

# God's Sovereign Election to Salvation

We believe that in order to be saved, sinners must be regenerated, or born again; that regeneration consists in giving a holy disposition to the mind; that it is effected in a manner above our comprehension by the power of the Holy Spirit, in connection with divine truth, so as to secure our voluntary obedience to the gospel; and that its proper evidence appears in the holy fruits of repentance, and faith, and newness of life. (Quoted from: *BAPTIST CHURCH MANUAL*, Revised, J.M. Pendleton, 1966, Broadman Press, Nashville, Tennessee, pp. 49-50)

Believers are born into God's family, NOT by man's will but by God's will. You are not free to choose Christ at any time. Your will is in BONDAGE to your nature. But His people—believing sinners—shall be WILLING in the day of His power, when Jesus Christ is revealed for Who He is, the Savior of the sinners (John 1:13; Psa. 110:3; Phil. 2:13).

Salvation is the gift of God's grace given to all who believe on the Son (i.e., to all whom God has sovereignly ELECTED to salvation). It includes all that God does in saving the elect from the penalty, power, and presence of sin, and in restoring them to a right relationship with God. As such, it is solely the work of God from initiation to completion. It cannot be gained by good works, but is a free gift for all whom God has ENABLED to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and His finished work on the cross. All who so put their faith in Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord have been forgiven and saved from their sins and declared righteous before God, and have been born into the family of God by the regenerating work of the Holy Spirit. God's purpose for saving His elect is so that they bring glory to Him by their lives (Rom. 1:16; 10:17; Acts 16:14b; Eph. 1:7; 2:8,9; Jn. 1:12,13; Rom. 9:16; 2 Cor. 5:21; Phil. 1:6; Titus 2:11-14; 3:5-7; 1 Pe. 1:18-19; Jn. 5:40; 6:44; 3:36; 5:24; 1 Jn. 5:1).

Because of man's depravity, blindness, and rebellious nature, salvation is possible only as a gift without merit; i.e., grace alone is efficacious to the saving of the soul (Eph. 2:8,9). This "gift" of salvation includes all things necessary as evidence that one has trusted Christ; i.e., the faith necessary to trust Christ and the repentant heart necessary to turn from sin to Christ are both gifts from God to His elect (Acts 13:48; Eph. 2:8,9; Phil. 1:29; Rom. 2:4; Acts 5:31; 11:18; 14:27; 2 Tim. 2:25).

A life of obedience to the law—that which God demands—has been performed by the doing and the dying of Jesus Christ—His sinless life and His obedient death. Sinners are enabled to present the righteousness of Christ to God by faith. Therefore, total forgiveness is granted by God based on the substitutional death of Christ on behalf of the believer, thereby imputing to the believer the righteousness of God in Jesus Christ. All believers acknowledge their sinful condition and trust in the death of Christ to pay the penalty for sin past, present, and future (1 Jn. 1:9). To acknowledge sin as sin is a confession that characterizes believers. The responsibility of believers is to flee all unrighteousness (1 Thes. 1:9b; 1 Tim. 6:11; 2 Tim. 2:22), having an appreciation for the cleansing ministry of Jesus Christ (1 Jn. 2:1,2).

A "Christian" then is the result of the creative act which Scripture calls regeneration—a new birth. In order to be saved, sinners must be "born again" (Jn. 3:3,5; Eph. 2:1,5; 1 Jn. 5:1), which is the new creation in Christ Jesus (2 Cor. 5:17; Col 2:13; Jn. 3:8). It occurs the instant a person believes on and receives the Lord Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord (Acts 16:30,31); i.e., it is not a process (Jn. 5:24).

**Titus 1:9 — "Holding fast the faithful word as he hath been taught, that he may be able by sound doctrine both to exhort and to convince the gainsayers."**

## Sovereignty of God in Salvation; p. 2

In the new birth, the one dead in trespasses and in sins is made a partaker of the divine nature and receives eternal life, the free gift of God (Rom. 3:23; 6:23).

---

### **Q & A on Election**

Q: I still don't agree with your view on election, I think it's fraught with two many contradictions with Scripture.

A: There are no contradictions with Scripture, only with man's desire to make himself sovereign over God, rather than vice versa.

Q: How does one reconcile the numerous verses where God says it is not His wish that any should perish, but that all should go to heaven? Here's the crux of the matter: how could God possibly claim this, that He wishes all could go to heaven, if He very well knows that He hasn't enabled all, by regenerating them, to "accept" Christ? This is tough for Christians themselves to answer.

