

The Biblical Doctrine of Reprobation

Introduction

As we study Biblical Reprobation I confess that this is a very difficult doctrine for many to embrace. I also confess that the grand majority of Particular Baptists have not been high grace supralapsarians, but infralapsarians or sublapsarians. However, while we do not have this doctrine appearing in any of the old Baptist Confessions that I know about, as an independent article, we do have it presented and explained in various articles.

Does this mean that Unconditional Reprobation is not an historic Particular Baptist concept though the minority view? No, no more than the doctrine of the Virgin Birth. Please find a separate article setting forth the Virgin Birth of Christ in any of the historic Particular Baptist Confessions of Faith? What this means is that our Particular Baptist forefathers did not think it was necessary, for whatever reasons, to devote a separate article on either Reprobation or the Virgin Birth of Jesus Christ.

Definition of Terms

By reprobation I mean:

That God, from before of old,

Jude 4 For there are certain men crept in unawares, who were before of old ordained to this condemnation, ungodly men, turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness, and denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ.

has ordained,

Jude 4 For there are certain men crept in unawares, who were before of old ordained to this condemnation, ungodly men, turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness, and denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ.

appointed,

I Peter 2:7 Unto you therefore which believe he is precious: but unto them which be disobedient, the stone which the builders disallowed, the same is made the head of the corner,

8 And a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offence, even to them which stumble at the word, being disobedient: whereunto also they were appointed.

written down, (In the Greek text of Jude 4, porgraphw appears and means to before write down, and has reference to the Decrees of God in my opinion, REP)

Jude 4 For there are certain men crept in unawares, who were before of old pre-written down ordained to this condemnation, ungodly men, turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness, and denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ.

or predestinated, see notes on Jude 4 and I Peter 2:8;

to by-pass leave certain persons, and leave them in their sins,

and in time to manifest them from His own children

2Ti 3:9 But they shall proceed no further: for their folly shall be manifest unto all men, as theirs also was.

1Jo 2:19 They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us: but they went out, that they might be made manifest that they were not all of us.

1Jo 3:10 In this the children of God are manifest, and the children of the devil: whosoever doeth not righteousness is not of God, neither he that loveth not his brother.

by such judicial acts as

blinding them,

Joh 12:40 He hath blinded their eyes, and hardened their heart; that they should not see with their eyes, nor understand with their heart, and be converted, and I should heal them.

Ro 11:7 What then? Israel hath not obtained that which he seeketh for; but the election hath obtained it, and the rest were blinded

2Co 3:14 But their minds were blinded: for until this day remaineth the same vail untaken away in the reading of the old testament; which vail is done away in Christ.

2Co 4:4 In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them.

1Jo 2:11 But he that hateth his brother is in darkness, and walketh in darkness, and knoweth not whither he goeth, because that darkness hath blinded his eyes.

(By comparing the above Scriptures we observe that God blinds by using secondary ways and means. REP)

hardening their hearts,

Romans 9:18 Therefore hath he mercy on whom he will have mercy, and whom he will he hardeneth.

19 Thou wilt say then unto me, Why doth he yet find fault? For who hath resisted his will?

20 Nay but, O man, who art thou that repliest against God? Shall the thing formed say to him that formed it, Why hast thou made me thus?

and sending them strong delusion to believe a lie and to be damned?

2 Thess. 2:11 And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie:

12 That they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness.

I further hold that these persons are called

vessels of wrath,

Romans 9:21 Hath not the potter power over the clay, of the same lump to make one vessel unto honour, and another unto dishonour?

22 What if God, willing to shew his wrath, and to make his power known, endured with much longsuffering the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction:

and God fits them unto destruction.

22 What if God, willing to shew his wrath, and to make his power known, endured with much longsuffering the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction:

I further hold that they are actually called Reprobates:

2Co 13:5 Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves. Know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates?

They are also called the children of the devil and owe their origin to Adam and Eve's production of natural offspring in the fallen state as the devil sows his tares among the wheat.

Matthew 13:25 But while men slept, his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat, and went his way.

26 But when the blade was sprung up, and brought forth fruit, then appeared the tares also.

27 So the servants of the householder came and said unto him, Sir, didst not thou

sow good seed in thy field? from whence then hath it tares?

28 He said unto them, An enemy hath done this. The servants said unto him, Wilt thou then that we go and gather them up?

29 But he said, Nay; lest while ye gather up the tares, ye root up also the wheat with them.

30 Let both grow together until the harvest: and in the time of harvest I will say to the reapers, Gather ye together first the tares, and bind them in bundles to burn them: but gather the wheat into my barn.

