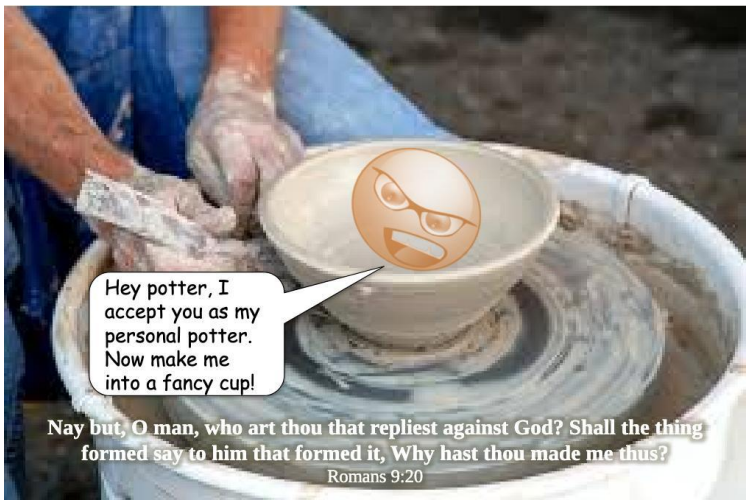
# Who Accepts Whom?

## A Careful Look At The Doctrine Of Predestination




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# INTRODUCTION

This study pertains to issues that are at the heart of the Gospel of God's sovereign grace. The doctrines discussed were preached by the great men of God who sparked the Protestant reformation and others that followed in their footsteps – men such as Martin Luther, Charles Spurgeon and Matthew Henry. But, believe it or not, the Gospel of grace is no longer being accurately presented by many professing Christians nowadays. There are a great many believers today who say they believe that we are saved by God's grace alone but then they present the Gospel in a way that is not by God's grace alone but by the will of man. I know, for I was one of them and I was taught by them. But my prior opinion and perhaps yours, was not based on a deep delving into the Word, but rather a superficial teaching that did not deal with difficult questions, like "Why would God predestine anyone to Hell?" or "Why do I need to witness to anyone if God predestines people to be saved?" or "If Jesus died for the whole world then why did Jesus say that most people go to Hell in Matthew 7:13?". Indeed, how could Christ die for the whole world and also just for those that 'accept' him? Are there no clear answers in God's Word to such questions? Does the Bible contradict itself?

Many Christians today, both true and false Christians, are preaching that to get to Heaven, one must **'accept'** Jesus Christ as their Lord and Saviour as if individuals have any say in their own salvation. But when we look at the related Bible verses, in context, we will see that salvation is entirely of the Lord. It is His doing, from start to finish, and it is marvelous in our eyes. God's plans will not be frustrated by those who are in rebellion against Him. He positively will save whom He pleases, when He pleases. It is all according to His good pleasure without any help, approval, or acceptance from sinful man. Please don't misunderstand, we *must* receive Christ into our hearts, and we *will* receive Him, but only AFTER He draws us and converts us as you will see in the scriptures, as presented below.

# THE SERIOUSNESS OF THIS ISSUE

The doctrines of election and predestination are not to be glossed over or ignored. A true believer must thoroughly understand them in order to accurately present the Gospel of Jesus Christ. We are under the curse of God if we bring any other Gospel than that which Paul preached (Galatians 1:8-9). We must not preach lies. We must not preach things that sound good or seem to make sense when we have not yet searched the scriptures as the Bereans of Acts 17 did. We must also not assume that preachers and pastors are the final authority. The Word of God is a Christian's final authority and nothing else, even if the Word of God teaches something very different than our pastor, Sunday school teacher or some famous preacher on TV or radio.

# A FREE-WILL PRAYER

In this paper, we will show, by comparing scripture with scripture, that salvation is entirely of the Lord, not some kind of cooperative effort between God and man. We will only quote **one** man in this paper, outside of the Bible. The man we will quote is Charles Spurgeon who clearly understood and accurately preached about the doctrines of God's sovereign grace. He is quoted here and only one more time, in the section: "WHAT IS MEANT BY 'ALL', 'THE WORLD', ETC.?". In his sermon "Free Will – A Slave", Spurgeon showed the error in thinking that spiritually dead sinners can 'accept' Christ as their Saviour of their own "free" will. In that sermon, Spurgeon recited a pharisaical prayer in order to illustrate the human pride underlying the idea of unsaved, ungodly rebellious man exercising his "will" to choose Christ:

*"Lord, I thank thee I am not like those poor presumptuous Calvinists. Lord, I was born with a glorious free will; I was born with power by which I can turn to thee of myself; I have improved my grace. If everybody had done the same with their grace that I have, they might all have been saved. Lord, I know thou dost not make us willing if we are not willing ourselves. Thou givest grace to everybody; some do not improve it, but I do. There are many that will go to Hell as much bought with the blood of Christ as I was; they had as much of the Holy Ghost given to them; They had as good a chance, and were as much blessed as I am, It was not thy grace that made us to differ; I know it did a great deal, still I turned the point; I made use of what was given me, and others did not – that is the difference between me and them."*

May the above prayer never be our prayer.

# IS FAITH A WORK?

Is faith some kind of "work" that some one does or can do?  Believe it or not – according to the Bible – the answer is ***yes***:

> 1 Thessalonians 1:3 – "Remembering without ceasing your **work of faith**, and labour of love, and patience of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ, in the sight of God and our Father"

> 2 Thessalonians 1:11 – "Wherefore also we pray always for you, that our God would count you worthy of this calling, and fulfil all the good pleasure of his goodness, and the **work of faith** with power"

Faith is either a work of God or it is work of man.  Now if faith ***is*** a work, and if we are not saved by ***our*** works (as clearly stated in Romans 11:6, Galatians 2:16, Ephesians 2:8&9, Titus 3:5 and elsewhere) then ***whose*** faith saves us?…

# WHERE DOES SAVING FAITH COME FROM?

The Bible even clearly states that FAITH is FROM GOD from start (author) to finish (finisher):

> Hebrews 12:2 – "Looking unto Jesus the **author** and **finisher** of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God."

We may think that we choose God but it is God who gives us the desire to want Him and the faith to be able to trust Him. God is the giver of every aspect of salvation even regarding repentance and faith:

> John 3:27 – "John answered and said, **A man can receive nothing, except it be given him from heaven**."

God has to enable sinners to repent:

> Acts 11:18 – "When they heard these things, they held their peace, and glorified God, saying, Then hath God also to the Gentiles **granted repentance** unto life."

> 2Timothy 2:25 – "In meekness instructing those that oppose themselves; **if God peradventure will give them repentance** to the acknowledging of the truth"

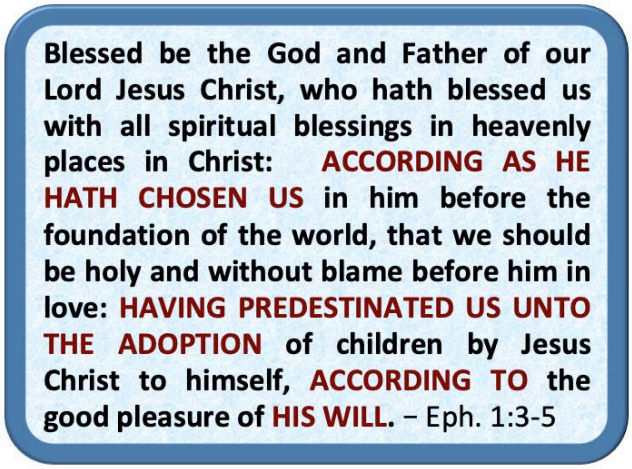
God has to give people faith as a gift so that they can believe on Christ:

> Ephesians 2:8 – "For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: *it is* the **gift** of God"

Regarding salvation, man has absolutely nothing to contribute: "knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked?" (Revelation 3:17).

Until God puts a new heart in us we are just like Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden, who hid from God after they sinned. Until God draws us and converts us, we have no desire for fellowship with Him or His children *on His terms*. Instead we run from Him and His messengers and we consider His commandments burdensome and His Lordship something to be scorned OR we may think we are quite capable of keeping His commandments yet we are

blind to the fact that salvation is by grace alone and that all our feeble attempts to do good are tainted with sin, especially the sin of self-righteousness.




## WHO DOES THE CHOOSING, MAN OR GOD?

Here are some Bible verses that are very clear about this matter of God choosing us – without any approval from us ahead of time:

> John 15:16 – "**Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you**, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit"
>
> John 15:19 – "If ye were of the world, the world would love his own: but because ye are not of the world, but **I have chosen you** out of the world, therefore the world hateth you."
>
> 2 Thessalonians 2:13 – "But we are bound to give thanks alway to God for you, brethren beloved of the Lord, because **God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation** through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth"
>
> Matthew 22:14 – "For many are called, but **few are chosen**."
>
> John 6:44 – "**No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him:** and I will raise him up at the last day."
>
> Psalm 65:4 – "Blessed is the man **whom thou choosest**, and causest to approach unto thee"
>
> Acts 13:48 – "And when the Gentiles heard this, they were glad, and glorified the word of the Lord: and **as many as were ordained to eternal life believed**."
>
> James 1:18 – "**Of his own will begat he us** with the word of truth, that we should be a kind of firstfruits of his creatures."

# CAN OUR WILL OVERPOWER GOD'S WILL?

When we first look at John 1:12 it sure looks like it is we who choose Christ:

> John 1:12 – "But **as many as received him**, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name"

But then, when we look at the next verse, we can no longer draw that conclusion:

> John 1:13 – "Which were born, not of blood, **nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God**."

