

# Before the World Began

## **Introduction:**

1. You are a creature of time, so it is very hard for you to imagine events before the beginning of time.
2. Your time on earth is very short, and then you are gone, which makes eternity impossible to fathom.
3. If you visualize a timeline, you know 100 years ago there were no cars, Jesus lived 2000 years ago, Abraham lived 4000 years ago, Adam was created 6000 years ago, and before that there was eternity!
4. How long ago did events occur that were “before the world began”? 6000 years ago? Eternity ago!
5. How many accidents and disappointments have there been to God? Satan’s rebellion? Adam’s fall?
6. Did God know Adam would sin? That some would stay rebellious against Him? That He would send many to hell for their sins? If He knew all this, why did He create? For His glory (Pr 16:4; Rev 4:11).
7. When were you saved? Paul gave unusual answers, and “before the world began” is one (II Tim 1:9).
8. How long has the person who loves you the most loved you? 15 years? 50 years? Maybe 75 years?
9. Have you fully considered how many very important things that God did not ask you about? How about existence? Height? Weight? Looks? Parents? Country? Generation? Intelligence? Coordination? Health? Vertical jump? Neighbors? Do you wish you could change some of these?
10. The sermon this morning, as true of all sermons, is addressed to those who believe on Jesus Christ. If you do not believe on Jesus Christ as the Son of God and Lord of the universe, believe on Him now!

## **God promised eternal life to the elect *before the world began* (Titus 1:2).**

- A. If you read the whole sentence opening this epistle, there are many glorious things hinted at!
  1. Faith is a possession of God’s elect: God gives faith to the elect (I Peter 1:2; II Pet 1:1,5).
  2. And their faith was in the gospel of God’s promise of eternal life in Christ (II Tim 1:1).
  3. Paul was a chosen man to preach the truth to God’s elect (Acts 13:48; II Thess 1:13-14).
  4. There is a body of truth the elect acknowledge, which leads to godliness (Titus 2:11-14).
  5. The elect have hope of eternal life based on the promise of God in Christ (II Tim 1:1).
  6. Men have been dying from the beginning, and the elect have the hope of God’s promise!
  7. God cannot lie; He is infinitely holy and righteous; His promise is certain (Heb 6:13-20).
  8. God’s promise of eternal life is manifested, brought to light, by preaching (II Tim 1:10).
  9. And Paul was the apostle to carry this news to the Gentiles (Romans 11:13; I Tim 3:16).
  10. The gospel of election, eternal life, faith, and godliness is the common faith (Jude 1:3).
- B. If God promised eternal life before the world began, then who needed eternal life and why?
  1. He saw the first transgression and the last, and the depraved rebellion and sins between.
  2. The elect He had chosen and predestinated to be His Sons were entirely unfit for heaven.
- C. If God promised eternal life before the world began, on what basis could a holy God do this?
  1. He cannot acquit or clear sinners – they must die (Ex 34:7; Eze 18:4; Na 1:3; Rom 3:23).
  2. Therefore, He also planned to send His only begotten Son to die for them (Romans 3:26).
- D. If God promised eternal life before the world began, then to whom did He promise it?
  1. He promised it to those He elected in Christ Jesus to be saved from their sins and hell.
  2. He promised it by covenant through the Lord Jesus Christ, Who would die for them.
- E. If God promised eternal life before the world began, then why is this not preached today?
  1. Men would hate sound doctrine, as Paul about today’s perilous times (II Timothy 4:3-4).
  2. If this is the common faith of God’s elect, we should earnestly contend for it (Jude 1:3).
- F. If God promised eternal life before the world began, then why should any believe or obey?
  1. The only way we know our election is by faith and works (I Thess 1:2-4; II Peter 1:5-11).
  2. The doctrine of election taught in truth is the best motive for godliness (I John 4:10-11).
  3. Those scorners who reject or mock God’s sovereignty show their damnation (Rom 3:8).

