

# Does Man Decide On His Own Salvation?

For whom He foreknew, He also predestined *to be* conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren. Moreover whom He predestined, these He also called; whom He called, these He also justified; and whom He justified, these He also glorified.  
Rm 8:29-30

Whose will is exercised when a man is saved from sin? Arminians say that it is man's own will that makes the decision. Every day people are told from pulpits, 'Decide today, choose salvation, give your heart to the Lord, accept Christ in your heart.' This unbiblical emphasis claims that man can choose to believe and can accept or reject the Gospel.

However, this is not a Biblical teaching. Not only does scripture deny this emphasis upon man's will in salvation, but in many places it expressly declares that it is God's will that is active in our salvation. We can easily illustrate this with several scriptures, without needless exposition.

## Man has no power to choose (will) salvation

But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name: who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God. Jn 1:12-13

For *the children* not yet being born [Jacob & Esau], nor having done any good or evil, that the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works but of Him who calls. Rm 9:11

So then *it is* not of him who wills, nor of him who runs, but of God who shows mercy. Rm 9:16

## God's will is what decides our salvation

Of His own will He brought us forth by the word of truth, that we might be a kind of firstfruits of His creatures. Jm 1:18

Jesus answered, 'Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.' Jn 3:5-6

For He says to Moses, 'I will have mercy on whomever I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whomever I will have compassion.' So then *it is* not of him who wills, nor of him who runs, but of God who shows mercy. For the Scripture says to Pharaoh, 'For this very purpose I have raised you up, that I may show My power in you, and that My name may be declared in all the earth.' Therefore He has mercy on whom He wills, and whom He wills He hardens. Rm 9:15-18

For it is God who works in you both to will and to do for *His* good pleasure. Phil 2:13

## Man is dead in sins and can do no spiritual good

And you *He made alive*, who were dead in trespasses and sins, in which you once walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit who now works in the sons of disobedience, among whom also we all once conducted ourselves in the

lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, just as the others. Eph 2:1-3

For we have previously charged both Jews and Greeks that they are all under sin. As it is written: 'There is none righteous, no, not one. There is none who understands; There is none who seeks after God. They have all turned aside; They have together become unprofitable; There is none who does good, no, not one.' ... 'There is no fear of God before their eyes.' ... by the deeds of the law no flesh will be justified in His sight, for by the law *is* the knowledge of sin. Rm 3:9-20

### **God raises the dead and gives life to the elect**

For as the Father raises the dead and gives life to *them*, even so the Son gives life to whom He will. Jn 5:21

But God, who is rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead in trespasses, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved). Eph 2:4-5

God, who gives life to the dead and calls those things which do not exist as though they did. Rm 4:17

### **We cannot birth ourselves but we are born of God**

Blessed *be* the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His abundant mercy has begotten us again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. 1 Pt 1:3

... having been born again, not of corruptible seed but incorruptible, through the word of God which lives and abides forever. 1 Pt 1:23

Whoever has been born of God does not sin, for His seed remains in him; and he cannot sin, because he has been born of God. 1 Jn 3:9

### **We did not choose God but God chose us from eternity**

Knowing, beloved brethren, your election by God. 1 Thess 1:4

But we are bound to give thanks to God always for you, brethren beloved by the Lord, because God from the beginning chose you for salvation through sanctification by the Spirit and belief in the truth, to which He called you by our gospel, for the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ. 2 Thess 2:13-14

He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame. Eph 1:4

[God] has saved us and called *us* with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace which was given to us in Christ Jesus before time began. 2 Tim 1:9

Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father. 1 Pt 1:2

### **The elect are loved by God from eternity**

He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love, having predestined us to adoption as sons by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will. Eph 1:4-5

Behold what manner of love the Father has bestowed on us, that we should be called children of God! 1 Jn 3:1

### **The Father draws the beloved elect in time to Christ to be saved**

All that the Father gives Me will come to Me, and the one who comes to Me I will by no means cast out. ... No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him; and I will raise him up at the last day. It is written in the prophets, 'And they shall all be taught by God.' Therefore everyone who has heard and learned from the Father comes to Me. ... Therefore I have said to you that no one can come to Me unless it has been granted to him by My Father. Jn 6:37, 44-45, 65

### **Conclusion**

Thus we can see that the controlling power in a man's salvation is not man himself but God alone. This is why salvation is said to be 'of the Lord' or 'belonging to the Lord', or that 'God is salvation' (1). God gives the elect the faith to believe the Gospel, and the ability and desire to repent (2). This is done in regeneration whereby the will and the heart is changed, by the work of the Holy Spirit, in order that man can turn from sin to Christ (3). This is why salvation is all of grace; it is all a free gift (4). Salvation is wholly of the Lord and he gives it to whomever he pleases.

Historically, this exposition of the Biblical Gospel has been called Augustinianism, Calvinism, Reformed Theology, or Sovereign Grace. The teaching of Arminianism is clearly shown to be false.

### **Footnotes**

1. E.g. Ps 3:8, 38:22, 68:19; Jer 3:23; Jonah 2:9.
2. Acts 5:31, 11:18, 14:27, 18:27; Eph 2:8-9; Heb 12:2; Rm 2:4; 2 Tim 2:25-26.
3. Jn 3; Phil 2:12-13.
4. Rm 4:16; Titus 2:11.

Scripture quotations are from The New King James Version  
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