So we can conclude that in John 1:12, God, by His will, converted people into His sons, thereby enabling them to receive Him and to believe on His name. One who is a child of darkness will certainly not receive Him.

Then when we read the first chapter of Ephesians, all we see are references to God and His will, not our own will:

> Ephesians 1:4 – "According as **he hath chosen us** in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love: 5 **Having predestinated us** unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, **according to the good pleasure of his will**, 6 To the praise of the glory of **his grace**, wherein **he hath made us accepted** in the beloved. 7 In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, **according to the riches of his grace**; 8 Wherein he hath abounded toward us in all wisdom and prudence; 9 Having made known unto us the mystery of **his will**, **according to his good pleasure which he hath purposed in himself**: 10 That in the dispensation of the fulness of times he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; even in him: 11 In whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated **according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will**:"

Romans chapter 9 is a section of the Bible that makes no sense at all if we are to believe that man chooses to accept Christ, of his own free will:

> Romans 9:15 – "For he saith to Moses, **I** have mercy on whom **I** have mercy, and **I** have compassion on whom **I** have compassion. 16 So then **it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but God** that showeth mercy."

Let us not ignore what God has said through the Old Testament prophets either:

> Isaiah 46:10 – "Declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done, saying, My counsel shall stand,

> and **I will do all my pleasure:**"
>
> Daniel 4:35 – "And all the inhabitants of the earth are reputed as nothing: and **he doeth according to his will** in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth: and none can stay his hand, or say unto him, What doest thou?"

# WHO SEEKS WHOM?

Do ANY of the unsaved seek after God?

> Romans 3:11 – "There is none that understandeth, **there is none that seeketh after God**."
>
> Romans 10:20 – "But Esaias is very bold, and saith, **I was found of them that sought me not; I was made manifest unto them that asked not after me**."
>
> Ezekiel 34:11-16 – "11 For thus saith the Lord GOD; Behold, **I, even I, will both search my sheep, and seek them out.** 12 As a shepherd seeketh out his flock in the day that he is among his sheep that are scattered; **so will I seek out my sheep**, and will deliver them out of all places where they have been scattered in the cloudy and dark day. 13 And I will bring them out from the people, and gather them from the countries, and will bring them to their own land, and feed them upon the mountains of Israel by the rivers, and in all the inhabited places of the country. 14 I will feed them in a good pasture, and upon the high mountains of Israel shall their fold be: there shall they lie in a good fold, and in a fat pasture shall they feed upon the mountains of Israel. 15 I will feed my flock, and I will cause them to lie down, saith the Lord GOD. 16 **I will seek that which was lost**, and bring again that which was driven away, and will bind up that which was broken, and will strengthen that which was sick: but I will destroy the fat and the strong; I will feed them with judgment."
>
> Luke 19:10 – "**For the Son of man is come to seek** and to save that which was lost."

Note that God seeks us – we don't seek him, because when we are unsaved we don't even know that we are lost (see Romans 3:11 and 10:20 above). Once God shows us that we are hopelessly lost Hell-deserving sinners, we can cry out to Him to have mercy on our lost soul and to save us from the wrath of God. It is this recognition of one's sinnership and God's holiness that occurs at salvation, when God opens our spiritual eyes as He did with Isaiah:

> Isaiah 6:5 – "Then said I, Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips: for **mine eyes have seen the King**, the LORD of hosts."

The only way that Isaiah could see the Lord's holiness and his own sinfulness was if God reached out and gave him the ability to see:

> John 9:39 – "And Jesus said, For judgment I am come into this world, **that they which see not might see**; and that they which see might be made blind."

Similarly, if God does not want someone to be saved or if it is not His time for them to be saved, they will not see the kingdom of God… their spiritual eyes will not be opened:

> Romans 11:7-8 – "7 What then? Israel hath not obtained that which he seeketh for; but the election hath obtained it, and the rest were blinded 8 (According as it is written, **God hath given them the spirit of slumber, eyes that they should not see**, and ears that they should not hear;) unto this day."

We cannot manipulate God and make Him save us just because we say a sinner's prayer in which we 'accept' Christ as our Saviour. As spiritually blind sinners, we are entirely at the mercy of God to seek us out (Luke 19:10) and to heal us of our spiritual blindness:

> Matthew 20:30 – "And, behold, two blind men sitting by the way side, when they heard that Jesus passed by, cried out, saying, **Have mercy on us**, O Lord, *thou* Son of David."

God certainly causes a person to care about their sins, just as He enabled the two blind men mentioned above, to have faith in Christ to heal them. However, God saves people in His time and in His way. The two blind men in Matthew 20 were healed by the Lord's touch. The blind man in John 9 was healed by the Lord making clay by spitting on the ground. In either case, these three men would never have been healed if it were not for the Lord coming their way and granting them healing. And so it is with salvation. God must send the workers out into the harvest field, and He must give them the Word to preach and He must bring conviction of sin and conversion of the heart.

## IS NOT SALVATION <u>ALL BY GOD'S GRACE AND HIS POWER</u>?

> Romans 5:6 – "For when **we were yet without strength**, in due time Christ died for the ungodly."

There are many people today who think they are truly saved and truly right with God because some well-meaning Christian told them to say a sinner's prayer and if **they** really meant it, they would be saved on the spot (regardless of what God had to say about the issue). A person might sincerely say a prayer to accept Christ (on his or her own terms) but never intend to forsake their

sins because the Holy Spirit has not yet convicted them of their sins (and may never convict them of their sins).

Whether we want to admit it or not, the act of accepting Christ is a 'work' because it is something that man does that he can take credit for and this kind of thing cannot happen in God's plan of salvation because He has declared that no one will be able to glory before Him (Romans 4:2). Also, as all true Christians should know (even those that preach that unsaved man has a free will) – salvation is "not of works lest any man should boast" (Ephesians 2:9). It is a gift that no unsaved sinner wants as Paul pointed out in Romans 3:11 where he wrote that *none seeketh after God*. The old man does not want to accept Jesus – the real Jesus – on God's terms. He wants to be his own lord and master:

> Isaiah 53:6 – "All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to **his own way"**

Only God can change us into a creature that is willing to submit to Christ's Lordship:

> 2 Corinthians 5:17 – "Therefore if any man be in Christ, **he is a new creature**: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new."

It is this new creature that accepts Christ's lordship. The old creature is at war with God:

> Romans 8:7 – "Because **the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be**. 8 So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God. 9 But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you."

Romans 8:8 plainly states that an unsaved person *cannot* please God and so they cannot accept Christ as their Saviour and Lord because they have not the will or the desire to do anything that would please God. God must FIRST put His Spirit in us so we will want to know Him, trust Him and please Him.

# DOES GOD PREDESTINE PEOPLE BASED ON HIS FOREKNOWLEDGE?

Many Christians are told that God has looked into the future to see who would "accept Christ" and therefore those people are the ones whom God has predestined to be saved. Where is this idea stated in the Bible? This idea is a false doctrine, perhaps based on a misunderstanding of scriptures like Romans 8:29 and Romans 11:2. After the fall of Adam, if God ever looked forward in time, the only thing He saw was this:

> Genesis 6:5 – "And **GOD saw** that the wickedness of man *was* great in the

> earth, and *that* every imagination of the thoughts of his heart *was* only evil continually."

If we look at Romans 8:29 and Romans 11:2 in context, we will see plenty of evidence for election by God's sovereign grace and zero evidence for that election being based on God looking into the future and seeing people accepting Christ:

> Romans 8:28-33 – "28 And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to **them who are the called** according to his purpose. 29 For **whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate** to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren. 30 Moreover **whom he did predestinate, them he also called**: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified. 31 What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us? 32 He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things? 33 Who shall lay any thing to the charge of **God's elect**? It is God that justifieth."

God foreknew that there were none that seeketh after God (Romans 3:11) and knowing that, He had no choice but to call people out of the world if He was going to have a people for Himself. God does the electing. Sinners do no elect themselves to be saved by choosing Christ or by repenting or by anything else they DO.

> Romans 11:2-8 – "2 God hath not cast away **his people** which **he foreknew**. Wot ye not what the scripture saith of Elias? how he maketh intercession to God against Israel, saying, 3 Lord, they have killed thy prophets, and digged down thine altars; and I am left alone, and they seek my life. 4 But what saith the answer of God unto him? **I have reserved to myself** seven thousand men, who have not bowed the knee to the image of Baal. 5 Even so then at this present time also there is **a remnant according to the election of grace**. 6 And if by grace, then is it no more of works: otherwise grace is no more grace. But if it be of works, then is it no more grace: otherwise work is no more work. 7 What then? Israel hath not obtained that which he seeketh for; but the election hath obtained it, and **the rest were blinded** 8 (According as it is written, **God hath given them the spirit of slumber, eyes that they should not see, and ears that they should not hear** unto this day."

Note in verse 5 above, that election is according to grace, NOT according to foreknowledge. If it was according to God's foreknowledge of our acceptance of Christ, it would be according to works and not according to grace. Note also in verse 7 that God blinded the rest. He did not intend for the rest to be saved, only His elect. Does that sound unfair? Remember, "who hath known the mind of the Lord, that he may instruct him?" (1 Cor. 2:16) and also "The LORD hath made all *things* for himself: yea, even the wicked for the day of evil." (Prov. 16:4). Also, if God were to be FAIR, everyone would end up in

hell.