36 Then Jesus sent the multitude away, and went into the house: and his disciples came unto him, saying, Declare unto us the parable of the tares of the field.

37 He answered and said unto them, He that soweth the good seed is the Son of man;

38 The field is the world; the good seed are the children of the kingdom; but the tares are the children of the wicked one;

39 The enemy that sowed them is the devil; the harvest is the end of the world; and the reapers are the angels.

1Jo 3:8 He that committeth sin is of the devil; for the devil sinneth from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil.

1Jo 3:10 In this the children of God are manifest, and the children of the devil: whosoever doeth not righteousness is not of God, neither he that loveth not his brother.

They are also called the children of the wicked one:

1Jo 3:12 Not as Cain, who was out of that wicked one, and slew his brother. And wherefore slew he him? Because his own works were evil, and his brother's righteous.

And tares: but the tares are the children of the wicked one;

And Goats: Matthew 25:31 When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory:

32 And before him shall be gathered all nations: and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats:

33 And he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left.

34 Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world:

John 10: 15 As the Father knoweth me, even so know I the Father: and I lay down my life for the sheep.

They were appointed to reject Christ:

I Peter 2:6 Wherefore also it is contained in the scripture, Behold, I lay in Sion a chief corner stone, elect, precious: and he that believeth on him shall not be confounded.

7 Unto you therefore which believe he is precious: but unto them which be disobedient, the stone which the builders disallowed, the same is made the head of the corner,

8 And a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offence, even to them which stumble at the word, being disobedient: whereunto also they were appointed

Disclaimer

I do not hold that God directly created them as fallen and evil, but that He decreed so as to make sure and certain that they would come forth as fallen and evil and have no recovery from this miserable condition. See our notes on The Work's of Daniel Parker.

God does not directly create anything in a fallen and sinful state, but He does indirectly, for God has made all things for Himself, even the wicked for the day of evil.

Pr 16:4 The LORD hath made all things for himself: yea, even the wicked for the day of evil.

Jer 17:17 Be not a terror unto me: thou art my hope in the day of evil.

Jer 17:18 Let them be confounded that persecute me, but let not me be confounded: let them be dismayed, but let not me be dismayed: bring upon them the day of evil, and destroy them with double destruction.

The Place of Adam and Eve and their Natural Offspring is of Both Reprobates and Elect

I further hold that God has permitted them to come forth as wicked through the fall of Adam, and preserves them in their existence, yet rules over them for His own secret purpose and uses them in the evil day.

Prov. 16:9 (16:5C) All of the works of the Lord are done with righteousness; and

the ungodly man is kept for the evil day. LXX

Psa. 76:10 Surely the wrath of man shall praise thee: the remainder of wrath shalt thou restrain.

Reprobates Are As Natural Brute Beasts

I further hold that God has decreed the existence of the reprobates for the purpose of making them as natural brute beasts, made to be taken and destroyed:

2Pe 2:12 But these, as natural brute beasts, made to be taken and destroyed, speak evil of the things that they understand not; and shall utterly perish in their own corruption;

God has Hidden His Truths from Them

Concerning some Jesus said:

Matthew 11:25 At that time Jesus answered and said, I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes.

26 Even so, Father: for so it seemed good in thy sight.

The Testimony of Particular Anabaptist and Baptist History

Some of the historic Particular Baptist Confessions do not devote a separate article on Reprobation, but they do teach this doctrine in the following:

The First London Confession of Faith, edition of 1646, states:

. 3.

God's Decrees, Including Election and Reprobation

God hath decreed in Himself before the world was, concerning all things, whether necessary, accidental, or voluntary, with all the circumstances of them, to work, dispose, and bring about all things according to the counsel of His own will, to His glory: (yet without being the author of sin, or having fellowship with any therein) in which appears His wisdom in disposing all things, unchangeableness, power and faithfulness in accomplishing His decree: and God hath before the foundation of the world foreordained some men to eternal life, through Jesus Christ, to the praise and glory of His grace; leaving the rest in their sin to their just condemnation, to the praise of His justice. Isa. 46.10; Ephes. 1:11; Rom. 11.33. Psa.115:3; and 135:6. Psa. 33:15; I Sam. 10: 9,26; Prov.21:1; Exod. 21:13; Pro. 16:33. Psa. 144; Isa. 45:7; Jer.14:22; Matt. 6:28-30; Col. 1:16,17; Num. 23:19, 10;

Rom. 3:4; Jer. 10:10; Eph. 1:4,5; Jude 4,6; Pro. 16:4.

