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# Historical Consequence of the Misinterpretation of the Doctrine of Election

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## HISTORICAL CONSEQUENCE OF THE MISINTERPRETATION OF THE DOCTRINE OF ELECTION

By Thomas G. Sleeth

The goal of this research is to demonstrate how Biblical Scripture has been misrepresented throughout the centuries and utilized as a specific tool to enable nations and empires with more sophisticated technological backgrounds to exploit developing cultures and relegate them to a position of inferiority. Specifically, the misinterpretation of the Doctrine of Election has been a principle motivating factor and justification to conquer indigenous groups and subjugate populations under the guise of proselytization. Colonization, Imperialism, Slavery and nation-sanctioned discrimination have all occurred under the self-righteous banner of performing God's will. Biblical principle and doctrine neither advocate nor condone any of the latter mentioned man-made principles. God's Word has been purposefully twisted through the advent of perceived idealism read into Biblical Doctrine, as opposed to understanding what the Scripture actually intended and designed in its original meaning and context by the original author. The research reveals, through Biblical exegetical analysis that the meaning of Scripture has nothing to do with preeminent discriminatory practices, and that the continued misinterpretation of Scripture will have long-lasting negative repercussions.

### INTRODUCTION

This paper will argue that a literal translation of specific Biblical Scripture has contributed to the subjugation of indigenous people by conquering nations espousing the Doctrine of Election and that the dominate culture's use of such a ruptured theological methodology has unequivocally been a precursor to promotion of racism and slavery.

Although it is self-evident throughout humankind's history that one culture enslaves another culture who is less technologically advantaged or sophisticated, the primary reason for subjugation of indigenous people by invading conquering nations has been through the use of religion. "The Biblical Doctrines of God's Chosen People and Promised Land assume a problematic character when viewed against the colonialist exploitation of them leading to the exploitation of indigenous people."<sup>1</sup> In the nineteenth century it was referred to as 'The White Man's Burden', and a classic literary poem was written with this title. But the practice of misinterpreting Scripture for the use of subjugation of another people has a history that begins well before the Age of Imperialism and Colonialization. "The Bible is a story of a relationship between certain people and God."<sup>2</sup> The principal motivating factor to conquer indigenous people was to Christianize them. There are two causes as to why this occurred, one, a literal interpretation of Biblical Scripture and, two, the feeling of entitlement of conquering nations due to the literal interpretation of the Theory of the Doctrine of Election. In Reverend Spurgeon's own words, there "seems to be an inveterate prejudiced in the human mind against this doctrine."<sup>3</sup> The purpose of this study is to show that a literal interpretation of Biblical Scripture

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<sup>1</sup> Michael Prior, *The Bible and Colonialism: A Moral Critique* (Sheffield, England: Sheffield Academic Press, 1997), 291.

<sup>2</sup> Jeremy Cott, "The Biblical Problem of Election," *Journal of Ecumenical Studies* 21, no. 2 (Spring 1984): 199.

<sup>3</sup> C. H. Spurgeon, "Election" (speech, Sermon, New Park Street Chapel, Southwark, September 2, 1855), <http://www.spurgeon.org/sermons/0041.htm>.

was not what the original author of specific Scripture(s) had intended for the original audience to hear or read. Through correct exegetical analysis of key Biblical passages, and the compare and contrast of different theories on the Doctrine of Election, it will be proven that colonialism was backed by exploitive religious ideology which led to the inevitable historical consequence of slavery and racism.

## DOCTRINE OF ELECTION

The Doctrine of Election, as defined by Elwell's *Evangelical Dictionary of Theology*, is "a sovereign, eternal decree of God. The elect have been 'predestined according to the plan of him who works out everything in conformity with the purpose of his will (Eph.1:11). God chose us in Christ 'before the creation of the world (Eph.1:4). God's sovereign decree is not arbitrary; 'in love he predestined us...in accordance with his pleasure and will' (Eph.1:4-5; cf. Rom.8:29)." <sup>4</sup> Within the very wording of this definition is both a literal interpretation of the specified Scriptures, along with an implied definitive entitlement of superiority. Although it was not prescribed to in the early years of the Church, an Early Church Father who supported the fact of Election and Predestination as dogma was Augustine. At the same time, it is noteworthy to bear in mind that up until Augustine put the idea to parchment, no one disputed such a belief; it just had not been written down and formally accepted.