If God looked down the corridors of time and "elected" those he foreknew would "accept" or "choose" him then man would have to be better than God says he is, i.e. dead (Eph 2:1). You would therefore have to concede that there is some good in man that is capable in his own strength to choose God. If God elected people the way that is suggested by Arminians/free-willers then no one would come to Christ because God would have found no one in the future that would have the ability to choose him. Unless the carnal (unsaved) man is not as dead as God says he is, God MUST (absolutely needs to) FIRST regenerate the soul of man to heed the call of the Holy Spirit and respond, which is why the raising of Lazarus from the dead is such an apropos picture of salvation. Lazarus could not come out of the grave and REPSPOND TO the cry "Lazarus come forth!" UNTIL Christ had first raised him from the dead.

## GOD FIRST OPENS A PERSON'S HEART

> Acts 16:14 – "And a certain woman named Lydia, a seller of purple, of the city of Thyatira, which worshipped God, heard us: **whose heart the Lord opened**, that she attended unto the things which were spoken of Paul."
>
> Ezekiel 36:26-27 – "26 A new heart also **will I** give you, and a new spirit **will I** put within you: and **I will** take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and **I will** give you an heart of flesh. 27 And **I will** put my spirit within you, **and cause you to walk in my statutes**, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them."

Note how many times God says "I will" or "will I" in the 2 verses from Ezekiel 36 above, because "Salvation is of the Lord" (Jonah 2:9). All *we* can **do** is praise God when *He* saves us. God will cause us to walk in His statutes *after* He puts His Spirit in us. And so we can see from scripture that it is the new heart, the heart of flesh, that accepts Christ and His Lordship, NOT the heart of stone!

## WHAT ABOUT THE LIFE-PRESERVER ANALOGY?

Have you been told that the salvation process is analogous to a man drowning? The rescuer (i.e. God the Father) throws the drowning man a life-preserver (God the Son – Christ) but the man must do 'his part' to be rescued. He must reach out and take the life-preserver in order to be saved, or in other words, he must 'accept' Christ after hearing the Gospel. This analogy has a huge flaw to it. How does a dead man grab a life-preserver? According to the Word of God, fallen men are not drowning – they have already drowned – they are dead (spiritually) and at the bottom of the ocean:

> Matthew 8:22 – "But Jesus said unto him, Follow me; **and let the dead bury their dead**."

> Romans 11:15 – “For if the casting away of them *be* the reconciling of the world, what *shall* the receiving *of them be*, but **life from the dead**?”
>
> John 11:25 – “Jesus said unto her, I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, **though he were dead, yet shall he live** “
>
> Luke 15:24 – “For this **my son was dead, and is alive again**; he was lost, and is found. And they began to be merry.”

## DO THE DEAD HAVE ANY PART IN RAISING THEMSELVES?

Jesus physically raised Lazarus from the dead without any help or even any initiative or free will on the part of Lazarus (See John 11:43). Lazarus could not come to Jesus until he became physically alive again. Likewise, spiritual life must be imparted to a person before they will want to come to God:

> Colossians 2:13 – “And you, **being dead in your sins** and the uncircumcision of your flesh, **hath he quickened** [made alive] together with him, having forgiven you all trespasses”

## WHO HAD OR HAS A FREE WILL?

Adam and Eve had free will, a will capable of obeying God, until they sinned and became cursed with spiritual death, severing their relationship to God. They then became immediately reprobate just like all their offspring are at birth. This was evidenced by the fact that they hid from God and they started blaming others for their sin rather then confessing their sin and seeking forgiveness from God. True Christians, indwelt by the Holy Spirit, have the power and desire (i.e. the will) to accept Christ’s Lordship, to keep God’s laws: “For it is God which worketh in you both **to will and to do** of his good pleasure.” (Philippians 2:13). True believers not only have the power to keep God’s laws but they take joy in pleasing God: “I delight to do thy will, O my God: yea, thy law is within my heart.” (Psalm 40:8). Reprobate mankind has no such joy: “it is abomination to fools to depart from evil” (Proverbs 13:19).

## WHAT KIND OF WILL IS MAN BORN WITH?

The Bible declares that man is born with a predisposition – a will – to sin:

> Psalm 58:3 – “The wicked are estranged from the womb: they go astray as soon as they be born, speaking lies.”

Children go astray as soon as they are born. They do not need to be taught sin. It is their nature to sin. That is curse of Adam. It was a most horrible curse. It is like a disease, a moral contamination, that is passed on from

generation to generation. It has affected every one of Adam's descendants:

> Romans 5:12,18,19 – "12 Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned … 18 Therefore as by the offence of one *judgment came* upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of one *the free gift came* upon all men unto justification of life. … 19 For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous."

But you say, "That is not fair. Why should I have to suffer for the sin of Adam?". Who are you to tell an infinitely holy and infinitely intelligent God what is fair and what is not fair? Likewise, was it fair that a sinless Saviour had to be brutally beaten and then crucified and forsaken by God to purchase salvation for fallen mankind, lifelong rebels against His commandments? No, it was not fair. It was grace, amazing grace.

**The very fact that man does not think God is fair, is confirmation that man is corrupt, because he has the idea that his Creator is defective in some way.**

Should you not rather assume that God is right and you, with your puny, imperfect (i.e. sin-contaminated) brain, just don't understand the Almighty?

Here is further biblical confirmation that unsaved man is not free to choose what is right. He has a will indeed, a will that is certainly free to commit any and all kinds of sins and a will that delights in doing just that. **Man's will is a will that is in bondage to sin**, a will that only Christ can set free:

> John 8:31-36 – "31 Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on him, If ye continue in my word, *then* are ye my disciples indeed; 32 And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you **free**. 33 They answered him, We be Abraham's seed, and were never in bondage to any man: how sayest thou, Ye shall be made **free**? 34 Jesus answered them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, **Whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin**. 35 And the servant abideth not in the house for ever: *but* the Son abideth ever. 36 If the Son therefore shall make you **free**, ye shall be **free** indeed."

Let us who name the name of Christ not be like the Pharisees who protested against Christ's declaration that they were in bondage to sin (John 8:33). Let us just humbly and honestly admit that such is the state of unsaved man, precisely as scripture proclaims. Indeed if we are reluctant to admit the total depravity of man, we need to examine ourselves to see if we are "in the faith" (really and truly saved).

## CAN WE GIVE BIRTH TO OURSELVES?

> John 3:3 – "Except a man be **born again**, he cannot see the kingdom of

> God."

We have about as much to contribute towards our spiritual birth as we had with our physical birth. God is the potter. We are the clay. *He* makes *us* **without our help**:

> 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?"

> Jeremiah 18:3-6 – "3 Then I went down to the potter's house, and, behold, he wrought a work on the wheels. 4 And the vessel that he made of clay was marred in the hand of the potter: so he made it again another vessel, as seemed good to the potter to make *it*. 5 Then the word of the LORD came to me, saying, 6 O house of Israel, **cannot I do with you as this potter**? saith the LORD. Behold, as the clay *is* in the potter's hand, so *are* ye in mine hand, O house of Israel."

God is not sitting around somewhere waiting and hoping for sinful man to accept him. Christians are God's people because God makes them His people, His sheep:

> Psalm 100:3 – "Know ye that the LORD he *is* God: **it is he that hath made us**, and **not we ourselves**; we are his people, and the sheep of his pasture."

## ARE PEOPLE SAVED AGAINST THEIR OWN WILL?

Nothing is too difficult for God. He is capable of saving people *in spite of* their own will, as it was with the apostle Paul who was quite busy going about his work of persecuting Christians when God decided it was time to convert Saul to Paul on the road to Damascus. Luke describes what happened to Paul in Acts chapter 22:

> Acts 22:4-14 – "4 And **I persecuted this way unto the death**, binding and delivering into prisons both men and women. 5 As also the high priest doth bear me witness, and all the estate of the elders: from whom also I received letters unto the brethren, and went to Damascus, to bring them which were there bound unto Jerusalem, for to be punished. 6 And it came to pass, that, as I made my journey, and was come nigh unto Damascus about noon, suddenly there shone from heaven a great light round about me. 7 And I fell unto the ground, and heard a voice saying unto me, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me? 8 And I answered, Who art thou, Lord? And he said unto me, I am Jesus of Nazareth, whom thou persecutest. 9 And they that were with me saw indeed the light, and were afraid; but they heard not the voice of him that spake to me. 10 And I said, What shall I do, Lord? And the Lord said unto me, Arise, and go into Damascus; and there it shall be told thee of all things which are

> appointed for thee to do. 11 And when I could not see for the glory of that light, being led by the hand of them that were with me, I came into Damascus. 12 And one Ananias, a devout man according to the law, having a good report of all the Jews which dwelt there, 13 Came unto me, and stood, and said unto me, Brother Saul, receive thy sight. And the same hour I looked up upon him. 14 And he said, **The God of our fathers hath chosen thee**, that thou shouldest know his will, and see that Just One, and shouldest hear the voice of his mouth."

Has God converted you yet? Can you say with assurance that He has chosen you? If not, pray for Him to have mercy on your soul. As God to grant you salvation to enable you to truly repent of your sins.  Cry out to God; plead with Him, to deliver you from the wrath to come. Seek Him today! **Seek Him in the scriptures** for that is where He is found.

So, what kind of a will do the unsaved possess? Not a will to please God:

> Romans 8:8 – "So then they that are in the flesh **cannot please God**."

