

## A BIRTHRIGHT AND A FITNESS!

by Herb Montgomery  
Director | Speaker



“Thus, Esau despised his birthright.”  
—Genesis 25.34

A “birthright” is a right or privilege that one is entitled to at birth. I would like you to ponder a few texts this week, in light of the concept of a *birthright*.

Romans 5.18:

“So then, as through one transgression, there resulted condemnation to all men, even so through one act of righteousness, there resulted justification of life to all men.”

Corinthians 15.20-22:

“But now Christ has been raised from the dead, the first fruits of those who are asleep. For since by a man *came* death, by a man also *came* the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam, all die, so also in Christ, all will be made alive.”

Timothy 4.9-10:

“It is a trustworthy statement deserving full acceptance. For it is for this we labor and strive, because we have fixed our hope on the living God, who is the Savior of all men, especially of believers.”

John 3.17:

“For God did not send the Son into the world to judge the world, but that the world might be saved through Him.”

I believe two things are needed for a person to be saved throughout eternity. The first is a “title.” In legal terms, a title is a legal document showing the right of ownership of a particular property. In other words, something that shows ownership. That object belongs to the holder of the title, and he or she has full rights and privileges in reference to it.

This title, this ticket, this right of ownership, this gift, according to the above verses, through Jesus’ death on the cross, has been given to every man, woman, and child! They

are born with it! It is their birthright by virtue of the life, death, and resurrection of their savior, Jesus Christ!

The second thing is “fitness.” This must not be overlooked because, if left in our self-centered state, it doesn’t matter how much heaven belongs to you, you won’t be happy there and your birthright will be despised. Heaven’s other-centered environment would be a place of sheer torment and torture. Thus, what good would a title be to something you don’t even want?

But, notice how it all works! When we “believe” in the birthright God has given to us outside of our doing anything to obtain it, we see past His gift, to His heart from which the gift was given. We begin to see the generous other-centered selfless love of our God! This belief in His love for us awakens in our hearts and in our other-centered love for Him. We begin to love because He first loved us. By His love for us, our love is awakened. We become transformed or converted from self-centeredness to other-centeredness, and, thus, through faith in the already given birthright that we are all born with, we are changed, restored back into the image of our unselfish God.

What a truly wise and loving God we worship. I’m amazed every time I see Him. †

### Thoughts to Ponder

Love, so little understood.

Other-centered, though all others would deny.

Selfless in its reach

Generous in all its provisions

Self-abandoning in all its means.

Penetrating to the deepest measure.

Awakening like torrents in return.

Transforming that which was lost into hope found once again.

Restoring life where once was found only the pall of death.

— Anonymous

# MINISTRY UPDATE

## You Didn't Choose Me! I Chose YOU!

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Last October, I was blessed with the privilege of conducting a series of evangelistic meetings right here in my hometown of Lewisburg, WV. And, to be quite honest, I had not put together the fact that because these meetings were being held locally, my daughter would be attending each night. Well, I've always tried to demonstrate to her what I feel is a true picture of what God really feels for her; I'm pleased to say it came together for her during this series. She caught it! I watched as her heart reached out toward a Love that was reaching out to her, and what a beautiful sight it was. I mean, it would be beautiful to watch it happen to anyone, but, this time, it was my oldest daughter. She came to me one night after the meeting had ended, and asked if, even though she was my daughter and these meetings were for the public, whether she could be baptized.

I've never believed in pushing kids. I've always figured that, when the love of Jesus touches their heart, they'll make the decision all on their own, naturally. But I was truly unprepared for what happened in my heart as I realized how deeply she was encountering God's love for her. This was my own daughter!

To make a long story short, it was my distinct privilege, in December 2008, to baptize my own daughter. Words cannot express what it feels like to baptize your own child.

The morning before she was baptized, while taking a few moments with God about what was about to happen, He reminded me of the words He gave us in the gospel of John: "You did not choose Me but I chose you" (John 15.16). At

that moment, I realized that I had been so excited about the decision my daughter was making, but God wanted me to see something deeper. The decision had really been made, not by Alexis, but by God himself! He had chosen my Ally! It was simply His love *for her* that I was watching her respond to. I cannot express the love I felt toward my Savior at that moment. For He not only loved me, He loved one of the most precious people in the world to me...my eldest daughter.



That day, as we were in the water, I reminded her of how she spent the first night of her life curled up on my chest as we both just lay there and slept. A special bond was created that night between her and me, and although I would love to be baptizing her today, there was Someone Who wanted to do it even more than I did, Who loved her more than I possibly ever could.