.5.

God's Providence.

God in His infinite power, and wisdom, doth dispose all things to the end for which they were created, that neither good nor evil befalls any by chance, or without His providence; and that whatsoever befalls the elect, is by His appointment, for His glory, and their good.

Job 37:10-13. Isa. 56:10,11; Eccles. 3:14. Matt. 10:29-32; Exod. 21:13; Prov. 16:33. Rom. 8:28.

The Second London Confession of 1677, (the first edition of the Second London Confession of Faith-REP) stated:

C H A P. 3.

Of God's Decree

1. GOD hath (Isa. 46.20. Eph. 1.11. Heb. 6.17. Rom. 9.15, 18) Decreed in himself from all Eternity, by the most wise and holy Counsel of his own will, freely and unchangeably, all things whatsoever comes to pass; yet so as thereby is God neither the author of sin, (Jam. 1.15, 17. 1 John 1.5) nor hath fellowship with any therein, nor is violence offered to the will of the Creature, nor yet is the liberty, or contingency of second causes taken away, but rather (Acts. 4.27, 28. John 19.11) established, in which appears his wisdom in disposing all things, and power, and faithfulness (Num. 23.19. Eph. 1.3-5) in accomplishing his Decree.

2. Although God knows whatsoever may, or can come to pass upon all (Acts 15.18) supposed conditions; yet hath he not decreed any thing, (Rom. 9.11, 13, 16, 18) because he foresaw it as future, or as that which would come to pass upon such conditions.

3. By the decree of God for the manifestation of his glory (1 Tim. 5.21. Matt. 25.41) some men and Angels, are predestinated, or fore-ordained to Eternal Life, through Jesus Christ to the (Eph. 1.5, 6) praise of his glorious grace; others being left to act in their sin to their (Tom. 9.22, 23. Jude 4) just condemnation, to the praise of his glorious justice.

4. These Angels and Men thus predestinated, and fore-ordained, are particularly, and unchangeably designed, and their (2 Tim. 2.19. John 13.18) number so certain, and definite, that it cannot be either increased, or diminished.

5. Thos of mankind (Eph. 1.4, 9, 11. Rom. 8.30. 2 Tim. 1.9. 1 Thes. 5.9) that are predestinated to life, God before the foundation of the world was laid, according to his eternal and immutable purpose, and the secret Counsel and good pleasure of

his will, hath chosen in Christ unto everlasting glory, out of his mere free grace and love; (Rom. 9.13, 16. Eph. 1.6, 12) without any other thing in the creature as a condition or cause moving him thereunto.

6. As God hath appointed the Elect unto glory, so he hath by the eternal and most free purpose of his will, fore-ordained (1 Pet. 1.2. 2 Thes. 2.13) all the means thereunto, wherefore they who are elected, being fallen in Adam, (1 Thes. 5.9, 10) are redeemed by Christ, are effectually (Rom. 8.30) called unto faith in Christ, by his spirit working in due season, are justified, adopted, sanctified, and kept by his power through faith (1 Pet. 1.5) unto salvation; neither are any other redeemed by Christ, or effectually called, justified, adopted, sanctified, and saved, but the Elect (John 10.26. John 17.9 John 6.64) only.

7. The Doctrine of this high mystery of predestination, is to be handled with special prudence, and care; that men attending the will of God revealed in his word, and yielding obedience thereunto, may from the certainty of their effectual vocation, be assured of their (1 Thes. 4.5. 2 Pet. 1.10) eternal election; so shall this doctrine afford matter (Eph. 1.6. Rom. 11.33) of praise, reverence, and admiration of God, and (Rom. 11.5, 6) of humility, diligence, and abundant (Luke 10.20) consolation, to all that sincerely obey the Gospel.

C H A P. 4.

Of Divine Providence

1. GOD the Creator of all things, in his infinite power, and wisdom, doth (Heb. 1.3. Job 38.11. Isa.46.10, 11. Psalm 135.6) uphold, direct, dispose, and govern all Creatures, and things from the greatest even to the (Mat. 10.29-31) least, by his most wise and holy providence, to the end for the which they were Created; according unto his infallible foreknowledge, and the free and immutable Counsel of his (Eph. 1.11) own will; to the praise of the glory of his wisdom, power, justice, infinite goodness and mercy.