The Bible has nothing positive to say about unsaved man's ability to do anything pleasing to God:

> Isaiah 59:1-4 – "1 Behold, the LORD'S hand is not shortened, that it cannot save; neither his ear heavy, that it cannot hear: 2 But your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid *his* face from you, that **he will not hear**. 3 For your hands are defiled with blood, and your fingers with iniquity; your lips have spoken lies, your tongue hath muttered perverseness. 4 **None calleth for justice**, nor *any* pleadeth for truth: they trust in vanity, and speak lies; they conceive mischief, and bring forth iniquity."

# CAN A PERSON RESIST GOD'S GRACE?

Do you think in a test of wills, that man can overpower the Almighty? I think not!

> Acts 6:10 – "And **they were not able to resist** the wisdom and the spirit by which he spake.
>
> Romans 9:19 – "Thou wilt say then unto me, Why doth he yet find fault? For **who hath resisted his will?**"
>
> 1Corinthians 3:6 – "I have planted, Apollos watered; but **God gave the increase**."
>
> Galatians 1:15-16 – "15 But when it pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb, and **called me by his grace**, 16 To reveal his Son in me, that I might preach him among the heathen; immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood"

But, you may ask, what about verses like these:

> Acts 7:51 – "Ye stiffnecked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye do always **resist** <496> (5719) the Holy Ghost: as your fathers *did*, so *do* ye."

**496 antipipto** {an-tee-pip'-to} from 473 and 4098 (including its alternate);; v
AV – resist 1; 1
1) to fall upon, run against
2) to be adverse, oppose, strive against

> 2Timothy 3:8 – "Now as Jannes and Jambres withstood Moses, so do these also **resist** <436> (5731) the truth: men of corrupt minds, reprobate concerning the faith."

**436 anthistemi** {anth-is'-tay-mee} from 473 and 2476;; v
AV – resist 9, withstand 5; 14
1) to set one's self against, to withstand, resist, oppose
2) to set against

We must remember that it is the nature of unsaved man to resist God, to fight against Him, to rebel. That is why we need God to transform us into new creatures who do not continually resist God just as God transformed Saul the rebel, who was actively resisting God, into Paul the Apostle:

> Acts 9:5 – "And he said, Who art thou, Lord? And the Lord said, I am Jesus whom thou persecutest: [it is] hard for thee to kick against the pricks."

When we examine this conversion experience in Paul's life we see him at one moment "kicking against the pricks" and then at the next moment he is asking Jesus "what wilt thou have me to do?". God was not at Paul's mercy hoping that Paul would stop persecuting the Church and hoping that Paul would stop resisting the Holy Spirit. It was clearly Paul who was at God's mercy and who was subject to God's will and God's instructions, not the other way around, as we see in Acts 9:6:

> Acts 9:6 – "And **he trembling** and astonished said, Lord, **what wilt thou have me to do**? And the Lord said unto him, Arise, and go into the city, and it shall be told thee what thou must do."

Paul was trembling – he had a fear of the Lord. God had converted him at this point. He was aware of who Christ was and who he had been persecuting and he was now willing and able to do the Lord's bidding and forsake his own previous self-righteous agenda.

# SHEEP VERSUS GOATS

One point that can help us to understand this matter of "who accepts whom" has to do with Bible references to sheep and goats. Here are some related verses: "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**: And

he shall set the **sheep** on his right hand, but the **goats** on the left. 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** … Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels" (Matthew 25:32-34,41).

Was the kingdom prepared for the goats? Not according to scripture.

> Matthew 10:5 – "These twelve Jesus sent forth, and commanded them, saying, Go not into the way of the Gentiles, and into any city of the Samaritans enter ye not: 6 But go rather to the **lost sheep** of the house of Israel."

Note that ***lost* sheep become *found* sheep** but **goats do not become sheep**. Also, lost sheep do not find themselves nor is there ever any mention of them seeking the shepherd, but there is mention of them going astray and going their own way:

> Isaiah 53:6 – "All we **like sheep** have gone astray; **we have turned every one to his own way**; and the LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of **us all**."

Notice that the words "us all" refer back to the sheep, God's elect, as confirmed just two verses later in the same chapter of Isaiah, by the use of the term "my people":

> Isaiah 53:8 – "He was taken from prison and from judgment: and who shall declare his generation? for he was cut off out of the land of the living: **for the transgression of my people** was he stricken."

Note also how it is the shepherd who seeks the sheep and not the other way around:

> Matthew 18:12 – "How think ye? if a man have an hundred sheep, and one of them be gone astray, doth **he** not leave the ninety and nine, and goeth into the mountains, and **seeketh** that which is gone astray?"

## WHAT IS LIMITED ATONEMENT? IS IT SCRIPTURAL?

Limited atonement (also known as Particular Redemption) refers to the fact that Christ's death was not literally for every person ever born or conceived. It was a transaction whereby God paid for the sins of those He came to save and those alone:

> Acts 13:48 – "And when the Gentiles heard this, they were glad, and glorified the word of the Lord: and **as many as were ordained to**

> **eternal life** believed."

"As many as were ordained" is a clear reference to limited atonement, is it not? John 17, verses 2 and 9 indicate the same thing:

> John 17:2 – "As thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to **as many as thou hast given him**."

> John 17:9 – "I pray for them: I pray not for the world, but **for them which thou hast given me**; for they are thine."

## Christ was a ransom for many, but not for all:

> Matthew 20:28 – "Even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life **a ransom for many**."

No one would end up in hell if the ransom for their soul was paid. To do such a thing would violate God's justice. He would not punish both His son and the sinner for the same crimes.

> 1Corinthians 6:20 – "For **ye are bought with a price**: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's."

Are those who were "not ordained" bought with a price? Was the ransom payment on their behalf? No. The ransom was only for "as many as were ordained" and not one more.

## Christ's atonement is limited to God's people:

That group of people whom God ordained to be saved are referred to as HIS people:

> Matthew 1:21 – "And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save **his people** from their sins."

> Psalm 85:2 – "Thou hast forgiven the iniquity of **thy people**, thou hast covered all their sin. Selah."

## God's people are limited to those whom God the Father gives to Christ:

> John 6:37 – "**All that the Father giveth me** shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out."

## Christ's atonement is limited to God's sheep:

The sacrifice of Christ does not apply to the goats (the non-elect). Christ only laid down his life for the sheep:

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

### Christ's atonement was limited to the Church:

> Ephesians 5:25 – "Husbands, love your wives, even as **Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it**"

### Christ's atonement is also limited to those whom He predestinated, whom He called and whom He justified and to no one else:

> Romans 8:30 – "Moreover whom **he did predestinate**, them **he also called**: and whom he called, **them he also justified**: and whom he justified, them he also glorified."

So we see above that Christ did not die for everyone. His death, His atonement, was limited to the elect. They are the only ones who are justified – declared just and righteous – on account of Christ's full payment of their sin debt. Everyone else will have to spend eternity in hell paying for their sins themselves. And no one will be in hell for whom Christ died. His blood was not shed in vain for any man.

## WHAT ABOUT VERSES STATING THAT JESUS DIED FOR ALL MEN?

To further clarify the issue of limited atonement we need to look at what the Bible is referring to when the word 'all' or the term 'the whole world' are used in regards to salvation. Otherwise, we will think there is a contradiction when we look at various scriptures that appear to be saying that Jesus died for every single person in the entire world, even those who do not receive Him.

**Here are many of the verses that seem to say that the sacrifice of Christ was for the sins of everyone (including those who will end up in hell):**

> John 1:7,9 – "The same came for a witness, to bear witness of the Light, that all {pas} *men* through him might believe. *That* was the true Light, which lighteth every man {pas} that cometh into the world {kosmos}."

> John 3:15-16 – "That whosoever {pas} believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life. For God so loved the world {kosmos}, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever {pas} believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life."

> John 6:33, 37, 39, 51 – "For the bread of God is he which cometh down from heaven, and giveth life unto the world {kosmos}. All {pas} that the

> Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out. And this is the Father's will which hath sent me, that of all {pas} which he hath given me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day. I am the living bread which came down from heaven: if any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever: and the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world {kosmos}."
>
> John 12:32 – "And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all {pas}*men* unto me."
>
> 1Timothy 2:4 – "Who will have all {pas} men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth."
>
> 1Timothy 4:10 – "For therefore we both labour and suffer reproach, because we trust in the living God, who is the Saviour of all {pas} men, specially of those that believe."
>
> Hebrews 2:9 – "But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour; that he by the grace of God should taste death for every {pas} man."
>
> 2Peter 3:9 – "The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all {pas} should come to repentance."
>
> 1John 2:2 – "And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for *the sins of* the whole {holos} world {kosmos}."

We will now show that the words "all" and "whole world" can have multiple meanings. This idea of multiple meanings is common in the English language as well as in the Greek. People frequently use expressions in English that are clearly figures of speech or hyperbole – not to be taken literally.

## WHAT IS MEANT BY 'ALL', 'THE WORLD', ETC.?

A great deal of confusion about the issue of man having a free will to receive Christ is caused by the use of the words 'all', 'whosoever' and 'world'. These terms come up in the verses that many people try to use to justify the idea of a 'free' will. We will see that Bible writers use these words to point out, primarily to Jewish believers, that the Gentiles – people of all nations – are now to be included in God's plan of salvation. This idea was something that many of the early Jewish believers did not understand and so the New Testament writers sought to point this out to them repeatedly. Careful examination of scripture verifies this claim:

> Romans 10:13 – "For **whosoever** shall call upon the name of the Lord

> shall be saved."

