“Declare **his glory** among the heathen, his wonders among all people.” (**Psalm 96:3**)

**Our Knowledge of the One True and Living God – A Motivation for Our Foreign Missionary Endeavors**

We belong to that group of Baptists who believe that God is sovereign in the salvation of all sinners. We believe in election and therefore believe that God has fixed the number that will be saved and each and every one of them will be saved! We believe that God is accomplishing His will in every nation upon the earth and that we, His servants, are a part of that will. We believe He is saving His elect out of “every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation” and that He will use us as His means in doing so.

We believe that it is the purpose of God to glorify Himself in the salvation of sinners. We believe that everything God does He does for His own glory.

**I Corinthians 1:26-31** – “(26) For ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called: (27) But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world … and God hath chosen the weak things of the world … (28) And base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not … (29) That no flesh should glory in his presence … (31) That, according as it is written, **He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord.”**

We also believe that true salvation is defined by our Lord Jesus Christ as knowing God.

**John 4:22** – “**Ye worship ye know not what**: we know what we worship: for salvation is of the Jews.”

**John 17:3** – “And this is life eternal, that **they might know** thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent.”

**Acts 17:23** – “… I found an altar with this inscription, **TO THE UNKNOWN GOD**. Whom therefore ye ignorantly worship, **him declare I unto you**.”

Once we know God in salvation and are known of God, it is our heart’s desire to know Him more and more.

Paul, expressing his heart as a Christian and as a missionary said in **Philippians 3:10** – “**That I may know him**, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death”

Without a proper and biblical knowledge of God, the sinner cannot be saved. Without a growing and ever increasing knowledge of God the Christian stops growing and if he continues without an increased knowledge of God, he may prove that he is no Christian at all.

**At the heart of every mission endeavor should be the desire to declare the One True and Living God so He may be known.**

**Why do some men go to a foreign field and preach the gospel?**

Some of the reasons given are: The people who live in this country live in such darkness. The idolatry is simply awful. Sin is rampant! The people there are very poor and the reason for their poverty is their ignorance. There is a great need. There are very few Baptists. There are no Sovereign Grace Baptists in this country. There are not many who are true believers.

All of these reasons and many others have been set forth as reasons why we should involve ourselves in the spread of the gospel to foreign lands. I have even used them many times.

Brethren, though there may be some good in these reasons, yet I submit to you that there is a reason which is far more important than those mentioned.

**We endeavor to spread the gospel to foreign lands because we know God and we believe that the God who revealed Himself in the Holy Scriptures is worthy to be known!**

**God's person** is worthy to be known and honored and worshipped among all the peoples of the world. **God’s work** as Creator, Sustainer, Provider, Lawgiver, and Redeemer, Protector, and Deliverer is worthy to be known, believed, embraced, honored, and glorified among all the people of the earth. **God’s name** is worthy to be praised. God is worthy to be worshipped by those who previously have given their worship to dead idols.

This is what Paul meant in **I Thessalonians 1:9** when he said, “For they themselves shew of us what manner of entering in we had unto you, and how ye turned to God from idols **to serve the living and true God**”

**The great issue in gospel preaching is that those who are lost do not know God!**

The vast multitudes in India – in Nepal, in Bhutan, in Myanmar (Burma), in Bangladesh, in Tibet, and in China – in Cambodia – In Thailand – In Vietnam - do not know the one true and living God. Like the Athenians, they have their multitude of gods, but they do not know the One, True and Living God.

**The great thrust of our missionary activity should be that the masses might come to know God.**

We are to use our lips to “Declare **his glory** among the heathen, **his wonders** among all people.” (**Psalm 96:3**) so that they may come to know the one we know.

In addition, we are to use our life spent in the spread of the gospel so that the God we began to know when He saved us from our sins may be known among all nations.

It is God’s declared purpose that His servants - His missionaries - make Him known to those who do not know Him.

James, quoting Peter described God's purpose in saving the Gentiles, as God visiting “the Gentiles, to **take out of them a people for his name**.” (**Acts 15:14**)

Jesus described missionaries as those who have “forsaken houses, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, **for my name's sake**” (**Matthew 19:29**).

**God can only be known by the revelation of Himself.**

**1. God has revealed Himself in nature** but fallen man has taken that which may be known of God and have “changed the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and fourfooted beasts, and creeping things.” (**Romans 1:23**)

**2. God revealed Himself in the Scriptures.** But ... fallen man is so blind that he cannot see the glory of God as it is revealed in the word of God ... fallen man is so spiritually deaf that he cannot hear what God has said about Himself in the word of God ... fallen man is so spiritually dead that he cannot know God as He has revealed Himself in the word of God.

**3. Therefore, God must reveal Himself** to each sinner individually. This is the doctrine of regeneration. It is what Jesus meant when He said to Nicodemus that he must be born again. This is what Stephen said of Abraham when he said, “**The God of glory app**eared unto our father Abraham” (**Acts 7:2**).

God must give the sinner **seeing eyes** to see His glory as He is revealed in His word. He must give the sinner a **hearing ear** so that he may hear what God has said about Himself in His word. He must give the sinner **a new heart** so that the sinner can love Him as He is revealed in His word. He must give the sinner **life** so that he can know God and His Son Jesus Christ as He is revealed in His word.