## COMPARE & CONTRAST THEORIES OF DOCTRINE OF ELECTION

Augustine of Hippo, who lived from 354-430 A.D. approximately, mixed neo-Platonic thought and Manichaeism with his theology. When it came to the soteriological ideology of God's grace and Jesus' salvific works upon the cross, Augustine felt that when given the option to choose between good and evil, humankind will always choose evil; we are pre-programmed inherently and are unable to effectively freely choose good. Therefore, it is "God's power to save his chosen ones. Salvation is entirely God's work, at God's initiative, and therefore cannot fail. He gave his elect the gift of perseverance, so that even though they sin they will repent and eventually be unable to forsake the good." <sup>5</sup> In Augustine's view salvation was a free gift from God based solely upon the fact of Jesus' redemptive sacrifice for all humankind upon the cross and was inextricably tied to the fact that some will be saved and others will not; and there is no way of ever knowing who is saved and who is not. "Our salvation becomes impossible without God's grace, given to some and withheld from others by an inscrutable act of predestination." <sup>6</sup> Augustine believed that the Elect were pre-chosen and predestined by God long before the foundation of the Universe and earth were created, that it was all inevitably a part of God's plan; and thus his Doctrine of Election was totally out of the hands of humankind's power and ability whatsoever. When it came to free will Augustine felt that "we would not be justified in holding people morally responsible if they did not have a will which somehow transcends natural appetite and natural order of efficient causes." <sup>7</sup> Augustine felt that a human's free will, which was tied to the Doctrine of Election, had to be separate in order for there to be a recognizable

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<sup>4</sup> Walter A. Elwell, *Evangelical Dictionary of Theology* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 2001), 370-371.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, 123.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>7</sup> Eric L. Jenkins, *Free to Say No?: Free Will and Augustine's Evolving Doctrines of Grace and Election* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2012), 110.

difference when a person comes to accept Jesus Christ as Savior otherwise there would be no need for humans to choose to love God to begin with. Not all of Augustine's theology premises were accurate though. He also believed that "sex could never be enjoyed without losing the body from the control of the will and vaunting the self above God, reminding even Christian spouses in the act of love that they were corrupt. While Augustine certainly did not originate the early Christian denigration of sex, he gave it a powerful boost and bequeathed it to the Middle Ages."<sup>8</sup>

John Calvin of Noyon, Picardie France, who lived from 1509-1564 A.D. approximately, developed his soteriological theological thought in Geneva, Switzerland circa 1536 A.D. The whole of Calvin's theological systematic thought can be summed up into words of *Sola Scriptura*, which is being translated as Scripture alone, and *Sola fide* which is being translated as faith alone. "Calvin's doctrine of election...in both content and form...for Calvin, Christ is the subject of election in that he is its author, and Christ is the object of election in that he mediates both election itself and the salvation which flows from election."<sup>9</sup> Calvin espoused that all of humanity was depraved and incapable of reaching God through his own merits, therefore the only way that humankind could reach God was through God's saving grace and faith in Jesus Christ. "Although his views have not always been popular and have at times been grossly misrepresented, his system of theology has had a very wide influence down to the present time, as indicated by the fact that all Reformed and Presbyterian churches look back to him as the founder of their biblical-theological doctrinal position."<sup>10</sup> Calvin's position was to go directly to the Scripture and see what it says, letting Scripture speak for itself. Emphasis that Calvin placed upon the Scripture was two-fold: first, it is the Word of God and two, the Bible is the final authority for Christian Doctrine. Another theological thought that Calvin derived from Scripture was that God was ever present in the continuation of the world and humankind's history upon it. Calvin's Doctrine of Election was much like Augustine's, God has preordained that some shall be saved and others shall be condemned to eternal damnation, without regards to righteousness or justice, but solely at the discretion of God the Creator Himself. John Calvin also believed in a five point methodology which is known in the acronym TULIP; Total depravity, Unconditional election, Limited atonement, Irresistible grace, and Perseverance of the saints. Calvin also ascribed to the certainty that there was a single intention for the atonement and that it was provisional and universal. Provisional on the grounds it was preordained before creation, and universal on the grounds that it was offered to all. Biblical references that Calvin used to support his soteriology was based heavily from the book of Romans that Apostle Paul wrote, especially Romans 9:6-16. Not all of John Calvin's theological ideologies were accurate due to the fact that he believed that musical instruments should be banned from Church services whereas singing was acceptable and the state should be run by the Church.

