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Volume VIII

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Greetings,

Welcome friends to the Metachoi Memorandum.

I have not written since we moved to Dallas. The transition from Phoenix after 21 years has been a pleasant surprise with the wonderful opportunities the Lord has provided for me. But now it is down to business.

As you might remember from your university days, the *Order of the Black Eagle* was created by Frederic the Great, whom my mother named me after. He was the first emperor of Prussia in 1701. His climb to power was aided by a loyal group of men who sacrificed in some cases their very lives to ensure that honor and glory be bestowed upon Frederic. After his rise to power and a secured kingdom, Frederic instituted and inaugurated the *Order of the Black Eagle*. This honor was awarded to his loyal men who proved faithful in every battle. The knights were issued hereditary nobility and a regal full dress uniform worn only by this band of royal dignitaries as a mark of the Faithful to Frederic. A special crest was created to be worn on the uniforms. The crest was also carved on the walls of select churches to make a memorial to the faithful men who made up this elite group.

The Order of the Black Eagle was a secular version of the sacred order of the Metachoi, which is a group of faithful partners who will be selected by the Lord of the universe, King Jesus, to help in His reign over the world of the future. (Heb. 2:5) The privilege to reign and the right to rule is a major motivation for Christians to endure whatever difficulties they may experience in this present world. (Revelation 2:26)

The book of Hebrews speaks to this truth in a variety of places, but the key

theological point to realize is that the world of the future is not to be ruled by angels but by men. Hebrews 2:5 and 12:19 speaks of this future world. G.H. Lang captures this thought quite eloquently as he states:

"In the purpose of God, the world (oikoumene) of the future has not been put under the control of angels, but of men. This is a key thought, the resolving of many obscurities and perplexities which hinder believers from grasping the exact significance of the plans of God and the final and highest outcome of redemption. It is the key to some present enigmas. At present, God is not saving the human race entire and its affairs corporate, but is selecting from it the company that are to rule the universe, superseding the existing government. He is preparing for a complete reorganizing of His entire empire, and is giving to these future rulers the severe training which is indispensable to fitting them for such responsible duties and high dignities. The gospel has not failed, but is fulfilling the purpose God plainly announced, though not the end that many preachers have mistakenly proposed, namely the conversion of the whole race. That general and desirable betterment of this sin cursed earth is in the plans of God, but falls for accomplishment in the next period of the divine programme, not in this age. There is manifest wisdom in a great Leader first training a body of efficient subordinates before seeking to reorganize society at large." - G.H. Lang

This being the case, I write to you men and women who have demonstrated a high degree of loyalty to the King and who have arranged your life so as to honor our Lord. The *Metachoi Memorandum* is meant to provide some encouragement, education, and a touch of exhortation. (Feel free to unsubscribe if you wish!)

Theological Trending

The Free Grace movement has frequently been under the radar and in the back channels of theological debate; but every once in a while we find ourselves over the target taking flak. Recently, Dr. Wayne Grudem has been so moved as to invest his valuable time in attacking the Free Grace Theology. It began in 2013 in a presentation to pastors at a Gospel Coalition conference in Phoenix. It was an attack of Free Grace theology and me. (He mentioned me 13 times in his lecture.) I was in the audience and spoke with him a few days after the talk. I also wrote an 18 page response to his speech. We did talk about it but not too much came of it. He then, a year later, made a presentation to his Sunday school class using most of the previous lecture. (I was only mentioned 7 times.) I spoke to him before and after his presentation as to why he was engaging in this. Not much came of it. I asked the Free Grace Alliance to produce a written response, which it did and it was given to Dr. Grudem with not much response. Then Dr. Grudem made a workshop presentation at the National Evangelical Theological Society meeting following the same material as in the previous talks. (Seven Free Grace theologians and exegetes submitted proposals to the ETS program chairman for presentations at the same conference in order to have an opportunity to respond to Dr. Grudem, but all were turned down. When asked why this happened we were told it was just a coincidence.) Finally there will be released in July a book by Dr. Grudem with the working title, *Free Grace Theology: Five Factors that Diminish the Gospel*. (Crossway Publishing)

In each of Dr. Grudem's presentations the issues included: the nature of persevering faith, the meaning of "saved by faith alone" and the "reformed formula"- the faith that saves is never alone, the grounds of assurance, the role of repentance in conversion and the "miss use" of some passages that result in an improper direction of theological articulation (I John, James 2, Heb. 6,10, John 15, and 2 Cor. 13 - the usual suspects!!)

In all of this there is good news and there is bad news. The bad news is that we are continually being misrepresented and marginalized to many who hear these arguments. The good news is that we must be doing something right that is causing these types of responses. There must be some reason why Dr. Grudem and others would invest their time in responding to us. Perhaps they have recognized we are making a difference. One of the reasons for Dr. Grudem's efforts is that he feels that we put people in danger of thinking they are saved when they are not, and as such we give them false assurance. I assured him that given his doctrine of hard determinism and election, that no one would end up in heaven who was not supposed to be there, and that no one would go to hell that God did not first ordain to do so.