I explained to her what it meant to do something in someone else's name. It means, it's not really you doing it, but them. You're doing it for others, and they get the credit! And that today, it was because of God's great love *for her* that it was my pleasure and privilege to baptize her *in the name* of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost. This day was about their love for her and how she had felt it and simply wanted to love Them all back. Tears were in our eyes. Before I knew it, both of our faces were wet. We had been immersed, cleansed, and reborn in the extravagant love of our God.



What a way to end a year of ministry! With the baptism of your first-born child. That is a memory time will not erase. Thank you, you who are reading this newsletter, for making the work we do at Renewed Heart Ministries possible. It is a sheer pleasure to be partnered with you in enlightening this world, both those that are far off and those as close as our own children, with the revelation of His character of love. †



## FOREKNOWLEDGE

By E.J. Waggoner

“For whom He did foreknow, He also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the first-born among many brethren.” The word “predestinate” is the same as “foreordain,” which is found in the Revised Version. Volumes of speculation have been written about the terms, but a few words are sufficient to set forth the facts. With respect to these, as well as to the other attributes of God, it is sufficient for us to know the facts. We have nothing to do with the explanation.

That God knows all things is plainly set forth in the Scriptures. Not only does He know the things that are past, but He sees the future as well. “Known unto God are all His works from the beginning of the world” (Acts 15:18). “O Lord, Thou hast searched me, and know me. Thou knowest my down-sitting and my uprising; Thou understandest my thoughts afar off” (Ps. 139:1,2). Thus, God can tell what men even yet unborn will do and say.

This does not make God responsible for the evil that men do. Some men have unwisely thought it necessary to apologize for the Lord and to relieve Him of the charge that, if He is omniscient and if He does not prevent it, He is responsible for the evil. They say that He could know if he wished, but that He chooses not to know many things. Such a “defense” of God is both unwise and wicked. It assumes that, if He knew about a particular evil beforehand and did not prevent it, God is responsible for the evil. They further imply that, in order not to be in a position to prevent it, He deliberately shuts His eyes from it. Thus, their “defense” really puts the responsibility for all evil upon God. Not only that, but it limits Him. It makes Him like a man.

God knows all things, not by study and research, as man learns the little he knows, but because He is God. He inhabits eternity. Isa. 57:15. We cannot understand how this can be anymore than we can understand eternity. We must accept the fact, and be not only content, but glad that God is greater than we. All time, past, present, and future, is the same Him. It is always with God.

The fact that God knew the evil that men would do even before the foundation of the world does not make Him responsible for it, any more than the fact that a man seeing by means of a telescope what another man ten miles distant is doing makes him responsible for that other one’s actions. God has, from the beginning, set before men warnings against sin and has provided them with all the necessary means for avoiding it; but He cannot interfere with man’s right and freedom of choice without depriving him of his manhood and making him the same as a stick.

Freedom to do right implies freedom to do wrong. If a man were made so that he could not do wrong, he would have no freedom at all, not even to do right. He would be lower and less than the brutes. There is no virtue in forced obedience, nor would there be any virtue in doing that which is right if it were impossible to do wrong. Moreover, there could be no pleasure or satisfaction in the professed friendship of two persons, if one associated with the other just because he could not avoid doing so. The joy in the Lord in the companionship of His people is that they of their own free will and they choose Him above all

others. And that which is the joy of the Lord is the joy of His people.

The very men who rail against God for not preventing the ills that He foresees, since He is all powerful, would be the very first to charge Him with cruelty if He did arbitrarily interfere with their freedom and make them to do that which they do not choose to do. Such a course would make everybody unhappy and discontented. The wisest thing for men to do is to stop trying to fathom the ways of the Almighty, and accept the fact that whatever He does is right. “As for God, His way is perfect” (Ps. 18:30).

### Predestination

The text shows that “whom He did foreknow, He also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the first-born among brethren.” God’s thoughts toward men are thoughts of peace, and not of evil. Jer. 29:11. He ordains peace for men. Isa. 26:12. We read nothing about men being foreordained to destruction; the only thing that God has predestined is that men should be conformed to the image of His Son.

But it is only in Christ that we become conformed to His image. It is in Christ that we come “unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ” (Eph. 4:13). Therefore, it is that men are foreordained or predestined only in Christ. The whole story is told in the following passage of Scripture:

“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ; according as He hath chosen us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love; having predestined us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good-pleasure of His will, to the praise of the glory of His grace, wherein He hath made us accepted in the Beloved.”

Everything is in Christ. We receive all spiritual blessings in Him; we are chosen in Him unto holiness; in Him we are predestined unto the adoption of children; in Him are we accepted; and in Him we have redemption through His blood. “God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ” (I Thess. 5:9).