2. Although in relation to the foreknowledge and Decree of God, the first cause, all things come to pass (Act 2.23) immutably and infallibly so that there is not any thing, befalls any (Pro. 16.33) by chance, or without his Providence; yet by the same Providence he orders them to fall out, according to the nature of second causes, either (Gen. 8.22) necessarily, freely, or contingently.

3. God in his ordinary Providence (Acts 27.31, 44. Isa. 55.10, 11) maketh use of means; yet is free (Hosea 1.7) to work, without (Rom. 4.19-21) above, and (Dan. 3.27) against them at his pleasure.

4. The Almighty power, unreachable wisdom, and infinite goodness of God, so far manifest themselves in his Providence, that his determinate Counsel (Rom.11.32-34. 2 Sam. 24.1. 1 Chron. 21.1) extends it self even to the first fall, and all other sinful actions both of Angels and Men; (and that not by a bare

permission) which also he most wisely and powerfully (2 Kings 19.28. Psalm 76.10) bounds, and otherwise orders, and governs, in a manifold dispensation to his most holy (Gen. 50.20. Isa. 10.6, 7, 12) ends: yet so, as the sinfulness of their acts proceeds only from the Creatures, and not from God; who being most holy and righteous, neither is nor can be, the author or (Psalm 50.21. 1 John 2.16) approver of sin.

5. The most wise, righteous, and gracious God, doth oftentimes, leave for a season, his own children to manifold temptations, and the corruptions of their own heart, to chastise them for their former sins, or to discover unto them the hidden strength of corruption, and deceitfulness of their hearts, (2 Chron. 32.25, 26, 31. 2 Sam. 24.1. 2 Cor. 12.7-9) that they may be humbled; and to raise them to a more close, and constant dependence for their support, upon himself; and to make them more watchful against all future occasions of sin, and for other just and holy ends. So that whatsoever befalls any of his elect is by his appointment, for his glory, (Rom.8.28) and their good.

6. As for those wicked and ungodly men, whom God as a righteous judge, for former sin doth (Rom 1.24, 26, 28. & 11.7, 8.) blind and harden; from them he not only withhold his (Deut. 29.4) Grace, whereby they might have been enlightened in their understanding, and wrought upon in their hearts: But sometimes also withdraws (Mat. 13.12) the gifts which they had, and exposes them to such (Deut. 2.30. 2 King. 8.12, 13) objects as their corruptions makes occasion of sin; and withal (Psalm 81.11,12. 2 Thes. 2.10-12) gives them over to their own lusts, the temptations of the world, and the power of Satan, whereby it comes to pass, that they (Exod. 8.15, 32. Isa. 6.9, 10. 1 Pet. 2.7, 8) harden themselves, even under those means which God uses for the softening of others.

7. As the Providence of God doth in general reach to all Creatures, so after a most special manner it takes care of his (1 Tim. 4.10. Amos 9.8, 9. Isa. 43.3-5) Church, and disposes of all things to the good thereof.

A special thanks to Brother John O'Brien for his placing this old Confession into MS Word.

In the 1677 Confession Article 32 deals with The last Judgment and states:

2. The end of God's appointing this Day, is for the manifestation of the glory of his Mercy, in the Eternal Salvation of the Elect; (Rom. 9.22, 23) and of his Justice in the Eternal damnation of the Reprobate, who are wicked and disobedient; for then shall the Righteous go into Everlasting Life, and receive that fullness of Joy, and Glory, with everlasting reward, in the presence (Matt. 25.21, 34, 2 Tim. 4.8) of the Lord: but the wicked who know not God, and obey not the Gospel of Jesus Christ, shall be cast into Eternal torments, and (Matt. 25.46, Mark 9.48, 2 Thess. 1.7-10) punished with everlasting destruction, from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power.

When we produce a work that properly joins together the First London Confession of Faith, edition of 1646, with the Second London Confession of Faith, edition of 1677, we shall have an excellent presentation of Biblical and Baptistic Theology.

For further comments on Biblical and Baptistic Theology please see Dr. James S. McDowell's Two Confessions, Why? Dr. McDowell gives us a very interesting and valuable historical background of the Second London Confession and further demonstrates the superiority of the First London Confession on Ecclesiology.

William Style's A MANUAL OF FAITH AND PRACTICE Designed for Young and Enquiring Christians BY WILLIAM JEYES STYLES, First Edition: Second Issue, London: Printed by J. Briscoe, Banner Street, Finsbury, E.C.; And Published by Robert Banks & Son, Racquet Court, Fleet Street; J. Parnell. 7Trigon Road, Clapham, W.W. 1897. You may locate this work on Brother Leroy's Site, <http://www.mountzionpbc.org/>.