A: This is not hard at all to answer. You are referring to 2 Pe. 3:9—"The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness. He is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance." Notwithstanding the fact that God is writing to His elect (not the entire world of humanity—see Peter's introduction to this epistle), God is expressing His "Desire-tive" will, which is not to be confused with His "Declarative"/"Determinative"/"Decretive" will. A sovereign God desires, or has pleasure in (e.g., that all be saved), the accomplishment of that which He does NOT necessarily declare or determine or decree will be accomplished (e.g., the creation of the world or the eternal doom of Satan). God also commands (i.e., desires) obedience from all, but He does not declare or determine or decree it so, but nevertheless, holds us accountable for our disobedience. Back to this verse, God patiently waits until all the ELECT are brought to repentance, that none of them may perish. (This is to whom Peter writes in both of his letters—the ELECT—1 Pe. 1:1; 2 Pe. 1:10.) (See also 2 Pe. 3:9; Ezek. 18:23, 32; 33:11; Acts 17:30; Rom. 2:4.)

Q: Election is hard in witnessing because it violates God's attributes (His love for all and the fact that Christ died for the sins of the whole world). Therein lies another dilemma—Why did God say Christ died for the sins of the whole world while He very well knew He would only enable a few to benefit from it? He might as well have said that Christ died only for the sins of those whom God had chosen.

A: This is flawed logic. God had to die for the sins of the whole world, or He wouldn't be able to hold all responsible for their unbelief. If He had not provided for (through the blood of Christ) the salvation of all, He would be unjust in requiring that they all repent. No one could be held accountable for NOT turning to Christ for salvation, unless there is a sense in which God has appointed His Christ to be the Savior of all the guilty ones. When Christ judges the wicked (Rev. 20—the Great White Throne Judgment) it will be evident that He does so in full justice! (Romans 3:25,26):

Acts 3:19 (KJV) [Repent] ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord;  
Acts 8:22 (KJV) [Repent] therefore of this thy wickedness, and pray God, if perhaps the

### **Sovereignty of God in Salvation; p. 3**

thought of thine heart may be forgiven thee.

Acts 17:30 (KJV) And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men every where to [repent]:

Acts 26:20 (KJV) But showed first unto them of Damascus, and at Jerusalem, and throughout all the coasts of Judaea, and then to the Gentiles, that they should [repent] and turn to God, and do works meet for repentance.

This is His desire will in all the verses above, yet He has not decreed that all will repent. Only those will repent whom have been GRANTED repentance by God:

Acts 11:18 (KJV) When they heard these things, they held their peace, and glorified God, saying, Then hath God also to the Gentiles GRANTED REPENTANCE UNTO LIFE.

And who are we to question God for His sovereign election?

Romans 9:14-26 (KJV) What shall we say then? Is there unrighteousness with God? God forbid. 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. So then it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that showeth mercy. For the scripture saith unto Pharaoh, Even for this same purpose have I raised thee up, that I might show my power in thee, and that my name might be declared throughout all the earth. Therefore hath he mercy on whom he will have mercy, and whom he will he hardeneth. Thou wilt say then unto me, Why doth he yet find fault? For who hath resisted his will? Nay but, O man, who art thou that repliest against God? Shall the thing formed say to him that formed it, Why hast thou made me thus? Hath not the potter power over the clay, of the same lump to make one vessel unto honour, and another unto dishonour? What if God, willing to show his wrath, and to make his power known, endured with much longsuffering the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction: And that he might make known the riches of his glory on the vessels of mercy, which he had afore prepared unto glory, Even us, whom he hath called, not of the Jews only, but also of the Gentiles? As he saith also in Osee, I will call them my people, which were not my people; and her beloved, which was not beloved. And it shall come to pass, that in the place where it was said unto them, Ye are not my people; there shall they be called the children of the living God.

Q: What logic was there in Christ saying to us to go and make disciples of all nations when He knew quite clearly that only a few have been enabled to accept the message? He could have said for us to go and preach the Gospel only to those whom God had enabled to accept Christ.

A: By man's "logic," there would indeed be no reason to evangelize. But God says this is the means He will use to bring the elect to repentance. By your logic, he could also ask "why should we pray?" The old saying that "prayer changes things," holds no water for a sovereign God. God's sovereign will controls all—the purpose of prayer is to line up our wills with the will of God. The purpose of evangelizing is to obey and to be used by Him in His glorious purposes. Some of the greatest preachers of election of all time (e.g. Edwards, Spurgeon, etc.) were great evangelists. Why, if only the elect would be saved? Because God commanded it, and these were men of great faith and great obedience.