Karl Barth of Bern, Switzerland, who lived from 1886-1968, held the position when it came to soteriological theology of centered on Christ with special attention and focus given to the work of Christ. In Barth's Doctrine of Election, he believed that "the election of grace (*die Gnadenwahl*) is the sum of the Gospel."<sup>11</sup> This theologian felt that everything should revolve

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<sup>8</sup> Elwell, 123.

<sup>9</sup> David Gibson, "A Mirror for God and for Us: Christology and Exegesis in Calvin's Doctrine of Election," *International Journal of Systematic Theology* 11 (October 2009): 448.

<sup>10</sup> Elwell, 201.

<sup>11</sup> Colin E. Gunton, "Karl Barth's Doctrine of Election as Part of His Doctrine of God," *Journal of Theological Studies* 25, no. 2 (October 1, 1974): 381.

around Jesus and His salvific works, as God has worked through Him, rather than on God and creation. Karl Barth viewed Jesus Christ as the only elected one; Scriptural evidence he used to support his theology is found in Psalms 89:3, Isaiah 42:1, Luke 9:35, and Luke 23:55. It was Karl Barth's belief that God had elected Christ and that all of humankind needed to cling to that belief and were thereby grafted in as being elect themselves. Barth understood the Doctrine of "election is that it is first of all, before being the election of men, something that God does in, with, and to Himself. It is God's self-ordaining, His self-determination, His self-limitation, His self-giving. Therefore, even though it entails a commitment of himself, it is free because God is its sole author. But it is also and at the same time gracious."<sup>12</sup> In other words, God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are Elect and by implication, due to the salvific works of Jesus Christ atoning for all humankind's sins and sin nature upon the cross, humankind has been allowed the benefit of being grafted into this ideology by the gracious kindness of a loving and merciful God. Karl Barth found fault with Augustinian theology by stating "Augustinian formulation...regard as 'a mythologizing' construction...rejecting the notion that predestination can be explained in terms of cause and effect."<sup>13</sup> Karl Barth also had negative thoughts toward John Calvin as well saying "Calvin's failure to perceive that we can have no assurance of our own election (if Jesus Christ is merely an elected means whereby the electing God executes the decree) is 'the decisive objection which we have to bring against his whole doctrine of predestination.'"<sup>14</sup> To sum up Karl Barth's Doctrine of Election theology, he was in total rejection to any dogmatic statements which would exclude any person from experiencing Jesus Christ' redemptive benefits which He performed upon the cross for all humankind. Karl Barth's soteriological theology is not without its problems as his views are "a significant departure from that of Reformed confessional theology [and] his distinct vocabulary, typified by various Christocentrism, makes his theological claims somewhat difficult to isolate and interpret."<sup>15</sup> In short, Karl Barth's theology is hard to understand and even more difficult to analyze and dissect.

Soren Kierkegaard of Copenhagen, who lived from 1813-1855, held an existentialistic point of view when it came to soteriological theology. When it comes to the theory of the Doctrine of Election, Kierkegaard gives total absolute power and control to God, and at the same time states that people must work out their own salvation for themselves. He was a firm believer in "one can only find the real God in selfhood...religions of dogmatism, absolutism, or magic are improperly motivated, since they fail to assert the freedom and selfhood of man."<sup>16</sup> Kierkegaard placed a great amount of emphasis on one's own ability to be a co-partner with God in all things, yet at the same time, stated that "doctrinal assertions subvert the agency of the learner. Kierkegaard repeatedly claimed that, ethically, an author must help the reader/learner to stand alone."<sup>17</sup> In short, Soren Kierkegaard felt that God does all the work for humankind and then allows humans, like a parent would allow their little child, to come to them and present them with a gift as if it were solely their idea, in this case, a human giving thanksgiving, love,

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<sup>12</sup> Ibid., 384.

