

WE DON'T 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 (see Romans 9:21 and Jeremiah 18:4).

SAVED AGAINST THEIR OWN 'FREE' 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 about his work of persecuting Christians when God decided it was time to convert Saul to Paul on the Road to Damascus (See Acts 9:1-5). Has God converted you yet? If not, pray for Him to have mercy on your soul.

SHEEP VERSUS GOATS

One point that can help us to understand this matter of who accepts who 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]

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. (See also Matthew 18:12-13).

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?"

Note that *lost* sheep can 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 (see Isaiah 53:6).

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

A great deal of confusion about the issue of a free will to accept 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 are now to be included in God's plan of salvation. Careful examination of scripture verifies the above statement:

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 - "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.

HOW DOES GOD SAVE SOMEONE?

God saves people through the convicting power of the Holy Spirit and through the Word of God: 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 Gospel to someone it is up to God to do what He wills with our seed sowing.

WHY DOES GOD SAVE SOME PEOPLE AND NOT OTHERS?

This is a question that God has not given us an answer to. It can best be answered by another question: "For who hath know the mind of the Lord that he may instruct him?" [1 Cor 2:16].

GO YE

If we truly love the Lord we will be anxious to tell as many people as possible about Him just as He commanded us to in Mark 16:15, Luke 14:23 and elsewhere, 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]. This does not mean the we are mere puppets of God. 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 (see John 1:12).

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Who Accepts Whom?

The message in this pamphlet is for Bible believing Christians who have a love for the truth as found in God's holy Word. The subject pertains to God's grace and it is a message preached by the great men of God who sparked the Protestant reformation. It is a message preached by Luther and by Spurgeon and by men like Matthew Henry. It is a message that has changed in recent history. Oh yes, 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 should I witness to anyone if God predestines people to be saved?"

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 they are doing God a favor and as if they really have the last word. But God's plans will not be frustrated by those who are in rebellion against Him. 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 information presented below.

GOD DOES THE CHOOSING

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. 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. Instead we run from Him and His messengers and we consider His commandments burdensome and His Lordship something to be scorned. 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 Thess 2:13 - "But we are bound to give thanks always 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."

Psalms 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.**"

OUR WILL CANNOT OVERPOWER GOD'S

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

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

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:**

WHO SEEKS WHOM?

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.**"

Luke 19:10 - "**For the Son of man is come to seek** and to save that which was lost."

Note that Jesus 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 but 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.

God certainly causes a person to care about their sins and about the salvation of their soul but He saves them in His time and His way which involves hearing the word of God (Romans 10:17), being convicted of sin by the Holy Spirit (John 16:7-8) and being drawn to Christ by God the Father (John 6:44).

ITS ALL BY GOD'S GRACE AND HIS POWER

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 were saved on the spot (regardless of what God had to say about the issue).

The act of accepting Christ is a 'work' and as all Christians should know - salvation is "not of works lest any man should boast" [Ephesians 2:9]. Charles Spurgeon made this point quite obvious in his sermon "Free Will - A Slave" where he recites a prayer that one might pray if one believed that we accept Christ as our Saviour of our own free will:

"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."

The Bible says that salvation is a gift of God (Romans 6:23, Ephesians 2:8, etc.). It is a gift that no unsaved sinner wants as Paul pointed out in Romans 3:11 where he wrote that *none seekth after God*. The old man does not want to accept Jesus. 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 put His Spirit in us so we will want to know Him, trust Him and please Him.

GOD MUST FIRST OPEN OUR 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 - "A new heart also **will I** give you, and a new spirit **will I** put within you: 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 above because "Salvation is of the Lord" [Jonah 2:9]. All we can **do** is praise God when He saves us.

THE DEAD HAVE NO 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.

WHO HAD OR HAS A FREE WILL?

Adam and Eve had free will until they sinned and became cursed with spiritual death, severing their relationship to 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." [Php 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." [Psa 40:8]. Reprobate mankind has no such joy: "it is abomination to fools to depart from evil" [Prov 13:19].