Q: Your theory of election has frightening questions which seem to violate who God is. I'm not accusing you of being a heretic—all I'm saying is I prefer Dave Hunt's Arminianism because, even

## Sovereignty of God in Salvation; p. 4

though it has HUGE problems, these don't contradict what we already know about God, but they cannot be answered because we simply don't have that info in the Bible.

A: This is nonsense. The reason all Arminians don't like election is because it puts total control in God's hands, i.e., it makes salvation all of God and none of man. In our flesh, we don't like that. How is God's character violated (as Dave Hunt teaches) when we say salvation is all of Him and none of us? In the Romans' verses I quoted above, God says all are depraved, and from that pool of ALL depraved humanity, God has mercy on some to salvation. That is perfectly in character with God's holy Nature. The question should be, "Why does God save anyone?" Are we going to tell the Potter "Why did you make me like this?" God forbid!

Q: For instance, Hunt's assertion that foreknowledge is the cause of predestination elicits the question, "How could God know something was going to happen if He hadn't decided it should happen?" In our human realm, it's impossible, but I don't see any contradiction with Scripture if I assert that it has to be possible with God, as opposed to what you espouse which answers that question (by saying He knows because He's decided it will happen), but in the process seemingly contradicts God's attributes (as I've explained above).

A: This is a misconception of the Bible's use of the word "foreknow." God's sovereign plan of "deciding what will happen," does not contradict His attributes at all! In fact, this supports His sovereignty. Do you think that God is surprised by what happens in this world? If He had not decreed everything to happen in His sovereign plan, He'd have to be surprised, and THAT would violate His character.

Q: The question of the "regenerate unbeliever" is another hot one! We're told that one cannot choose Christ because they cannot will to do so, but that once we're regenerated, we "cannot avoid" choosing Christ (irresistible Grace).

A: That's correct. No more than we can avoid choosing diesel fuel for a car that our mechanic has pulled the gas engine and replaced it with a diesel engine. Our choice is a "free will" choice, but the choice is now bound by the new engine. This analogy is a good one for the new heart in "choosing Christ"—it's a free will choice, but the choice is bound up in the fact that our will follows the new heart and, therefore, can make no other choice.

Q: We can safely say, for the sake of argument, that once regenerated, we're at the same "spiritual level" as Adam was before he sinned. But Adam was able to "resist" God's will, just as much as a regenerate person could choose to "resist" accepting Christ.

A: The Bible does not tell us the nature of Adam's heart when He sinned. We cannot at all "safely say" what spiritual level Adam was at when he sinned. That was a completely different dispensation. Also, having been given a regenerate heart does not mean that it renders one unable to sin. A regenerate man still has the Adamic nature, which we struggle against throughout our time of sanctification (Rom. 7). Therefore, to fall back on Adam as an example is meaningless. [Some Sovereign Grace theologians make a good case that Adam, in his perfect innocence at creation, did have free will in the truest sense—he could choose good or evil by a will totally unbound by the fallen nature. As we know, he chose to sin, thereby resulting in the Fall and the imputation of a sin nature to all of

## Sovereignty of God in Salvation; p. 5

humanity, to which the will then became bound, both his will by imputation, and our wills by inheritance.]

Q: What do you see as the difference between the will of man and the will of the flesh? (John 1:13) If there is a difference, which one is totally depraved, or are both totally depraved?

A: Both come from the depraved nature of man.

Q: The Calvinist (you call it Biblical) position elects certain men to salvation and certain men to damnation?

A: Some argue for a double-election. But I think Romans 9:20-23 is quite clear. All have sinned and are destined for a Christless eternity. But God, in His grace, elected some (from the pile of depraved clay) for glory. Those not elected are left in their depraved condition, not elected to it.

Q: Are you stating that God is willing to predestinate some to everlasting bliss and others to everlasting suffering?

A: I think this was covered in my answer above. ALL are destined to everlasting suffering, BUT for God's grace in electing some for salvation. Why does He elect some and not others? The question should be, "Why has He elected anybody?" Because of His mercy and grace, some He has DECLARED righteous and IMPUTED the righteousness of His Son.

Q: Was I, before I got saved, in Adam or in Christ? If I was in Christ, did I fall out of Christ, get into Adam, and then get out of Adam and back into Christ?