<sup>13</sup> Jason A. Goroncy, "'That God May Have Mercy upon All': A Review-essay of Matthias Gockel's Barth and Schleiermacher on the Doctrine of Election," *Journal of Reformed Theology* 2, no. 2 (2008): 116.

<sup>14</sup> Gibson, 459.

<sup>15</sup> Timothy Scheuers, "An Evaluation of Some Aspects of Karl Barth's Doctrine of Election," *Mid-America Journal of Theology* 22 (2011): 161.

<sup>16</sup> Jeffery G. Sobosan, "Kierkegaard and Jung on the Self," *Journal of Psychology and Theology* 3, no. 1 (Winter 1975): 34.

<sup>17</sup> Lee C. Barrett, III, "Doctrines and Undecidability: Kierkegaard on the Indeterminacy of Christian Teachings," *Toronto Journal of Theology* 26, no. 1 (Spring 2010): 61.

and repentance to God. Kierkegaard also believed that doctrines are problematic for humans in that they result in the creation of false theological ideology wherein the human feels responsible for something that they have done or created when in reality everything is up to God. It can be said that “Kierkegaard was in no way a doctrinally oriented author.”<sup>18</sup> Kierkegaard also felt that a humans will was severely damaged when it came to choosing the good, due to original sin, but was in no way completely destroyed and that God rewards stringent effort with divine grace which pushes a person onward toward sanctification. Again, much in the same manner that a parent pushes their child onward to accomplish a task, albeit riding a bicycle or learning arithmetic tables. Kierkegaard chastised the Doctrine of Predestination saying that “predestination must be considered as a thoroughgoing abortion...the doctrine arose in order to explain the relation between human freedom and ‘God’s governance of the world.’”<sup>19</sup> His hostility toward predestination was based upon the belief that it would foster passivity within people on a whole. Kierkegaard’s problem with predestination, and therefore also Doctrine of Election, was “[it] takes aspects of legitimate forms of Christian pathos and transpose them into a dogmatic concept.”<sup>20</sup> Soren Kierkegaard believed that doctrines and dogma discourage the individual from seeking answers within one’s own self and has one rely on man-made ideologies that were vague, critical and self-serving only for the Church or denomination who held them. Kierkegaard also found fault with and was very critical of other theological positions as well like Augustinianism, Pelagianism, Manichaeism and Armenianism. “Kierkegaard assumed that the work of Christ must be received through faith, and that the development of faith itself was part of God’s redemptive activity.”<sup>21</sup> The existentialist, Soren Kierkegaard believed it made no difference what a person did, it was all totally up to God as to what was going to take place and happen and that the entire issue was out of humankind’s hands whatsoever.

#### ANALYSIS OF HISTORICAL CONSEQUENCES OF LITERAL INTERPRETATION

The consequences of a literal interpretation of Biblical Scripture have overwhelmingly decided, in many instances, the fate of indigenous people of new lands that were discovered, regardless of what the original author had intended for the Biblical passage(s) to mean to the original audience of whom they were intended for. “This doctrine has often been mutilated and speculatively interpreted to the detriment of many.”<sup>22</sup> Both the Doctrine of Election and Predestination were specifically interpreted by ecclesiastical hierarchy in order for the benefit of the Church just as the slave trade and discovery of new lands was taking place in the latter half of the fifteenth century and into the sixteenth century.

During the three hundred to four-hundred-year period of Roman rule in the known world, slavery was practiced. However, religious racism, which has accompanied bigotry, developed much later during the slave trade era. “The battle for the Bible has a long and twisted history. There have been countless casualties in the tug of war to gain control of biblical interpretation.”<sup>23</sup> An obvious question that arises is how religion and racism became mutually dependent and accepted on a global basis.