### **God saves by His purpose and grace *before the world began* (II Timothy 1:9).**

- A. Paul exhorted Timothy to not be ashamed of the glorious gospel of God's power (II Tim 1:8).
- B. Eternal life is defined here as graciously given to Paul and Timothy before the world began.
  - 1. Salvation, though aspects of it occur during time, is based on God's eternal purpose.
  - 2. God did not consider Paul and Timothy's works (Titus 3:5; Rom 11:6; Ephesians 2:8-9).
  - 3. Again, the promise and purpose of eternal life is in and through the Lord Jesus Christ.
  - 4. God's eternal purpose of eternal life became visible with Jesus Christ's coming to earth.
  - 5. The next verse declares that Jesus has abolished death and brought immortality and life!
- C. The gospel, the good news Paul preached, only brought these things to light (II Tim 1:10!)
  - 1. It is a modern variation of Roman sacramentalism that ascribes eternal life to the gospel!
  - 2. The gospel brings life and immortality to light; it does not bring the life and immortality!
  - 3. Paul did not take eternal life to the elect, but rather this glorious knowledge (II Tim 2:10).

### **God chose and predestinated us in Christ *before the world began* (Eph 1:4).**

- A. If we read the whole section here, we find many glorious aspects of salvation (Eph 1:3-12).
  - 1. All spiritual blessings are in Christ, and we get them by God's choice of us (Eph 1:3-4).
  - 2. God chose us in Jesus Christ in order to make us legally holy and blameless (Eph 1:4).
  - 3. God chose us in Jesus Christ in order to make us the objects of His holy love (Eph 1:4).
  - 4. God's choice of us before the world began included His predestination of us (Eph 1:5).
  - 5. We are the children of God by the good pleasure of His will in predestination (Eph 1:5).
  - 6. God's eternal grace should be praised for making us accepted in Jesus Christ (Eph 1:6).
  - 7. We have redemption and forgiveness by being chosen and predestinated in Him (Eph 1:7).
  - 8. It is God's own pleasure and purpose that brings the wisdom of the gospel (Eph 1:8-10).
  - 9. God's choice and predestination of us in Christ is the basis of our inheritance (Eph 1:11).
  - 10. God predestinated us by the purpose of His own will (Ephesians 1:11-12; Rom 9:15-16).
- B. The words chosen here by the Holy Spirit are these: "before the foundation of the world."
- C. These verses are simple enough: God settled your destiny to obtain the spiritual blessings of salvation and an eternal inheritance in Jesus Christ before the world began! Glory!

### **God foreordained Jesus to die for us *before the world began* (I Peter 1:20).**

- A. There could be no salvation for any sinners without the glorious Substitute, Jesus Christ.
- B. The redemption of sinners required the precious blood of Jesus Christ (I Peter 1:18-20).
- C. Before the world began, God settled on the plan of sending His own Son for sinners.
  - 1. He was ordained to the work of the cross before the world began – foreordained.
  - 2. Ordination is appointing someone to a job, but foreordination puts it back in eternity!
  - 3. Here is the wisdom of God in devising such a glorious plan of redemption for the elect.
- D. But it was the incarnation of Jesus Christ that made this plan fully manifest to the elect.
- E. Do you believe Jesus of Nazareth is this ordained Saviour from God? You have eternal life!

### **God wrote us in the book of life *before the world began* (Rev 13:8; 17:8).**

- A. The enemies of Jesus Christ are described as not ever having their names in the book of life.
- B. Comparing the prepositional phrases in both verses, the writing was before the world began.
  - 1. Starting with Rev 17:8, you know "from the foundation of the world" modifies "written."
  - 2. Therefore, we know Rev 13:8 is not teaching the lamb was slain before the world began.

- C. Is this fact consistent with the rest of the Bible? Absolutely! God chose us in Jesus Christ before the world began, and Jesus is the Lamb that was slain for us (Eph 1:4; II Tim 1:9)!
- D. The Lord Jesus Christ came to be slain for His elect (John 6:38-39; 10:11,15; 17:2).
- E. What should we do with the song, "There's a New Name Written Down in Glory"? Trash it!

### **God prepared a heavenly kingdom for us *before the world began* (Matt 25:34).**

- D. The scene here is the last judgment, with the Lord identifying acts of charity (Matt 25:31-46).
- E. These acts of charity are not the basis or means of eternal life, but rather the evidence of it.
  1. Eternal life is always without works of any kind, for God saved us by grace (Eph 2:8-9).
  2. Paul told Timothy the rich could get evidence of eternal life by giving (I Tim 6:17-19).
- F. If God prepared a kingdom for them in eternity, did He know or not know its occupants?
- G. If God prepared a kingdom for them in eternity, was there any chance of empty houses?
- H. The wicked, who did no acts of charity to the people of God, are sent, in stark contrast, into everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels (Matt 25:41,46).