A: This question doesn't make any sense. You can be of the elect and still not YET be saved, because God has not yet regenerated your heart..

Q: Jesus said: "... how often would I have gathered thy children together, as a hen doth gather her brood under her wings, and ye would not!"

A: Of course they would not—they were not elect. Nevertheless, Jesus DESIRED that they be saved, yea, even COMMANDED obedience (which is impossible without Christ).

Q: Luke 13:34, how can the Calvinist (you call it Biblical) position state that the will of man plays no part in the performance of the will of God?

A: The will of man plays NO part—that is correct. If man's will can in any way whatsoever trigger the "performance" (your word) of the will of God, then God is NOT the Almighty Sovereign He claims Himself to be in the Bible. Salvation is either all of God or none of God.

## Sovereignty of God in Salvation; p. 6

Q: Jesus said He “would” but the people said we “would not.”

A: Not until He grants them the faith and the power to repent; i.e., regenerates them with a new heart. The will of man is bound by his nature. New nature, new will. The old nature WILL NOT, yea CANNOT, choose Christ. The new nature will “choose” Christ—no other choice can be made. That is what is meant by the phrase—“Man’s will, bound yet free.” Man’s will is always bound by his nature.

Q: Many modern-day Arminians are in opposition to the view that “faith” comes to us as a “bestowed gift.”

A: Speaking purely from my own salvation experience, if this were not a “bestowed gift” in my believing, working, and persevering, I don’t have an egg’s chance of surviving Niagara Falls. I don’t know a single thing that I ever did which was acceptable to God that was not a “bestowed gift.” John Bunyan once said that the best prayer he ever uttered had enough sin in it to damn the world, and I must plead the same depravity as Bunyan. Faith is indeed the “bestowed gift” of God, for it is His own creative work by the Word of God and its use by the Holy Spirit. We are born “OF” (*ek*) the Spirit, BY (I) the Word of God. We are distinctly told that it is “not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God” (John 1:13). Whatever is essential to salvation is a “work,” and whatever is a “work” is a “condition,” and whatever is a “condition” is what the Holy Spirit “bestows” upon us in accomplishing the making of us new creations in Christ. The real issue is, “Who is sufficient for these things?—God or man?” “For who maketh thee to differ from another? and what hast thou that thou didst not receive?” (1 Cor. 4:7).

Q: Isn’t it clear that God has a will, the people have a will; God willed one thing, the people willed the opposite; therefore God’s will was not performed? This is a common occurrence throughout the Scriptures. How can you explain this from the Bible?

A: Shame on you! Do you realize what you are saying? “Man can prevent God’s will from functioning”!!! I’m sorry, but you have just made man sovereign and God subject to man’s will! You are confused between God allowing something to happen and being forced to go along with the flow of man’s will. This is very dangerous ground to be on.

---

And so the way is prepared for that caricature of gospel preaching, that consists chiefly in begging the sinner to come to Jesus before it is too late, leaves the false impression that it is quite in his power to come today or tomorrow, or whatever time may be convenient to him, and that presents a very willing but powerless Jesus, that would ever be pleased to save the sinner, but is incapable to do so unless the sinner gives his consent. The “whosoever will may come” is presented as meaning: “All men can will to come whenever they please.” And instead of the truth of the gospel that no man can come to Christ unless the Father draw him, we now hear; “No, Christ cannot come to the sinner, unless the sinner permit him!” Here is a fair example of it: “God is ready, God is willing, God is eager, God is anxious, God is pleading for the privilege of washing away the sins of every soul in the precious blood of His son and

**Sovereignty of God in Salvation; p. 7**

heir. But His hands are tied, His power is limited, His grace is constrained by you. If you want to be saved, God is willing to save you. If you don't want to be saved, there isn't anything that even God can do to rescue you from that pit of eternal burning." That is what becomes of the preaching of the gospel when the truth of God's sovereign grace is either forgotten or denied. Call it the gospel, if you like; to me it is nothing short of blasphemy of the name of the living God! An anxious and pleading God, whose power is limited, and whose hands may be tied by the proud and stubborn sinner, who is less than dust of the balance, is no God, but a miserable idol! (Herman Hoeksema (1886-1965) in *Whosoever Will*).

---

**Rick Miesel; Compiler & Editor**  
***Biblical Discernment Ministries***  
**P.O. Box 679**  
**Bedford, IN 47421-0679**