At first glance this verse looks like anybody and everybody can be saved UNTIL we look at the verse immediately preceding it:

> Romans 10:12 – "For there is no difference between **the Jew and the Greek**: for the same Lord over all is rich unto **all** that call upon him."

That is, God plans to save both Jews AND Gentiles. There are many other verses that can be confusing if taken out of context such as shown here:

> 2 Corinthians 5:15 – "And that **he died for all**, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them, and rose again.

The confusion is cleared up if we read further:

> 2 Corinthians 5:18-19 – "18 And **all things are of God**, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation; 19 To wit, that **God** was in Christ, **reconciling** the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation.

Obviously in verse 19, God was not saying that He would not impute trespasses to anybody at all in the entire world, but rather He had to be speaking of the elect – both Jews and Gentiles. The fact that a verse says "whosoever" or "all" does not negate scriptures like John 6:44 which says that no one can come to Jesus unless the Father draws him or Romans 9:15 which says that God will have mercy on whom He will have mercy. God does not contradict Himself. So when we see a verse like:

> 2Peter 3:9 – "The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, **not willing that any should perish**, but that all should come to repentance."

we know it must mean that God desires that none of **His elect** should perish, especially when we look at the verse in context. Because then we will see that two verses above (i.e. in verse 7), God is planning to destroy ungodly men, which makes verse 9 (i.e. not willing that any should perish) sound like a contradiction to what was stated in verse 7:

> 2Peter 3:7 – "But the heavens and the earth, which are now, by the same word are kept in store, **reserved unto fire** against the day of judgment and perdition of **ungodly men**."

Since God does not contradict Himself, we know that when we read John 3:16:

"For God so loved **the world**, that he gave his only begotten Son, that **whosoever believeth in him** should not perish, but have everlasting life."

the phrase “for God so loved *the world*” must mean that God loves people (His elect) from all nations, a point that is made in Revelation chapter 5:

> Revelation 5:9 – “And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood **out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation**“.

It is also important to note in John 3:16, the ones who will end up “believing in him” are those whom God converts into new creatures in Christ. They won’t believe in one that they don’t yet know.

Charles Spurgeon, in a sermon on particular Redemption, had some additional light to shed on this issue of how words like “all” and “world” are used in scripture:

“… “the **world** has gone after him” (John 12:19). Did all the world go after Christ? “then went **all** Judea, and were baptized of him in Jordan” (Matt 3:5). Was all Judea, or all Jerusalem, baptized in Jordan? “Ye are of God, little children”, and the whole **world** lieth in the wicked one” (1John 5:19). Does the whole world there mean everybody? The words “world” and “all” are used in some seven or eight senses in Scripture, and it is very rarely the “all” means all persons, taken individually. The words are generally used to signify that Christ has redeemed some of all sorts — some Jews, some Gentiles, some rich, some poor, and has not restricted His redemption to either Jew or Gentile …”. [Charles Spurgeon]

# FALSE PREMISES PREVENT PROPER INTERPRETATION

Perhaps the reason many people do not come to proper conclusions about the biblical doctrine of limited atonement is that they conduct their studies with false notions and prejudices and incomplete information. Some of these hindrances to interpretation include:
disregarding certain verses from their study of limited atonement
explaining away verses as being irrelevant or not meaning what they say
assuming that words have only one very narrow meaning no matter what context they are used in
making false assumptions about election, predestination and other doctrines related to limited atonement
having a wrong or incomplete understanding of the attributes of God, primarily His sovereignty
misunderstanding what the Bible means by justification

# WHAT DOES THE BIBLE TEACH ABOUT JUSTIFICATION?

What exactly did Christ accomplish at Calvary? Did He just open the door to

heaven for everyone as Catholicism teaches? Did He make it "possible" for all men to be saved? Was His death a complete payment for the sins of all men even those who will end up in hell? Are men in hell simply for rejecting the gift of salvation that Christ supposedly bought for them or are they in hell because of their sins and because it was not God's plan to have mercy on them? To know the biblical answer to these questions we must determine what the Bible teaches about justification. Did Jesus suffer the exact and complete punishment demanded by God's justice, for each person Christ came to save? What does the Bible say?

> Romans 4:7 – "Saying, Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and **whose sins are covered**."

Can we say that the sins of the goats, the non-elect, are covered? The Bible clearly teaches that the sins of the elect are covered by the precious blood of Christ, that Lamb without spot or blemish. We know that the elect are referred to as "blessed" throughout the Bible (Mat 5:3-10, Rom 4:7&8, Rev 14:14, 16:15, 19:9, 20:6, 22:14).

Where does it teach that the non-elect are covered? The transaction that occurred at Calvary was an act of God's mercy at great expense to God. That act of mercy made peace with God for the elect and the elect alone – those whom God would grant the gift of faith to, at some point in their lives:

> Romans 5:1 – "Therefore being justified by faith, **we have peace with God** through our Lord Jesus Christ"

## We get some more insight into limited atonement in the Old Testament:

> Exodus 12:13 – "And the blood shall be to you for a token upon the houses where ye are: and **when I see the blood, I will pass over you**, and the plague shall not be upon you to destroy you, when I smite the land of Egypt."

Not everyone in Egypt was spared the wrath of God. If Jesus died for everyone then the non-elect cannot go to hell. God says He will pass over those who have the blood of Christ on them… The elect have been washed clean of their sins by the blood of Christ:

> Revelation 1:5 – "And from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, and the first begotten of the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth. Unto him that loved us, and **washed us from our sins in his own blood**"

If Jesus died for everyone, wouldn't He have washed everyone of their sins? Note also that Revelation 1:5 says "him that loved us". Does God love everyone or only the elect?

We see another picture of the atonement in the Old Testament – and revealed in the New Testament:

> Hebrews 7:27 – "Who needeth not daily, as those high priests, to **offer up sacrifice**, first for his own sins, and then **for the people's**: for this he did once, when he offered up himself."

Did the high priest offer up sacrifices for all people of the whole world or just for the people of Israel? There is no biblical evidence that the high priest presented sacrifices for the heathens. Similarly, Christ did not offer up Himself for the non-elect, but rather strictly for the Israel of God – His people, His sheep.
The elect have been redeemed by the blood of Christ:

> Revelation 5:9 – "And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and **hast redeemed us to God by thy blood** out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation"

Have the non-elect been redeemed? What is redemption? Is it not the purchasing of something at a specific price? What is the price of sin? From Romans 6:23 we know that the wages of sin is death – eternal damnation. Is that not the price that Christ had to pay to redeem each of the elect? Could an infinite God suffer the equivalent of eternity in hell for each of the elect in the brief time that He was here on earth? Christ must have paid such a price because that is what Divine justice required. At Calvary there was no room for mercy for Christ. As the scapegoat for the elect, He had to endure the full wrath of God for each person being redeemed – the complete penalty that the elect would have had to pay for their sins.

The Bible says that the elect are **accounted worthy** of eternal life:

> Luke 20:35 – "But they which shall be **accounted worthy** to obtain that world, and the resurrection from the dead, neither marry, nor are given in marriage"

Can the non-elect be accounted worthy? Is a person accounted worthy because of something THEY do? … because THEY exercise THEIR faith in Christ (i.e. by believing in Christ or accepting Christ) OR are they only accounted worthy because of **what Christ did** *specifically for them* at Calvary? So, with this Bible knowledge of the atonement, can we honestly proclaim to all people that Jesus died for them? I think not.

## WHAT ABOUT THE SIN OF UNBELIEF?

Some people who claim that man has a free will to accept Christ are also saying that the only sin that keeps a person out of heaven is the sin of unbelief. That idea probably comes from this verse:

> John 8:24 – "I said therefore unto you, that ye shall die in your sins: for **if ye believe not**."

This verse is certainly true in what it says. But, are we to understand that Jesus died for all the sins of all the people in the world EXCEPT for the sin of unbelief, so that everyone in hell has had ALL their sins paid for by Christ, EXCEPT for the sin of unbelief? Can we get such theology from John 8:24 or similar passages dealing with believing or not believing in Christ? The Bible says that any single sin of any kind will damn a person to hell:

> James 2:10 – "For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and **yet offend in one *point*, he is guilty of all**."

> Isaiah 59:1-4 – "1 Behold, the LORD'S hand is not shortened, that it cannot save; neither his ear heavy, that it cannot hear: 2 But **your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you**, that he will not hear. 3 For your hands are defiled with blood, and your fingers with iniquity; your lips have spoken lies, your tongue hath muttered perverseness. 4 None calleth for justice, nor *any* pleadeth for truth: they trust in vanity, and speak lies; they conceive mischief, and bring forth iniquity."

> Ezekiel 18:4 – "Behold, all souls are mine; as the soul of the father, so also the soul of the son is mine: **the soul that sinneth, it shall die**."

> Romans 6:23 – "For **the wages of sin is death**; but the gift of God *is* eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord."

Note that there is no special mention of the sin of unbelief in the above verses. People who end up in hell will be punished for ALL their sins, not just the sin of unbelief. Believing in Christ is something that all men are commanded to do, yet all men are incapable of doing unless the Father draws them:

> John 6:44 – "**No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him**: and I will raise him up at the last day."

> John 6:65 – "And he said, Therefore said I unto you, **that no man can come unto me, except it were given unto him of my Father**."

In addition to believing in Christ, God commands the human race to do a multitude of things (like the ten commandments) that they are incapable of doing in their fallen state.