### **God planned to convert many Gentiles *before the world began* (Acts 15:18).**

- A. The situation is the great council of the apostles and elders at Jerusalem about the Gentiles.
- B. James brings the discussion to a close by applying a prophecy taken from Amos 9:11-12.
  1. The rebuilding of David's tabernacle, or the kingdom of God, was to be with Gentiles.
  2. James calmed them with this drastic change by reminding them of God's eternal purpose.
- C. Paul taught the same thing about God's eternal plan to save and convert Gentiles, which is documented most fully in Ephesians (Rom 16:25-27; Eph 3:1-12; Col 1:25-29; I Tim 3:16).
- D. If you are a Gentile believer this morning, it is by this great work of God planned in eternity.

### **God deserves our thanks for His choice *before the world began* (II Thes 2:13).**

- A. When election is understood and proven, the elect are bound to give constant thanksgiving!
  1. The contrast with God's judgment on the wicked in context should help (II Thess 2:9-12).
  2. It is God's choice that should open our lips; and it occurred before the world began.
- B. God loved the elect Thessalonians and had chosen them to salvation from the very beginning.
  1. Paul declared these believers to be elect by observing their fruitful lives (I Thess 1:2-4).
  2. God's election of these saints included salvation from the false doctrines of the man of sin, and Paul had played his small role in preaching the gospel to them (II Thess 2:14-15).
  3. It is the election of grace through God's love that gives everlasting consolation and good hope through the promise of eternal life and motivates to good works (II Thes 2:16-17).

### **Conclusion:**

1. How long has God known you? He has foreknown you since *before the world began* (Rom 8:29-30; 11:2; I Pet 1:20), and this is very different from His horrific declaration to the wicked (Matt 7:23).
2. How long has God loved you? He has loved you with an everlasting love, consistent with all He did *before the world began* (Jer 31:3). And once so loved, we cannot be separated from it (Rom 8:38-39)!
3. How long ago did God covenant for your salvation? He made an everlasting covenant with Jesus Christ on your behalf *before the world began* (Heb 13:20).
4. Everyone should ask, and many do, how can I know I am one of God's elect, chosen in Christ *before the world began* and loved with an everlasting love? You know your election by your fruits and good works (I Thess 1:2-4; II Pet 1:5-11 cp II Tim 1:9). These cannot save, but they prove His salvation!
5. Though He did so much for us *before the world began*, He calls us in this gospel day to hear His voice and not lose the privilege for practical salvation and glory by grace (II Cor 6:1-2; Heb 3:7-15).

6. He calls us to walk worthy of our vocation as the sons of God and to help others as well (Eph 4:1; 5:1; I Thess 4:18; 5:14; Heb 10:23-25).
7. There are several other references with similar language but with only indirect bearing on this subject.
  - a. God finished the works of creation at the foundation of the world and began His rest, but the gospel rest for believers came long after it (Ps 95:7-11; Heb 4:3-4; Gen 2:1-3; Ex 20:8-11).
  - b. The sacrifice of Jesus Christ for sin was once for all, or otherwise He would have had to suffer over and over again since the foundation of the world (Heb 9:25-26).
  - c. We in the New Testament kingdom of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ are privileged to know things kept secret from before the world began (Matt 13:35; Eph 3:5,9).
  - d. The Lord Jesus Christ prayed for and most assuredly obtained divine glorification in the presence of God, which He had enjoyed before the world began (John 17:5,24).

**For Further Study:**

1. The web document, "[Seven Proofs of Unconditional Salvation](#)," proves that God gives eternal life as a free gift.
2. The sermon outline, "[Is Election Fair?](#)" covers God's various choices of men and shows that is far beyond fair.
3. The web document, "[When Were You Saved?](#)" shows five phases of salvation taught in the New Testament.
4. The sermon outline, "[The Book of Life](#)," covers in details the nature and timing of the names written therein.