The High Grace Anabaptists

Williams, in his Radical Reformation, distinguishes between the High Grace Anabaptists and the others. He concludes that many of the Anabaptists believes in what is called Double Predestination, or election and reprobation. Here are some of his remarks:

Predestination Anabaptists in the 1,500s, 2

THE PREDESTERIAN ANABAPTISTS

From study of Williams' The Radical Reformation, I have concluded the following points:

1. The majority of the Northern Anabaptists, those not in Italy, Spain and France, differed greatly from the Protestants on the doctrine of Predestination.
2. The majority of the Southern Anabaptists, those in Italy, Spain and France, differed greatly from the Papacy and held basically to the same doctrines about the Bondage of the Will and Double Predestination as the Protestant Reformers. There were variations in both of these groupings

with different attitudes towards the Bondage of the Will.

3. Melchior Hoffman believed in the Predestination of the elect, but not double predestination, that is Reprobation. I believe I am correct on this point. He also held that in the New Birth or Regeneration the elect received a free will. Hoffman was from the Northern Anabaptists.

4. Melchior Hoffman published a work on Prophecy called Exposition of the

12th Chapter of Daniel. In this he dealt with the final 7 years of the world, Williams, page 623.

5.

If there was any futurism and pre-tribism in those days it may have been in this work.

6. The Northern Anabaptists held to free will, some to free will to come to Christ in the natural state. Other Northerners denied this and held to free will only after regeneration.

7. The Southern Anabaptists seemed to deny this and would fall among the Absoluters of today in America. The Northerners seemed to deny and react against the Protestant idea of the bondage of the will even after regeneration. Mostly they affirmed that after regeneration, they could make their own choices as to baptism, church membership, marriage and true Christian holiness. The Protestants seemed to deny this.

8. The Anabaptists seemed to reject the Papal and Protestant ideas of the Nicene Trinity. Some of the extreme Southern and Northern Anabaptists embraced full Unitarianism, but these were a radical minority. However, the Papists and Protestants persisted in calling them all Anti-Trinitarians because they rejected the Nicene, Papal and Protestants concepts of the Trinity.

9. Many, if not most, of the Polish speaking Anabaptists were Predestinationists, page 1274. These would, of course, except the Unitarians and Socinians.

10. Many, if not most of the Italian, (also Spanish and French) speaking Anabaptists were Predestinationists, page 1275.

11. Good review of the Waldenses and the Italian-French Anabaptists, page 814.

12. Master Anthony Marangone is the first Italian Anabaptist of whom the name and particulars survived page 818.

13. John and Alphonse Valdes also consider as Italian Anabaptists, pages 819-834.

14. Peter Carneseccchi, an Italian Anabaptist, was beheaded in 1567, page 834.

15. Very good account of the Waldenses, pages 812-814. In this account there is a friendly debate between two young Waldensian barbs to be on the issue of the Bondage of the Will and Predestination. The Arminain grabbed an expensive bowl and dashed it to the flour. He said, see there, I have proven that I can act of my own choice. The other, a Predesterian said, yes, you can choose evil and do evil, now put the pieces back together. Only God can do Good.

16. The Predestination Anabaptists came from the NON-PROTESTANTIZED Waldenses, pages 945 and 805.

17. Here is Williams' summation of the three main groups of Anabaptists:

a. The Italian-French Anabaptists were characterized by the doctrine of Predestination;

b. The German Spiritualists (later would be called Quakers) by the doctrine of the inner Word;

c. The German Anabaptists maintained the removal of original sin and guilt on Calvary, page 948.

16. John De Ries, 1553-1638, may be an example of the mild Calvinists. He was a main writer and mover behind what is known as The First Waterlander Confession, Sept. 1577. There is no known copy of this first confession, page 1189. There is no double predestination, very hazy comments on election and predestination. The chapter or part on Regeneration seems to be very good and reflects the Biblical position on the bondage of the will of the natural man and his inability to come to Christ before and without regeneration.

17. The First Waterlander Confession came forth in an effort to reconcile several parties in that location who held to the differing concepts among the Anabaptists.

18. The final article sets forth the historic gospel-mill position. The Waterlanders sought to be a compromising group in an effort to bring about unity, so it seems, page 1189.

19. Here are some of the Polish speaking Predestination Anabaptists:

a. Gonesius;

b. Czechowic;

c. Gregory Paul, page 1275; also chapter 25.4.