# WHAT THE GOSPEL IS NOT

The true Gospel of Jesus Christ is none of the following, no matter how many people may be saying these things:
God has a wonderful plan for your life.

*In truth, God has a plan for your life that you may not like in the least – especially if you are not among the elect. (Romans 9:22, Romans 2:5-6, Prov 29:1)*
God loves the sinner but hates the sin.
*In truth, God hates the workers of iniquity AND their wicked works (Psalm 5:5-6, Psalm 11:5-6, Prov 15:9)*
You can be saved anytime you want just by accepting Christ.
*In truth, salvation is of the Lord (Jonah 2:9), not of man. God chooses whom He wills when He wills (1Cor 15:8, John 1:13, Eph 1:4-11).*
Say this prayer and if you really mean it, you are saved.
*In truth, God will have mercy on whom He will have mercy (Romans 9:15,18)*
Anyone who believes in Jesus and calls Jesus "Lord" is a Christian.
*In truth, if God does not convert the person's heart, they are none of His (Matt 7:21-23, James 2:19)*

# HOW DOES GOD SAVE SOMEONE?

God saves people through the convicting power of the Holy Spirit and through preaching the Gospel. So we need to explain what the Gospel is or what the central message of the Bible is.

# WHAT IS THE GOSPEL?

The whole Bible is the Gospel or Good News of Jesus Christ or in other words, God's plan of salvation. However, God's plan of salvation can be summarized as follows:
1. **We need to recognize who God is:** God is man's creator, and ruler and law giver. He values holiness and justice as much as love. His hatred towards sin is a great as his love for righteousness.

2. **We need to recognize who we are in relation to God:** We are hopelessly lost, rebellious, hell-deserving sinners who want God to be subject to us, our whims, our terms, our conditions, our brand of religion.

3. **We need to recognize what God expects of us:** God expects and deserves total obedience to all His commandments at all times, even though man, because of his sin nature, is incapable of faithful service to God. Man's corrupt spiritual condition does not free himself from responsibility to God.

4. **We need to recognize that we fall far short of what God expects of us:** Even our greatest acts of kindness and charity are considered as filthy rags to God because our motives are tainted with sin until and unless God gives us a new heart and a new spirit. Even one sin can and will separate a person from God for all eternity.

5. **We need to recognize the consequences of not living up to God's expectations:** Eternal damnation in hell is the punishment that God has prepared for those who die in their sins. Any punishment less severe than that

would detract from the holiness of God.

6. **We need to recognize the only way of escape from the consequences of not living up to God's expectations:** We need a supernatural scapegoat, who could meet God's requirements for sinlessness and who could at the same time pay the complete penalty that we owe for all of our sins, past, present and future. We need God to rescue us from hell and make us fit for heaven in a way that is beyond our capability to reform.

7. **We need to repent of our sins:** We must cry out to God for mercy, imploring Him to enable us to stop sinning, realizing that we are incapable of changing without God's help.

8. **We need to believe on Christ:** Throwing ourselves on the mercy of God, we must trust in Christ alone and the work HE ALREADY DID in subjecting Himself to the full fury of the terrible wrath of God when He suffered and died at Calvary. We need to believe that He was buried and on the third day He arose from the grave, claiming victory over death and proving that He is eternal God and proving that God the Father was completely satisfied with the work that Christ did on the behalf of the elect, that Christ's work was the complete and all-sufficient payment for all the sins of all the elect.
Can we do any of the above things if we are spiritually dead? Absolutely not! God must enable us to do these things. He is the One who gives us eye salve and opens our blind eyes to the truth of who God is and who we are and He does this by resurrecting our spiritually dead soul.

# SO HOW DOES THE GOSPEL TAKE EFFECT?

> Romans 10:17 – "So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God."

God has chosen to use believers to get the Word of God out, to sow it in men's hearts:

> Mark 4:15 – "And these are they by the way side, where the word is sown; but when they have heard, satan cometh immediately, and taketh away **the word that was sown** in their hearts."

Once we have preached the Word of God to someone it is up to God to do what He wills with our seed sowing. Nevertheless, we are obligated to pray to the Lord of the harvest to send out workers to water the seed that we sow and to pray to God to have mercy on the souls of men just as Moses interceded for Israel. When it is God's time to save someone, He will give them new life from above. He will put His Spirit in them. A verse that describes this new birth is found in the Gospel of John:

> John 16:21 – "A woman when she is in travail hath sorrow, because her hour is come: but as soon as she is delivered of the child, she remembereth no more the anguish, for joy that a man is born into the

world."

What a wonderful picture of Christ's sacrifice for His people as well as a picture of the new birth! This passage is ever so descriptive of being born from above. When the Holy Spirit convicts us of our sins, our souls become grieved over our sins to the point of not being able to bear the grief any more, comparable to a woman giving birth to a child, as the Word says. We then cry out to God to 'deliver' us and He graciously does – since it is by His grace that we are going through the birth pangs – being convicted of the depth of our sin. Then, by God's grace, the burden of sin is lifted off of us and placed on Christ, just as a woman is relieved of her travail when her child is brought forth. Similarly, as a woman is joyful that a new life has entered the world, the new creature in Christ experiences the joy of their salvation for the very first time, as the burden of their sin rolls away.

Note that it is the woman going through childbirth that is a picture of a person being converted, and not the woman's child. There are many parallels here to the new birth of a Christian. I'm sure it is not uncommon for a woman to call upon God as the time of her delivery approaches, just as a sinner calls upon God to save him from the wrath to come. The birth of a child must be a time of great concern and fear for a woman because it can be a matter of life and death, for herself and for her child. Likewise, the birth of a believer is a time of great fear of the Lord, seeing how the Bible says, "the fear of the lord is the beginning of knowledge" (Proverbs 1:7). God causes us to have a holy and reverent fear of Him when He saves us. We see this in Isaiah chapter 6 where we read the prophet's description of what it is like to stand before a thrice-holy God:

> Isaiah 6:5 – "Then said I, Woe *is* me! for I am undone; because I *am* a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips: for mine eyes have seen the King, the LORD of hosts."

When God saves a person, they are awakened to the fact that, without Christ's righteousness, they themselves as well as the people all around them, are spiritually unclean… morally filthy… their works are detestable… their thoughts loathsome.

Evidence of true salvation is a changed attitude about sin as described by the fruit of the Spirit in Galatians 5:22-24 plus a desire to warn the lost to flee the wrath of God (1 Corinthians 9:16, 2 Corinthians 5:20) and a love for Biblical truth (Psalms 1:2) as well as a love for other true believers in Jesus Christ.

## WHY DOES GOD SAVE SOME PEOPLE AND NOT OTHERS?

This is a question that can best be answered by another question: "For who hath know the mind of the Lord that he may instruct him?" (1 Corinthians 2:16). We do know that whatever God does, it is for His own good pleasure:

> Luke 12:32 – "Fear not, little flock; for **it is your Father's good pleasure** to give you the kingdom."
>
> Ephesians 1:5 – "Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, **according to the good pleasure of his will**"
>
> Ephesians 1:9 – "Having made known unto us the mystery of his will, **according to his good pleasure which he hath purposed in himself**"
>
> Philippians 2:13 – "For it is God which worketh in you both **to will and to do of his good pleasure**."

If we look at Romans chapter 9, we will find one reason why God saves some and not others. It is a very sobering passage:

> Romans 9:22 – "*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: 23 And that he might make known the riches of his glory on the vessels of mercy, which he had afore prepared unto glory"

Is not God saying that He is showing the redeemed just how much a gift of grace they receive from Him? When we look at how hardhearted and rebellious the unsaved around us are, we are reminded of our own sinfulness, especially before we became saved. We also get a striking picture of the depravity of man that serves as a testimony to how fair and just God is in the damnation of sinners. If not for the grace of God, no one would be saved.

## WHY WOULD GOD PREDESTINE ANYONE TO HELL?

This is surely a sixty-four thousand dollar question. It of course relates to the paragraph above (Why does God save some people and not others), but it goes beyond that question to the real heart of the matter – the matter of man's heart:

> Jeremiah 17:9 – "The heart *is* deceitful above all *things*, and desperately wicked: who can know it?"

The heart of man is wicked and deceitful, and so he will never have a proper or perfect understanding of the justice and mercy of God. In his unsaved condition, he will always think that God is not fair with regards to the damnation of sinners. How can we tell God whom to love and whom to save? If you were king of a kingdom, and you were infinitely smarter and holier than any of your subjects, would you not think it presumptuous of any of them to tell you whom to love and whom to have mercy on?

To better understand the doctrine of predestination we must come to grips

with the fact that God does not love everyone even though that may be what we were taught in Sunday school or in seminary. Not all popularly held beliefs in the Church are scriptural, as these verses point out:

> Psalm 5:5 – "The foolish shall not stand in thy sight: **thou hatest** all workers of iniquity."
>
> Psalm 11:5 – "The LORD trieth the righteous: but the wicked and him that loveth violence **his soul hateth**."
>
> Leviticus 20:23 – "And ye shall not walk in the manners of the nation, which I cast out before you: for they committed all these things, and therefore **I abhorred them**."
>
> Hosea 9:15 – "All their wickedness is in Gilgal: for there **I hated them**: for the wickedness of their doings I will drive them out of mine house, I will love them no more: all their princes are revolters."
>
> Zechariah 11:8 – "Three shepherds also I cut off in one month; and **my soul lothed them**, and their soul also abhorred me."
>
> Malachi 1:3 – "And **I hated Esau**, and laid his mountains and his heritage waste for the dragons of the wilderness.
>
> Romans 9:13 – "As it is written, Jacob have I loved, but **Esau have I hated**."

