

**November 5, 2013**

**Question:** What are some verses that explain that God does not choose whom he will save?

**Answer:** First, the Scriptures are clear that God desires all men to be saved. God "desires all people to be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth" (2 Timothy 2:4). Further, Peter wrote that "The Lord is not slow to fulfill his promise as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing that any should perish, but that all should reach repentance" (2 Peter 3:8). These passages emphasize coming to a knowledge of the truth and reaching repentance. That involves personal choice. Those who chose to live in ignorance, or refuse to repent, will not be saved. God does not make those choices for men, but men make them for themselves.

Second, the Bible clearly says that "God is no respecter of persons," or "shows no partiality" (Acts 10:34). Peter then said that "in every nation anyone who fears him and does what is right is acceptable to him" (Acts 10:35). If God arbitrarily chose who would be saved and who would be lost, He would become a respecter of persons, and man would have no responsibility for his eternal fate.

Third, those passages which speak of predestination (Romans 8:29, 30; Ephesians 1:5, 11) address the role of Christ in the salvation of man. God predestined to save those who follow Jesus. Jesus said, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me" (John 14:6).

According to our Lord, a day of Judgment is coming (John 5:28, 29). The apostle Paul confirmed this judgment in Romans 14:10-12 and 2 Corinthians 5:10, 11. The writer of Hebrews wrote: "And just as it is appointed for man to die once, and after that comes judgment, so Christ, having been offered once to bear the sins of many, will appear a second time, not to deal with sin but to save those who are eagerly waiting for him" (Hebrews 9:27, 28).

The apostle Paul, wrote the following: "This is evidence of the righteous judgment of God, that you may be considered worthy of the kingdom of God, for which you are also suffering—since indeed God considers it just to repay with affliction those who afflict you, and to grant relief to you who are afflicted as well as to us, when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven with his mighty angels in flaming fire, inflicting vengeance on those who do not know God and on those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus. They will suffer the punishment of eternal destruction, away from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of his might, when he comes on that day to be glorified in his saints, and to be marveled at among all who have believed, because our testimony to you was believed. To this end we always pray for you, that our God may make you worthy of his calling and may fulfill every resolve for good and every work of faith by his power, so that the name of our Lord Jesus may be glorified in you, and you in him, according to the grace of our God and the Lord Jesus Christ" (2 Thessalonians 1:5-12).

Special attention should be given to the fact that vengeance will be taken on "those who do not know God and on those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus." The saved are therefore those who know God and obey the gospel of Jesus, and not those that God arbitrarily chooses to save or condemn.

The promise of salvation is made to those who believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God (Mark 16:16; Hebrews 11:6). Faith comes through the word of God (Romans 10:17). It is true that Jesus

said, "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 6:44). But, God draws a man to Him by means of the gospel, and not by some arbitrary selection process. Each man must chose to accept or reject the gospel of Jesus Christ. Some say that faith is all that is required of a man in order to be saved, but Jesus also said, "Except ye repent, ye shall all like wise perish" (Luke 13:3, 5). Also, one should consider Acts 2:38 and the demand to "repent and be baptized." Still others would say that this is where man's response to the gospel ends, but the Scriptures also demand a public confession of Christ (Matthew 10:32, 33; Romans 10:9, 10). Again, some stop here, but Jesus and His disciples also demanded baptism (immersion in water) as a part of our obedience to the gospel of Christ (Matthew 28:18-20; Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38; 8:36-38; 22:16; Romans 6:3, 4). Of course, as already noted, our ultimate salvation is realized after death and judgment. Discipleship demands faithfulness to the Savior (Matthew 10:22; 1 Corinthians 15:58). This does not require perfection on the part of a Christian, but it does require faithfulness. God has determined to save those who accept the Savior (His only begotten Son) in the manner the Scriptures demand. Thus, we, and not God, make the determination as to whether we will be lost or saved. He has provided the means of our salvation through His Son. We may choose to accept or reject the pardon offered through Jesus. Perhaps it would be helpful to note the words of Christ Himself: "The one who rejects me and does not receive my words has a judge; the word that I have spoken will judge him on the last day" (John 12:48).

Because of God's love, mercy and grace, Jesus was dispatched from heaven to earth to be man's Savior. God loves all men, but all men do not love Him. Only those who accept His offer of salvation through Jesus on the terms outlined in Scripture will ultimately be saved. We must hear, believe, obey, and live by the word of God, for someday we will be judged by it. Thus, we choose whether heaven or hell is in our future by our response to Christ and His gospel. Come Judgment Day, God will be compelled to honor the choice we made in this life.