This God does when He sends His preachers to preach His word. As a general rule, God has chosen the preaching the gospel as the means by which He will reveal Himself to the nations. Because we believe that, we go - we send – we support those who go.

**God is made known in the preaching of the gospel and God is made known in the lives of His servants.**

We need to have the attitude of **Robert Morrison** who labored in China, when, a man “…looking at him with a smile that only half concealed his contempt, inquired, ‘Now Mr. Morrison do you really expect that you will make an impression on the idolatry of the Chinese Empire?’ ‘No sir,’ said Morrison, ‘but I expect that God will.”

**What has God revealed about Himself?**  What has He revealed concerning His character or His attributes?

There are many things that can be said in answer to that question. Books have been written about the attributes of God. For our purposes today, I want to focus upon one aspect of God’s character – one aspect of His attributes which has far reaching implications if we genuinely believe it.

1. God has revealed that He is the Almighty Sovereign over heaven and earth.

**Matthew 28:18-20** – “And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, **All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth**. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, **lo, I am with you alway**, even unto the end of the world. Amen.”

**In these verses our Lord gave us the reason for the success of Foreign Missions**. He has all the power to accomplish His will in the salvation of sinners – He has all the power to see to the success of the means He chooses to use in the work of missions. In other words, because He is the Almighty Sovereign, nothing can stop him – nothing can hinder His plan – nothing can hinder His purposes among the peoples of the earth.

**John Stott** said, “His authority on earth allows us to dare to go to all the nations. His authority in heaven gives us our only hope of success. And His presence with us leaves us no other choice.”

**John Paton** (missionary to the New Hebrides islands) speaking of the sovereignty of God in salvation said, “Oh, Jesus! To Thee alone be all the glory. Thou hast the key to unlock every heart that Thou has created”

**Jonathon Goforth** (missionary to China) said “All the resources of the Godhead are at our disposal!”

Because He is the Almighty Sovereign, God has said – No weapon formed against thee shall prosper. (**Isaiah 54:17**) He has said – I will build my church and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it (**Matthew 16:18**). He has said that He will save His people out of out of “every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation” (**Revelation 5:19**) He has said that nothing can separate His elect from His love (**Romans 8:35-39**) He has personally said to His children, I will never leave you nor forsake you. (**Hebrews 13:5**)

Because He is the Almighty Sovereign, He orders our steps and governs the affairs of our life. In His providence the Almighty Sovereign governs all things in the lives of His elect – in the lives of His servants – in the lives of His missionaries.

**William Carey** understood that the living God is the Almighty Sovereign, he therefore could say, “Expect great things from God - Attempt great thing for God.”

It was his knowledge of God that led him to India. It was his knowledge of God that kept him in India. It was his knowledge of God that sustained him during the many trials which swept upon him and his co-laborers. Because God was loving, good, kind, and merciful, he could expect great things from Him. Because God was the Almighty Sovereign, **William Carey** could attempt great things for Him.

As I said, “In His providence the Almighty Sovereign governs all things in the lives of His elect – in the lives of His servants – in the lives of His missionaries.”

Therefore, we cannot speak of trials without speaking of God’s providence in the trial. How many missionaries have suffered great things in order to see God glorified among the heathen? How many missionaries have lost their lives - the lives of their children – the lives of their wives that God may “**take out of them a people for his name**”? (**Acts 15:14**)

Every trial comes from the good hand of a God who cannot fail! Every struggle comes from the hands of a God who does all things for His own glory and for the good of His elect.

**It was their knowledge of God and His ways that kept those early missionaries faithful.**

We need to know and understood that it is not only God’s purpose to reveal Himself to the heathen, by sending us to the mission field, but it is also His purpose to reveal Himself in and through our lives and our ministry.

**Adoniram Judson** (missionary to Burma) speaking of the loss of one of his children, “If I had not felt certain that every additional trial was **ordered by infinite love and mercy**, I could not have survived **my accumulated sufferings**.”

Concerning the loss of his first wife, **John Paton,** said, “I felt her loss beyond all conception or description, in that dark land. It was very difficult to be resigned, left alone, and in sorrowful circumstances; **but feeling immovably assured that my God and father was too wise and loving to err** in anything that he does or permits, I looked up to the Lord for help, and struggled on in His work”

**John Paton** teaches us how to trust our God with our lives and our ministry. When facing a trial, he prayed claiming the promises of God while at the same time submitting himself to God will in the matter.

“I … assured them that I was not afraid to die, for at death my Savior would take me to be with Himself in Heaven, and to be far happier than I had ever been on Earth. I then lifted up my hands and eyes to the Heavens, and prayed aloud for Jesus … either to protect me or to take me home to Glory as He saw to be for the best.”

In another account he records, “Had it not been for the assurance that … in every path of duty He would carry me through or dispose of me therein for His glory, I could never have undertaken either journey”

Later he said, “We felt that God was near, and omnipotent to do what seemed best in his sight”

Is not this what our Saviour did in the Garden of Gethsemane when He said, “Not my will but yours be done.”?

This is the God who has called His churches to declare the gospel to the nations with our lips and with our lives. May God grant us the grace to do so!

“Declare **his glory** among the heathen, his wonders among all people.” (**Psalm 96:3**)