Believe it or not, a Christian cannot honestly go around saying to everyone indiscriminately "Jesus loves you." and "Jesus died for you." Nor can a Christian honestly state that "God loves the sinner but hates the sin". Before and until God saves a person, they are His enemy:

> Romans 5:10 – "For if, when **we were enemies**, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life."

Why, you ask, would God create people that He hates? Certainly a 'fair' question, but I am not God and so I can not necessarily answer such a question to your satisfaction. However, I can tell you what God has said about this subject:

> Psalm 76:10 – "Surely the wrath of man shall praise thee: the remainder of wrath shalt thou restrain."

God uses the wrath of man to glorify Himself. In spite of what anyone may think, God really is in control of this earth:

> Proverbs 16:4 – "The LORD hath made all *things* for himself: yea, even the wicked for the day of evil."

God will restrain evil when He sees fit and He will allow the wicked to commit evil to bring glory to Himself at some later date:

> Psalm 2:1-4 – "1 Why do the heathen rage, and the people imagine a vain thing? 2 The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the LORD, and against his anointed, *saying*, 3 Let us break their bands asunder, and cast away their cords from us. 4 He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh: the Lord shall have them in derision."

The wicked and their demise are a testimony to the justice of God. We must remember, if God was to be "fair" (i.e. treat everyone equally), then He would cast every single human being who was ever born and who will ever be born, into Hell for all eternity. But, in His infinite mercy, He has gloriously decided to save some, to have a people for Himself, who will share in His glory for all eternity, through no merit of their own whatsoever. **Thanks be to God, for saving a wretch like me!**

## WHY WOULD GOD TELL US TO RECEIVE CHRIST IF WE CAN'T?

Why indeed, would the Bible say over and over that in order to become saved we must believe the Gospel, we must repent of our sins, we must receive Christ, we must do all sorts of things that we cannot possibly do as spiritually dead beings? The Bible is full of commands that no one is capable of obeying. Take just this one for instance:

> Mark 12:30 – "And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength: this *is* the first commandment."

Does that mean we are not responsible for obeying? Should God lower His standards and get rid of all His commandments and give us commandments that are easy to comply with? Should our nation get rid of its laws because so many people are having trouble abiding by them? Are not the people in prisons the ones who seem least able to keep the laws? Does that make it unfair to punish them for their crimes?
Admittedly, there are many scriptures that say we must **believe** in Christ to be saved. So how can we believe in Christ if we don't have a free will – or if we have a nature that is AGAINST God? Don't fret, God has given us the answer to that puzzling question:

> Philippians 1:29 – "For **unto you it is given** in the behalf of Christ, not only **to believe** on him, but also to suffer for his sake"

So being able to believe in Christ requires a work of God, as further stated here:

> John 6:29 – "Jesus answered and said unto them, This is **the work of God**, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent."
>
> John 6:65 – "And he said, Therefore said I unto you, **that no man can come unto me, except it were given unto him of my Father.**"

So we see that God is quite capable of doing what is impossible for man to do in and of himself:

> Matthew 19:24-26 – "24 And again I say unto you, It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God. 25 When his disciples heard *it*, they were exceedingly amazed, saying, Who then can be saved? 26 But Jesus beheld *them*, and said unto them, With men this is impossible; but **with God all things are possible**."

## CAN UNSAVED MAN COOPERATE WITH GOD?

Have you ever witnessed to a Catholic, a Catholic who knows what their church really teaches? Do they not say that a person must cooperate with God's grace in order to maintain their works-based salvation. They consider this cooperation to be a lifelong process. In a similar fashion, free-will teachers say that the will of God works with the will of man to effect a man's salvation. This idea is unscriptural. The Bible says that the will of God works AGAINST the will of man and vice versa:

> Galatians 5:17 – "For the flesh lusteth **against** the Spirit, and the Spirit **against** the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would."

**To say anything positive about the will of unsaved man is to make man better than he is – better than GOD says he is.**
**And this is the main problem with the free-will gospel.**

Man has a sin nature that is continually rebelling against his Creator as we quoted earlier:

> Jeremiah 17:9 – "The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?"
>
> Genesis 6:5 – "And GOD saw that the wickedness of man *was* great in the earth, and *that* **every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually**."

Look at what Paul said, and this after he was already saved:

> Romans 7:18 – "For I know that **in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth**

> **no good thing**: for to will is present with me; but *how* to perform that which is good I find not."

Paul said "to will is present with me" because as a saved individual, the Spirit of God was in him, warring against the flesh, in which dwelleth no good thing. However, an unsaved individual does not have the Spirit of God and so that individual cannot cooperate with God.

As mentioned earlier, the Bible says that the unsaved man wants nothing to do with the will of God even though he may think he does:

> Proverbs 13:19 – "The desire accomplished is sweet to the soul: but **it is abomination to fools to depart from evil**."
>
> Proverbs 16:2 – "All the ways of a man are clean in his own eyes; but the LORD weigheth the spirits."
>
> Proverbs 21:2 – "Every way of a man is right in his own eyes: but the LORD pondereth the hearts."
>
> Proverbs 30:12 – "There is a generation that are pure in their own eyes, and yet is not washed from their filthiness."
>
> Romans 8:7 – "Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. 8 So then **they that are in the flesh cannot please God**."

# GETTING DECISIONS FOR CHRIST?

In the interest of seeing people saved, we can invent methods of evangelism that give us the results we are looking for – tangible evidence that our efforts are bearing fruit. The problem with this approach is that "Salvation is of the Lord" (Jonah 2:9) and so only God can give the increase (1 Corinthians 3:7). Any attempt on our part to give the increase will yield false fruit – people who think they are saved and yet have not been *converted* by God. True biblical evangelism is not a numbers game where we can use psychology or other techniques to coax a 'decision' out of people. God is the one making the decision as to when and whom HE is going to convert.

In addition, we are not doing God a favor by accepting Him.

**When did Jesus ever tell people to bow their heads and close their eyes, so that lost, Hell-deserving sinners would not be afraid or embarrassed about raising their hands to 'accept' Him?**

In fact, did not Jesus say:

> Mark 8:38 – "Whosoever therefore shall be ashamed of me and of my

> words in this adulterous and sinful generation; of him also shall the Son of man be ashamed, when he cometh in the glory of his Father with the holy angels."

Did He not also preach repeatedly and strongly about repentance and Hell, saying:

> Luke 13:3 – "I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish."

His message is not a gospel molded to fit the comfort zone of the sinner. His Gospel is an ultimatum: "EXCEPT YE REPENT, YE SHALL ALL LIKEWISE PERISH", albeit an ultimatum that we cannot comply with until He enables us to. The modern methods put man in the driver's seat, believing that he can choose God anytime he wishes, just by raising his hand in church or by reciting a "sinner's prayer". Man is not the sovereign Lord of the universe nor is he even master of his own fate. God alone is Supreme, and anything that happens in this world of His is by His own choosing for His own glory.

Rather than asking people to raise their hands while nobody is looking, to 'accept' Christ as their Saviour in secret, as it were, would it not be more scriptural to just warn the lost as fervently as possible, to flee the terrible fury of the wrath of God. We cannot fail if we generously and prayerfully give out God's Word, avoiding words of men's wisdom. God's Word is powerful and will not return void (Isaiah 55:11). We should always urge people to talk to us or to elders or other Christians about any concerns they may have regarding the condition of their soul and regarding the only way to escape the coming judgment. In this way, people who have questions can be more thoroughly instructed in the doctrine of salvation so that they do not get the impression that they are saved when they are not.

## WHERE DID THESE MODERN EVANGELISM METHODS COME FROM?

Where did people get their modern-day ideas for presenting the Gospel? Certainly we can learn wrong doctrine when verses are taken out of context and combined with plausible explanations. When error is repeated often enough, it can easily become accepted as fact. But there is a major reason why error goes on being repeated without being corrected. "What is it?" you may be wondering. It has to do with the way that people study the Bible. Most people have not been taught *how* to properly study the Bible. That includes both pastors and their congregations. Were you, as a member of a local church ever taught *how* to study the Bible? Probably not, if your experience was similar to mine and that of the majority of Christians. There is a scriptural way to study the Bible and then there is the way that most Pastors and most Christians study the Bible:

### The scriptural way of studying the Bible:

Use the Bible itself and its various cross references
Use concordances such as Young's and Strong's
Use Greek/Hebrew interlinear translations
Avoid using 'study' Bibles which have commentaries on the meanings of verses
The above way of studying the Bible is based on a biblical principle:

> "Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth; **comparing spiritual things with spiritual**." [1 Corinthians 2:13]
>
> "For **we know that the law is spiritual**: but I am carnal, sold under sin." [Romans 7:14]

The above verses tell us to use scripture (i.e. the law) to interpret scripture. We cannot and **must not** trust any information outside of the Bible. Only the Bible itself is completely trustworthy. We can be sure that the reason there are so many interpretations of various Bible passages nowadays, is because the above biblical principle is NOT being adhered to.