That is God’s purpose and foreordination concerning man. Still further, “whom He did foreknow, He also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of His Son.” Whom did He foreknow? There can be no limit; He must have foreknown all. If there were any exception, then God would not be infinite in knowledge. If He foreknows one person, then He foreknows every person. There has not been a person born into the world whose birth God did not foreknow. “Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in His sight; but all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of Him with whom we have to do.” Therefore, since every person has been known to God, even before the foundation of the world, and those whom He has foreknown He predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son, it follows that God has purposed salvation for every soul that has ever come into the world. His love embraces all, without respect of persons.

“Then everybody will be saved, no matter what he does,” some will say. Not by all means. Remember that the purpose of God is in Christ. It is only in Him that we are predestined. And we are free to choose



for ourselves, whether we will accept Him or not. Man's will has been forever set free, and God Himself will not presume to interfere with it. He holds the choice and will of each individual sacred. He will not carry out His own purpose contrary to man's will. His will is to give man whatever man decides will best please him. So He sets before man life and death, good and evil, and tells him to choose which he will have. God knows what is best, and has chosen and prepared that for man. He has gone so far as to fix it beyond all possibility of failure so that man shall have that good thing if he chooses it. But the wonderful kindness and courtesousness of the great God is seen in this, that He defers in everything to man's wishes. If man, in his turn, will but defer to God's wishes, there will be the most delightful and loving companionship between them.

### **Called, Justified, Glorified.**

"Moreover, whom He did predestinate, them He also called; and whom He called, them He also justified; and whom He justified, them He also glorified." This is completed action. We need not stumble over it, if we will but remember that everything is in Christ. In Christ we have already been blessed with all spiritual blessings. All men are called to that which God has prepared for them, but none are "called according to His purpose" unless they have made their calling and election sure by submitting to His will. Such ones are predestined to be saved. Nothing in the universe can hinder the salvation of any soul that accepts and trusts the Lord Jesus Christ.

And all such are justified. The death of Christ reconciles men to God. "He is the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but for the sins of the whole world" (1 John 2:2). His death has secured pardon and life for all. Nothing can keep them from salvation except their own perverse will. Men must take themselves out of the hand of God in order to be lost. Much more, then, those who accept the sacrifice, are justified. "God commendeth His love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Much more then, being justified by His blood, we shall be saved from wrath through Him. For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of His Son; much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by His life."

"And whom He justified, them He also glorified." Have we not read in the prayer of Christ for His disciples, not only for those who were with Him in the garden, but also for all them that should believe in Him

through their word, and therefore for us that "The glory which Thou gavest Me, I have given them"? Peter said that he was a partaker of the glory that shall be revealed. God has left nothing undone. Everything that Christ has we have, if we accept Him. All that remains is that it should be revealed. "The earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God." When God asks, concerning His people, "What could have been done more to My vineyard, that I have not done in it?" who shall presume to say that there is something that He has overlooked?

### **All Things Ours.**

But we have anticipated the apostle. Hear him: "What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us? He that spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?"

"How shall He not?" That is, how can He avoid giving us all things? In giving Christ for and to us, God could not do otherwise than give us all things, "for in Him were all things created, in the heavens and upon the earth, things visible and things invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers; all things have been created through Him, and unto Him; and He is before all things, and in Him all things consist" (Col. 1:16,17, R. V).

"Therefore let no man glory in men. For all things are yours; whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come; all are yours; and ye are Christ's; and Christ is God's" (1 Cor. 3:21-23). This, then, answers the question, "Who can be against us?" Everything is for us. "All things for your sakes" (2 Cor. 4: 15).

A general once telegraphed to the seat of government, "We have met the enemy, and they are ours." This is what every child of God is privileged to say: "Thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Cor. 15: 57). "This is the victory that hath overcome the world, even our faith" (1 John 5: 4, R. V). This is what makes us know that all things work together for good to them that love God. No matter how dark and forbidding the things may seem, if we are in Christ, they are for us, and not against us.

--Apples of Gold, No. 41, 1897

## CALENDAR

### **February 20-March 1, 2009**

Enterprise SDA Church  
Enterprise, OR  
541.426.3751

### **March 6-15, 2009**

Kingfield SDA Church  
Franklin, TN  
615.672.5601

### **March 20, 2009**

Good News Tour  
Vancouver, BC  
604.266.6727

### **March 23-27, 2009**

Visalia Week of Prayer  
Visalia, CA  
559.359.6722

### **April 13-16, 2009**

Pine Hills Adventist Academy  
Auburn, CA  
530.885.9447

### **April 25-May 2, 2009**

Lakeport SDA Church  
Lakeport, CA  
707.263.6002

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