

*shall be clean: from all your filthiness, and from all your idols, will I cleanse you. 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. And I will put My Spirit within you, and **cause** you to walk in My statutes, and ye shall keep My judgments, and do* (Ezekiel 36:24-27). Notice the heavy use of **I**; God does everything necessary to save His people; nothing depends upon their natural heart, will, or effort. He starts, finishes, and seals it; for Christ is the *Author and Finisher of [our] faith* (Heb 12:2) and the elect are to be *confident of this very thing, that He which hath begun a good work in [them] will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ* (Phil 1:6). Hence the blessedness of the doctrine of election and predestination!

One of the clearest passages on the sovereignty of God in both salvation and damnation is Romans 9:11–24 *...For [the children] being not yet born, neither having done any good or evil, **that the purpose of God...according to election might stand, not of works, but of Him that calleth;***) *It was said unto her, The elder shall serve the younger. As it is written, **Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated.** 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 sheweth mercy.** For the scripture saith unto Pharaoh, Even for this same purpose have I raised thee up, that I might shew 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...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 shew 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?* — In light of the above, do not err in believing that Christ loves all, died for all, wants to save all, but cannot save any unless they let him. God sovereignly saves *all of His own*; yet, of the non-elect we read *add iniquity unto their iniquity and let them not come into thy righteousness. Let them be blotted out of the book of the living* (Psa 69:27) and *cover not their iniquity, and let not their sin be blotted out from before thee*" (Neh 4:5) and *God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie: That they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness* (2 Thess 2:11-12).

Now what about you dear reader? Do you believe this Gospel? If you feel spiritually afflicted like Lazarus; blind like the beggar; and unclean like the harlot, cry out to God for His mercy. Seek Him diligently and ask Him to reveal Himself to you through His word. He delights in mercy and is mighty to save; promising to deliver all who believe His Truth (knowing that those who believe, believe only because He has worked that faith in them by His free, sovereign, and predestinating grace). He says to His people *work out your own salvation with fear and trembling **for** it is God which worketh in you **both to will and to do** of His good pleasure* (Phil 2:12-13). To God be the glory!

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THE GOSPEL OF CHRIST

Nothing should be of greater urgency than the salvation of our souls for *we all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God* (Rom 3:23). *If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the Truth is not in us* (1 John 1:8). What is the consequence of our sin? *The wages of sin is death* (Rom 6:13). *The LORD trieth the righteous: but the wicked and him that loveth violence His soul hateth. Upon the wicked he shall rain snares, fire and brimstone, and an horrible tempest... [shall be] the portion of their cup* (Psalm 11:5-6). Isaiah 13:9 states *Behold, the day of the LORD cometh, cruel both with wrath and fierce anger, to lay the land desolate: and He shall destroy the sinners thereof...* and Revelations 20:11-15 declares *And I saw a great white throne, and Him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them. And I saw the dead...stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works...they were judged every man according to their works... whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire."*

We need the Lord Jesus Christ, the only Just God and Saviour, to deliver us from our sin and from the wrath to come. It must be by Him, and Him alone, for there is no salvation in any other, neither is there any other Name given under heaven amongst men whereby *we must* be saved (Acts 4:12). Christ is the Way, the Truth, and the Life; no one comes to God the Father except by Him (John 14:6). No one goes to Heaven apart from God-given faith in Him and from the God-wrought repentance that accompanies faith. The Gospel is the power of God unto salvation to all who believe; for therein is the righteousness of God revealed, even in the salvation of

elect sinners based *solely* upon the Person and work of Christ: (1) *His Person*, in that He is Jehovah the Anointed Saviour; God the Word made flesh. Being both fully human and fully divine, He is the fullness of the Godhead bodily, even the express image of God, being Himself God. (2) *His work*, in that as their Atoning Substitute, Christ kept the law of God perfectly on behalf of His people; suffered unto death on the cross in their stead (enduring the full wrath of God due their sins); paid the entirety of their sin debt for them (utterly fulfilling the demands of divine law and justice); and forever put away their sin. In so doing, He established a righteousness for them that guarantees all aspects of their salvation, — even from the new birth to final glory (Romans 1:16-18; 3:20-22; 4:3-8; 8:28-39; 10:1-4). It is through this salvation that the Triune Godhead is glorified in the highest.

When Christ said on the cross “*It is Finished*,” He meant it. He did it all; He fulfilled the will of God in the salvation of all who were chosen in Him from before the world was. It is only in light of this finished work that God the Holy Spirit regenerates, converts, and seals the elect. We see this beautifully put forth in Ephesians 1:4-14, *Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly [places] in Christ: 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: Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will, to the praise of the glory of His grace, wherein He hath made us accepted in the Beloved. In whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace; wherein He hath abounded toward us in all wisdom and prudence; having made known unto us the mystery of His will, according to His good pleasure which He hath purposed in Himself: 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:*

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: that we should be to the praise of His glory, who first trusted in Christ. In whom ye also [trusted], after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise, which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of His glory. — So we see that the Father chose a people unto Himself, in Christ, from before the world was; He predestinated them (put a hedge about them, bordering them in, unto salvation) in light of the work that He knew His Son would faithfully accomplish. Thus, at the time appointed, the Holy Spirit will quicken them (giving them eternal life), and they will believe the Gospel preached unto them, for...*as many as were ordained to eternal life believed* (Acts 13:48) knowing that *...God hath from the beginning chosen [them] to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the Truth: Whereunto He called [them] by our gospel, to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ*" (2 Thess 2:13-14). They are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that [they] should shew forth the praises of Him who hath called [them] out of darkness into His marvellous light (1 Peter 2:9). Spiritually, Psalm 65:4 puts it this way: *Blessed [is the man whom] Thou choosest, and causest to approach* [unto Thee], that He may dwell in Thy courts: *we shall be satisfied with the goodness of Thy house, [even] of Thy holy Temple.*

Note that election and predestination have nothing to do with any natural goodness in the elect (for there is none) nor is it based upon any supposed foreknowledge of their willingness to come to Jesus. We know this because God declared thrice ... *There is none righteous, no, not one: there is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God. They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one* (Psalm 14:1-3; 53:1-3;

and Rom 3:10-12). Christ stated *No man can come to Me, except the Father which hath sent Me draw him... But there are some of you that believe not. For Jesus knew from the beginning who they were that believed not... Therefore said I unto you, that no man can come unto Me, except it were given unto him of My Father* (John 6:44, 64-65).

God must make His people willing in the day of His power (Psalm 110:3), i.e. in the day of their salvation. Concerning the Apostles and all of the elect, the Lord Jesus declares *Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain...* [John 15:16]. Christ does not wait for the impossible; He does not wait for fallen man to release themselves from the mighty grip of sin, flesh, and Satan. He doesn't wait for them to accept Him or to make a decision for Him for He knows that they cannot; He knows that He must first save them and make them acceptable in God's sight before they can do anything spiritually good. We read in 1 Corinthians 2:14 *the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.*" That word *receiveth* is *dechomai* and it literally means to *actively receive, take up, take hold of, or to accept for oneself*. Unless one is already born again by the grace and effectual working of God, they cannot accept Jesus, take up Christ, or receive the Lord into their heart, because they are *spiritually dead in trespasses and sins* and have no spiritual strength or life to do so.

God teaches that *the heart [is] deceitful above all [things], and desperately wicked* (Jer 17:9) for *out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness...* (Mark 7:21-22) and yet the deceived ones speak of “inviting Jesus into their hearts” as if the Lord desires to indwell their naturally vile, wicked hearts. They fail to realize that God must first quicken His elect, and put a new heart in them, before He will indwell their heart. He