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<sup>18</sup> Ibid., 63.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid., 64.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid., 65.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid., 66.

<sup>22</sup> James Daane, "The Greatest Misconception," *Reformed Journal* 11, no. 1 (January 1961): 15.

<sup>23</sup> Christopher M. Leighton, "Introductory Essay," *CrossCurrents* 59, no. 2 (June 2009): 107.

In brevity, the initiation of what is thought of in today's terms as the slave trade was implemented under Pope Nicholas V, in June of 1452, who authorized the Papal Bull *Dum Diversas* which rendered any pagan or non-Christian believer to perpetual slavery. This was an edict allowing the slave trade to be formally recognized by the Roman Catholic Church and Portugal. In January of 1455, Pope Nicholas V wrote the *Romanus Pontifex* which allowed any new lands discovered, during this time of exploration, to have utter dominion over the new lands, any minerals located and indigenous non-Christian peoples. This edict encouraged the enslavement of non-Christian peoples in both Africa and the New World; as they were viewed to be enemies of Christ. In 1493, Pope Alexander the VI wrote *Inter Caetera* which served as the foundation for a Doctrine of Discovery. This last edict coupled with the other two enabled the slave trade to become an equitably financially lucrative enterprise which also ushered in the Age of Imperialism. Over the ensuing centuries such a prevalent attitude was further reinforced with writings by "George Armstrong, an influential protestant, [who] wrote *The Christian Doctrine of Slavery*, an 1857 book that defended the practice of slavery as acceptable in Christianity."<sup>24</sup> These ideologies were the beginning coupling of religious racism and slavery. The science of the nineteenth century would also have a profound influence on the intellectual climate. Darwinian evolution, once taken beyond the realm of biology and applied to human social development, often referred to as Social Darwinism, had an even greater impact that even Darwin himself could have envisioned. In the wake of his publications, subsequent arguments for slavery and racial differences would go forth under the banner of science.<sup>25</sup> A question still of concern at this point is how Scriptural interpretation was used as a tool, enabling such atrocity to take place.

## EXEGETICAL ANALYSIS OF BIBLICAL SCRIPTURE

It is through the use of systematic theology, specifically biblical theology, and a comparison of Biblical texts through a definitive exegesis of Scripture that one begins to realize how Biblical passages, and their intended meaning(s), have been misconstrued. For example, in a Biblical passage found in the book of Romans it says, "And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose. For those God foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brothers and sisters. And those he predestined, he also called, those he called, he also justified, those he justified, he also glorified" (NIV Rom.8:28-30). It is easy to see how, within this Biblical passage, a misinterpretation can lead to catastrophic results. This particular Scripture also endows 'those predestined' to be glorified and justified; or having entitlement. For instance, when reading this latter Scripture literally and coupling it with "Leviticus 20:24 'I am the Lord thy God which have separated you from other people'" instantly one is seen as justified by God when it comes to the issue of enslaving indigenous peoples of new lands discovered.<sup>26</sup>

However, the meaning that the Apostle Paul intended for Romans 8:28-30 was speaking about the relationship that a believer has with God. In this Biblical passage is contained how

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<sup>24</sup> Archie C. Epps, III, "The Christian Doctrine of Slavery, A Theological Analysis," *Journal of Negro History* 46, no. 4 (October 1961): 1.

<sup>25</sup> Stephen Jay. Gould, *The Mismeasure of Man* (New York: Norton, 1981), 72.

<sup>26</sup>"White Camelia Knights of the Ku Klux Klan," Slave Master Productions, accessed May 1, 2014, <http://www.wckkkk.org/eql.html>.