### The common way of studying the Bible:

**Use the Bible itself and its various cross references**
**Use external commentaries and secular history books**
**Use books by popular Christian authors**
**Use Bible Dictionaries which may use extra-biblical sources to define and explain things**
**Look at various Bible versions to see which one makes the most sense to you**
**Use an English dictionary – without corroborating that definition with lexicons and other scriptural references to the same word**
Use concordances such as Young's and Strong's
Use Greek/Hebrew interlinear translations
Based on preaching that I've heard on the radio and in churches I've visited, the common way of studying the Bible nowadays is primarily by the methods listed above (in bold print). These helps can actually throw us off track when we are trying to find the meaning of a passage of scripture. They should only be consulted after we have done a thorough job of studying the Bible without these materials.

## WHY PREACH IF SALVATION IS ALL UP TO GOD?

This is one of the main concerns about Calvinism of the free-will camp. They think that if all Christians were Calvinists, no one would share the Gospel. Not to worry. A good Calvinist knows his Bible. For instance, he knows what it says in Romans chapter 10:

> Romans 10:14-15 – “14 How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher? 15 And how shall they preach, except they be sent? as it is written, How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things!”

He also knows what it says in 2 Corinthians 5:20, James 5:20, 2 Timothy 4:5, Ezekiel 33:8, Hosea 8:1, 1 Corinthians 9:16, Luke 14:23 and elsewhere, about the need to preach the Gospel of grace. If we truly love the Lord we will be anxious to tell as many people as possible about Him and to warn them to flee the wrath to come, just as He himself did and just as He commanded us to do:

> Mark 16:15 – ” And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature.”

We will preach the Gospel even if we believe we had no ‘free’ will to choose to be saved, because we know that “it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure” (Philippians 2:13) and it is His good pleasure to use vessels of clay to preach the Gospel and to give those vessels the desire and ability to preach what God wants preached. This does not mean that we are mere puppets of God although if we appreciate God’s wisdom we should be glad to be His puppets. What it means is that before God saves someone, they are slaves to sin (see John 8:34). When they become saved, they become servants of Christ and they receive power to do the will of God: “Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, **according to the power that worketh in us**, Unto him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen.” (Ephesians 3:20-21).

> “If God would have painted a yellow stripe on the backs of the elect I would go around lifting shirts. But since He didn’t I must preach “whosoever will” and when “whosoever” believes I know that he is one of the elect.” — C.H. Spurgeon

## SO WHAT IS A HYPER-CALVINIST?

Contrary to the claims of some free-will gospel promoters, a *hyper*-Calvinist is not the same as a Calvinist. A Calvinist believes that the doctrines of grace are the doctrines of the Bible. Also, a Calvinist understands His total inability to participate in raising himself to “newness of life” (Romans 6:4) and he also is grateful to God for having mercy on his soul, so he does his best *out of thankfulness to God*, of sharing the Gospel with those who are lost. Now a *hyper*-Calvinist is a person who uses the doctrine of election and predestination as an excuse not to share the Gospel, claiming that if God has predestined people to be saved, then there is no need to share the Gospel. Some hyper-Calvinists, such as those who call themselves Primitive Baptists, have invented an elaborate system of theology whereby they interpret certain

passages of scripture in a very unorthodox fashion to justify their belief that God does not use the preaching of the Gospel as a "means" (or instrument) in the salvation of souls.

In contrast, a Calvinist understands that if not for the grace of God, if not for the good pleasure of the Almighty, he too would still be a spiritual blind man wandering about in the darkness of this sin-cursed world, oblivious to the fact that he is running headlong into the eternal fires of Hell where the smoke of their torment ascends for ever and ever and they have no rest day or night (Revelation 14:11). I venture to say that a true *hyper*-Calvinist has no real understanding of God's grace at all and so he is not a true blood-bought disciple of Christ. If he thinks he is, he had better examine himself promptly and carefully to see if he indeed is "in the faith" (2 Corinthians 13:5).

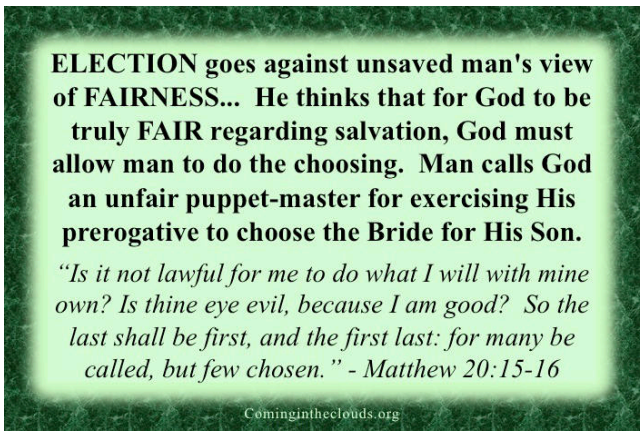
## WHICH COMES FIRST, SALVATION OR TURNING TO CHRIST?

You've heard the expression: "Which came first, the chicken or the egg?" In a sense, that is the issue that has been addressed in this paper – "Which comes first: A. Our obedience to God's commands to repent, believe the Gospel and receive Christ? OR B. God granting us repentance and salvation?" In other words:
1. Do we *first* accept Christ and His lordship, and *then* God **rewards us** by saving us? OR
2. Does God *first* save us and impart His Spirit into us, and *then* we become able to accept Christ and His lordship?
If we ignore all the scriptural evidence in this paper and assume that the first statement above is true, then man has something to boast about – namely, that *he* has made the right choice and *he* has exercised *his* will to turn to God. If we believe that the second statement is true, then God and God alone, receives all the glory. And that is how it should be, for he who glories, let him glory in the Lord! Amen!

## THE BOTTOM LINE: DOES GOD GET TO CHOOSE THE BRIDE FOR HIS SON?

Do we TELL GOD to accept us as the Bride for His Son Jesus or does God Almighty have the choice in that matter? I think this passage in the gospel of Matthew clearly answers that question: "Is it not lawful for me to do what I will with mine own? Is thine eye evil, because I am good? So the last shall be first, and the first last: for many be called, but few chosen." Matthew 20:15-16. As you comprehend the impact of that passage, you will surely be thanking God in heaven – for all eternity – for saving your hell-deserving soul, if you indeed are one of God's elect. If you are not sure at this point, there still is time for YOU to call upon the Lord while He is near and to seek Him while He may be found (Isaiah 55:6). He is under no obligation to tell you at birth if you are one of His elect. If and when He saves you, you will know it. The Holy

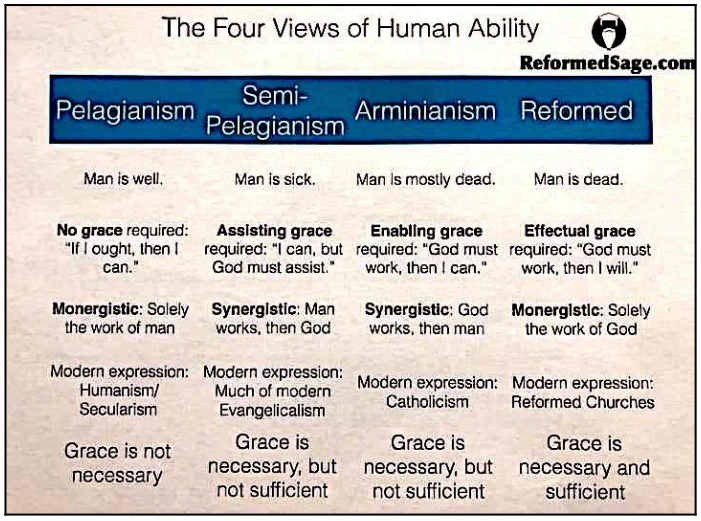
Spirit will testify with your spirit that you are a child of God (Romans 8:16). If the thought of spending eternity in Hell really concerns you, then you WILL start reading the Bible to find out more about God's one and only salvation plan and His one and only Savior and sin-bearer, the Lord Jesus Christ… because God uses the Bible to show us sinners our need for the Savior and to draw us to Himself.



# EPILOGUE:

There is more to the issues of election, predestination and free-will than we have covered here, as shown in the chart below. But thank-you for getting this far in our study on election. Hopefully it shed some light on an area of bible study that is a subject of much contention – and sadly much poor teaching – within the body of Christ. — *RM Kane*




# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I wish to thank two very helpful brothers in the Lord, Matthew Heyns and Jim Riscinti, for pointing out many very pertinent Scripture verses regarding the various issues covered in this Bible study on predestination and election. I also wish to thank two other dear brothers in the Lord, Jeremy Dow and

Daniel Gentile, for sharing some excellent literature with me on this subject of predestination. Most of all, I wish to give God the glory for opening my eyes to the spiritual truths regarding the doctrines of grace in the Word of God. This study has given me a clearer understanding of what God has said in Psalm 65, verse 4: “Blessed is the man whom thou choosest, and causest to approach unto thee”. Blessed indeed!

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**Further reading on election, predestination, free-will, Calvinism and Arminianism:**

1. “Why is Calvinism so Hated? (article)“, by Kenneth Matto
2. “Free Will – A Slave (article)“, by C.H. Spurgeon
3. “Accepting Christ (article)“, by I.C. Heredeen
4. “The Choice… Man’s or God’s? (article)“, by Peter Eldersveld
5. “Gospel Preaching Commanded (article)“, by A.W. Pink
6. “The Justice Of God In the Damnation Of Sinners (article)“, by Jonathan Edwards
7. “The Justice Of God In the Damnation Of Sinners (PDF file)“, by Jonathan Edwards
8. “The Myth Of Free Will (article)“, by Walter Chantry – **Excellent article that explains the limits of the human will**

Items 1 through 4 above are available on-line by clicking on the underlined links or in print from:

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