20. Here are some of the Italian Predestination Anabaptists. Pages 840-844.

21. Camillo Renato had many followers, page 844.

22. Very good info on pages 849-851.

23. He is considered as the main leader of the Predesterian Anabaptists of Italy and the Southern Territories.

24. In the Northern Groups in Strasburg and Worms there was a debate between the Predesterians, Wolfgame Capito and Martin Cellarius on one side, with John Denick and Louis Haetzer, none-Predesterians, on the other side. They discussed several issues including Predestination. They agreed to disagree in a friendly and respectful manner, page 260.

25. However, we must remember that even men like Denick maintained a mild form of Predestination.

I am just now beginning my studies of these Southern Anabaptists and their

doctrines and works. Williams informs us that these sources are not yet catalogued, published and investigated. Therefore, it would seem that this is a new frontier for us all to investigate. I assume that these works will not be in German, but in Spanish, Italian and French.

For further information on Unconditional, Personal Reprobation, please consider the works of John Brine, John Gill and James P Boyce and many other Particular Baptist writers.

Summation Remarks

I further hold that we cannot be certain of the state of any who appear to be reprobates in this present life, for they who appear now to be reprobates, may be called to Christ later and manifest themselves as the elect of God.

I further hold that those who are reprobates have been made like unto natural brute beasts, that is, God has made them to be taken and

destroyed.

I further hold that many of the Jews and others, who rejected Christ, were reprobates and God did appoint them to reject Christ and stumble at Him. If they remained in this condition until their death, and had no recovery, I hold that they died in their sins and went to eternal punishment rather than to eternal happiness and glory.

I further hold that God is not passive concerning the reprobates but rather performs certain acts unto them in a judicial manner, causing them to reject Christ and not believe on Him, and by these actions, God causes the reprobates to be distinguished and manifested from His elect.

I further hold that the majority of the human race are reprobates or vessels of wrath fitted unto destruction. These make manifest their reprobation when they live in rejection of Jesus Christ, follow the antichrist system, and die in unbelief.

Rev. 17:8 And all that dwell upon the earth shall worship him, whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world.

Rev. 17:8 The beast that thou sawest was, and is not; and shall ascend out of the bottomless pit, and go into perdition: and they that dwell on the earth shall wonder, whose names were not written in the book of life from the foundation of the world, when they behold the beast that was, and is not, and yet is.

Re 13:4 And they worshipped the dragon which gave power unto the beast: and they worshipped the beast, saying, Who is like unto the beast? who is able to make war with him?

Re 17:13 These have one mind, and shall give their power and strength unto the beast.

Re 17:17 For God hath put in their hearts to fulfil his will, and to agree, and give their kingdom unto the beast, until the words of God shall be fulfilled.

However, I also believe that Christ rules over these reprobates and uses them for His own purpose and the benefits of His own people.

.19.

Christ As A King over His Elect in their Effectual Calling, Conversion and
Maintainance Stated, and His Power in

Governing all Creation Explained.

Concerning His kingly office, Christ being risen from the dead, and ascended into heaven, and having all power in heaven and earth, He doth spiritually govern His

church, and doth exercise His power over all angels, and men, good and bad, to the preservation and salvation of the elect, and to the over-ruling and destruction of His enemies. By this kingly power, He applies the benefits, virtues, and fruits of His prophecy and priesthood to His elect, subduing their sins, preserving and strengthening them in all their conflicts against Satan, the world, and the flesh, keeping their hearts in faith and filial fear by His Spirit: by this His mighty power He ruleth the vessels of wrath, using, limiting, and restraining them as it seems good to His infinite wisdom.

I Cor. 15:4; I Pet. 3:21,22; Matt. 28:18,19; Luke 24:51; Acts 1:2, and 5:30,31; John 20:17; Rom. 14:9; John 5:26, 27; Rom. 5:6, 7, 8, 14, 17; Gal. 5:22,23; Mark 1:27; Heb. 1:14; John 16:15; Job. 1:8; 2:6; Rom. 9:21,17,18; Eph. 4:7,8; 2 Pet. 2:9.

An important issue here also may be...Does God make a distinction between those who are Vessels of Mercy and those who are Vessels of Wrath? Are there ways by which we may discern between the fruits of the reprobates and the fruits of God's elect? I say yes, though not in a final and absolute way for some of those who appear to hate the truth and persecute the church, as Saul, may be called unto Christ and then preach the faith he once tried to destroy..

Does God cause these two differing types of persons to become manifested by their faith in Christ and professed obedience unto Him, or their lack of faith in Christ and their disobedience unto Him? I say yes.