God “[is] continually at work, but those for whom he works are steadfast in their love for him.”<sup>27</sup> This passage is about following and listening to God’s laws, edicts, and works which will enable a person “to be a servant of God [who] is thoroughly equipped for every good work”(NIV 2<sup>nd</sup> Tim.3:17). In life as we suffer during hardships and times of turmoil and catastrophe, we are to remember and look upon the risen Christ who died upon the cross for our sins while we were as of yet still unknown, and that if we “share the likeness of his Son...[we] learn obedience from what he suffered.”<sup>28</sup> This is a very different analysis of this Biblical passage that was ignored in order to sanctify the established reign of slavery throughout the world.

It is also evident in the verses “he predestined us for adoption to sonship through Jesus Christ, in accordance with his pleasure and will to the praise of his glorious grace, which he has freely given us in the One he loves...in him we were also chosen, having been predestined according to the plan of him who works out everything in conformity with the purpose of his will” (NIV Eph.1:5,11). It is easy to understand how this Scripture developed into entitlement justification of slavery over another people. When these verses are coupled with “...you do not believe because you are not my sheep. My sheep listen to my voice, I know them, and they follow me” (NIV John10:27), as the Knights of the Ku Klux Klan believe then it becomes understandable how racism and slavery have further become intertwined. It is racists such as the latter mentioned who feel “that there is only one group of people that has always followed Christ and they are White Anglo-Saxon Christians.”<sup>29</sup>

However, the original intended meaning of Ephesians 1:5, 11 were adoption to sonship as was known in Roman times when an adopted son could still become heir to his father’s estate and was fully recognized as a legitimate child by the state. Paul was trying to illustrate, through the use of analogy, that when we become believers in Christ we are also adopted into the auspices of God’s kingdom as His children who are legitimately recognized by God as such. In verse eleven, in relationship with Christ there is a meaningful future for all who believe upon the Savior Jesus Christ. These two verses have to do with being the children of God and have nothing whatsoever to do with, nor do they imply, that only white people are preordained for belief and relationship with Jesus Christ. Therefore, the invitation for repentance, confession, and acceptance from God has to do with belief on and in Jesus Christ, and is open to everyone in the world, not specifically one group of people based on the color of their skin.

In the book of Genesis it says “Cursed be Canaan! The lowest of slaves will he be to his brothers” (NIV Gen.9:25). With further literary analysis of following Scripture one derives that the descendants of Ham’s son were the peoples of Egypt, Philistia, Assyria, and Babylonia. Then it is inferred that those people were the people who eventually also migrated and populated the continent of Africa. Again, it is not hard to understand how easy it was to presume that God had intended one group of people to be slaves to the rest of the world.

However, this ideology is not based upon Scriptural truth, but rather upon one group of people placing presupposition onto what they believe the Biblical verse states. The latter mentioned presuppositional beliefs also would, therefore, ascribe to limited atonement based upon skin color when “The Bible teaches universal atonement...John assures us, ‘He is the atoning sacrifice for our sins, and not only for ours but also for the sins of the whole world

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<sup>27</sup> Robert H. Mounce, *The New American Commentary Romans*, vol. 27 (Nashville: TN: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1995), 188.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid.

<sup>29</sup>Michael Fisher, "The Ku Klux Klan," accessed April 15, 2014, <http://home.wlu.edu/~lubint/touchstone/KKK-Fisher.htm>.



(1John2:2).”<sup>30</sup> Through more specific exegesis we learn that in the Genesis 9:25 passage, is a relative contextual thought ascribed to earlier Scripture when Cain killed Abel. Within the context of these two Biblical passages we find that one brother becomes a servant of the other, one through having killed his brother, the other through having gossiped about what condition his father had come to in old age. Leviticus 18:28 says, “There are no grounds in our passage for an ethnic reading of the ‘curse’ as some have done, supposing that some peoples are inferior to others. Here Genesis looks only to the social and religious life of Israel’s ancient rival Canaan, whose immorality defiled their land and threatened Israel’s religious fidelity. It was not an issue of ethnicity but of the wicked practices that characterized Canaanite culture.”<sup>31</sup>

## CONCLUSION

Misinterpretation of Scripture has had devastating consequences that have reached every corner of the world. The Doctrine of Election, as well as the theology of Predestination, both have been given alternate meanings other than what the original author intended from Scripture in order to accomplish subjugating indigenous peoples upon every continent. “The grand truth of election...takes us back to the beginning of all things. It antedated the entrance of sin into the universe, the fall of man, the advent of Christ, and the proclamation of the Gospel. A right understanding of it, especially in its relation to the everlasting covenant is absolutely essential if we are to be preserved from fundamental error.”<sup>32</sup> The misuse of Scripture, whether under the guise of Imperialism, Colonialism, Chattel Slavery, segregation or Ecclesiastical sanction will have far lasting repercussions into our present day contemporary church if proper exegesis is not given to Biblical interpretation.