I believe we have a new opportunity to respond to their response. We also have a wonderful opportunity to clarify the issues and not simply be defensive in clarifying our views, but be offensive by challenging some of their exegesis and theological conclusions. Exegesis has always been the hallmark and strength of the Free Grace Movement. It must always be so.

Resources

"But beyond this my son, be warned: the writing of many books is endless and excess devotion to books is wearying to the body." This biblical exhortation from Qoheleth, the preacher traditionally understood to be Solomon, might be problematic to an editor and publisher of books. But let me augment the biblical injunction by suggesting that reading books does not mean endless or excessive devotion to them.

The sacred Scriptures alone are owed that mindset. The role of books concerning theological and biblical studies is a combination that seeks to describe error and defend truth. In order to beware of error, we must be aware of it. The only way to correct bad sight with a corrective lens is to understand the nature of the problem with one's vision.

And so, might I be so bold as to suggest a book you might wish to consider reading. For those who wish to clarify their vision on the theological tensions that exist in the arena of soteriology and perseverance, let me suggest *Covenant and Commandment: Works, Obedience and Faithfulness in the Christian Life* by Bradley Green, Ph.D. (published by IVP in 2014). This is a book in the series *New Studies in Biblical Theology* from NSBT Series Editor, D.A. Carson. This is a good book to gain an understanding of the most up-to-date biblical, theological, and historical arguments regarding justification that is "already" and the final justification that is "not yet." In order to get from the former to the latter, works and obedience are necessary and essential, for each Christian will be judged according to works to determine if their justification is vindicated at the final judgment (Rom. 2). In other words, salvation is "conditioned on works" but initial

justification is not "grounded" in works. Works produce merit, but they are non-meritorious, only confirmation that faith truly worked. In short, it can be said that "future salvation is conditional" and "we are saved by perseverance" in that the only faith that saves contains and maintains perseverance to the end. Let me be clear - Dr. Bradley holds that we are saved by grace alone, through faith alone, in Christ alone, and not by works. **But** he also contends that although works are not the grounds of salvation, they are necessary for salvation.

Dr. Bradley finds a foundational source of support for this view as he enlists the promise of the New Covenant (Ezekiel and Jeremiah) that provides a new power to keep the law. The New Covenant is originally promised to Israel, but finds its fulfillment in the new people of God. Hence, the people of God, the Church, are to expect and experience the power of God through the Holy Spirit and regeneration, resulting in empowerment, ensuring every Christian a life of perseverance, although not meaning perfection in this life. Hence, the title, *Covenant and Commandment: Works, Obedience and Faithfulness in the Christian Life*.

In this monograph, Dr. Green provides some exegetical details, more theological inference from the reformed perspective, and even more evidence from the viewpoint of historical theology and the development of reformed dogma. He enlists the support of the original reformers, Calvin and Luther, the post Westminster reformers, John Owen and Jonathan Edwards, and the recent works of Richard Gavin, Greg Beale, John Piper, and N.T. Wright, all of whom appear to endorse two types of justification: one that is forensic and initial and the other that is a final vindication at the final judgment based upon works. (Rom. 2, 8) All of the aforementioned theologians clearly hold to and state in other works that we are saved by grace alone, through faith alone, in Christ alone, and not by works, and that works are not the grounds of salvation, although they are necessary for salvation to be authenticated. They also declare that future justification, vindication, and salvation is by works or a faith that works, evidenced through perseverance. (This is very similar to the works of Paul Rainbow, Chris Van Landingham, and Alan Stanley.)

It appears that since the Reformation, the reformed church has struggled to reject the Roman Catholic Church dogma of "salvation by faith and works" and has replaced it with a doctrine of "faith that works."

This book will be a review for some and new for others. Due to its length and the fact that you cannot cover all things in one book, by necessity there is much left out at the exegetical level. However, it provides a good theological and historical explanation for the interface of faith and works and the final judgment based on works.

The most noticeable omission of the book, but one that was most certainly designed, is the fact that there is not one reference in text, index, footnote, or bibliography to the views of authors (either classic or contemporary) who would hold to what is called a Free Grace Theology. I assume this is a planned omission due to the limited length and purpose of the book. In fact, I imagine that one of the reasons for the writing of the book was to clarify the reformed view on this topic because of the danger of Neonomianism in reformed circles and the

perceived but unrealized and unsubstantiated danger of antinomianism in Free Grace Theology. I think you will enjoy the book.

Remember the words of Oliver Wendell Holmes, "The man of action has the present, but the thinker commands the future from his study." You men and women, as pastors and teachers, and as Metachoi are to be both, men and women of action and thinkers. Hence, we must demand the time to think and develop the habit of thought.

Now unto Him who is able to keep you from falling, and provide beyond all that you can ask or think - - To Him be Glory and Dominion forever and ever.

Serving Him with you
Until He comes for us,

Fred Chay, Ph.D.
President, Grace Line

Visit our website - www.GraceLine.net

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Grace Line Ministry, 5011 Briar Tree Drive, Dallas, TX 75248

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