## REFLECTION

The topic of the historical consequences of the misinterpretation of the Doctrine of Election requires a deep exploration of an often times ugly past. The issues of Colonialism, Imperialism, chattel slavery, and government endorsed subjugation on the basis of culture are such a negative reflection on our predecessors that many choose to ignore the important lessons that can still be applied today. The significance of this research to the Christian faith, in general, is seen today with the continual marches and protests witnessed in American society that are staged in cities and universities across the country. How should the Christian Church and Christian faith respond to these protest demonstrations? The first step is to search the Scriptures, isolating possible similar scenarios which have occurred in the past and how such situations were dealt with. The next step, therefore, is to ascertain Biblical principle and doctrine in its plain, relevant meaning. A final step would be to apply those Biblical principles and doctrines as a solution to establish peaceful race-relations between both those who perceive to be disenfranchised and marginalized in society and those whose perception and entitlement in society has been based solely and strictly upon race. These steps should lead to active

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<sup>30</sup> John Brenner, "The Doctrine of Election and Mission Work," *The Institute for Worship & Outreach*, May 21, 2012, 2.

<sup>31</sup> Kenneth A. Matthews, *The New American Commentary Genesis 1-11:26*, vol. 1A (Nashville: TN: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1996), 423.

<sup>32</sup> Arthur Walkington Pink, *The Doctrine of Election* (New York: Great Christian Books, 2013), 10.

communication and dialog between peoples of different races for the benefit of instituting new forms of societal mores and norms that are both inclusive and egalitarian of nature.

Inclusivity and equality of all peoples within society create the ability of humankind to achieve great accomplishments, as is witnessed when we read, “And the LORD said, Behold, the people *is* one, and they have all one language; and this they begin to do: and now nothing will be restrained from them, which they have imagined to do” (KJV Gen. 11:6). An overall concept contained within this verse is ‘the people is one...they have one language...and now nothing will be restrained from them.’ The greatest strength of a people is found in the willingness of society to work together, regardless of race, in order to dominate and subdue the earth, much in the manner in which God spoke when we read, “And God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it: and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth” (KJV Gen. 1:28). Here it is understood that God’s original plan was for His creation, humankind, to work together equally, following and living by God’s decree and moral standard, having complete control over the earth and all that exists therein. However, in the past and the present, man-made institutional and societal norms and mores have succeeded at becoming a perverse mockery of God’s infallible Word. In this instance one realizes that judicially established rules for society to follow are based solely upon popular cultural belief and opinion, versus a proper exegetical analysis of Biblical Doctrine.

When completing this research, I bore in mind how the mistakes of the past are still relevant to the modern day Christian church and Christian faith today. As far as race-relations are considered, should always be as the Scripture states, “When pride cometh, then cometh shame: but with the lowly is wisdom” (KJV Prov. 11:2). Always the starting point should be asking the question: *what does the Bible say on this issue?* Too little times has this question been asked. Too often times has humankind decided, in ignorance, that the Scripture is stating something it entirely and emphatically does not state. In order for there to be any type of peaceful resolution to the protests, demonstrations and violent riots and uprisings that are witnessed throughout the societal landscape there has to be a mutually accepted arbitrating factor; and that factor has to be the Holy Word of God. It is only through educating our children, future generations, in the Scripture, that race-relation tension, or any problem in American society or world-wide will ever be solved. All other modes of literary device will only add to derision and divisiveness which will be the inheritance that posterity will inherit posthumously.

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