

God's Choice

Remember to fill in the Bible references before coming to the study.

As we approach our second lesson we may be thinking that God is simply waiting in Heaven for people to repent and believe the Gospel. Someone might say "God has done His part by sending Jesus to die for us, and now we must do our part". But salvation is not partly our achievement and partly Christ's. If it were, we would be joint saviours with Christ of our own souls. No. God, who sent His Son, is also active in drawing us to Him. It is God who gives us repentance and faith to believe the Gospel. Salvation is God's work from beginning to end, so that He might have all the honour.

In our first study we said that everyone faces a choice. We can either continue in rebellion or turn to God. If you responded by turning to God, it was because God enabled you to do so. If you are a Christian today, it is because God decided you should become one. In an ultimate sense it was God's choice, not yours. So this study is about salvation from God's perspective.

1. GOD'S SPIRIT GAVE US A NEW NATURE

(a) If you are a Christian it is because God has been at work in your life. God's Spirit has produced an inner change; you have been "born again": **look up John 3:5**

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(b) The rebirth affects every part of our nature. It gives us a new desire to serve and please God. Unless God had worked this change in your rebellious heart you would never have submitted to Christ's rule. Without this change you would still be spiritually dead: **look up Ephesians 2:1**

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(c) When the Bible says we are spiritually dead it is describing a condition that could not be worse. No one can be "deader" than dead! That was your condition before the Lord gave you the spiritual life of the rebirth. Though we now have a new nature we also retain our desperately wicked hearts (Matthew 15:19): **look up Jeremiah 17:9**

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2. GOD'S DECISION NOT OURS



(a) A Christian not only has a new nature through the rebirth, he also has a very special honour. The person who is born of God's Spirit is also born into God's family. Everyone who receives Christ as Saviour has become a child of God, and that is a great privilege! Now, we did not decide to be born into this world - others, humanly speaking, made that decision for us. In the same way, however it may appear, we did not decide to be born into God's family - it was God's choice: **look up John 1:12-13**

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(b) God decided that you should be a Christian before the world began: **look up Ephesians 1:4**

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(c) It was not you who chose Christ, but Christ who chose you: **look up John 15:16**

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(d) The only reason you love Him now, is because He first loved you: **look up 1 John 4:19**

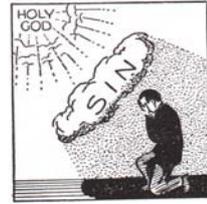
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(e) Conclusion: all who repent and believe are appointed by God to Eternal Life: **look up Acts 13:48**

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3. MAN IS POWERLESS TO SAVE HIMSELF

(a) Those who are dead are powerless to help themselves. Only the power of God could have raised you from spiritual death and altered the direction of your life. Only His Spirit could have given you the desire to be saved. Only Christ could have made you willing to forsake sin. Only He could have released your enslaved will and set it free: **look up John 8:34 and 36**



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The Bible has many examples of people who were once slaves of sin but whom God set free. They could never have saved themselves. God could have justly passed them by, but instead He gave them true repentance and faith.

Zacchaeus, for example, had been a very bad man indeed. He was a tax collector who worked for the hated Roman occupiers. Like all tax collectors of his day, he was a cheat who took more from people than he should have done. In fact he was a chief tax collector, so he was considered by everyone to be among the worst sinners. Jesus saw him watching from a tree as He went along. Instead of passing him by, Jesus stopped to speak with him and went to his home. **You can read about the remarkable change Jesus brought to his life in Luke 19:1-10.**

(b) Saul, who was later called Paul, threatened Christians with death and dragged them to prison. He deserved God's judgement more than most, but Jesus stepped into *his* life also. Saul was not seeking Jesus, but Jesus was seeking him. **You can read about his conversion in Acts 9:1-9.** He considered himself the "chief of sinners": **look up 1 Timothy 1:15**

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Zacchaeus and Saul were reckless sinners, confirmed in their evil ways. If God had not chosen them, they would never have chosen God!

YOU were just as undeserving and powerless. Sin was too strong for you, and you were spiritually helpless. It is only because God broke into your life that you are saved today. This undeserved love of God towards you is called "Grace"!

CONCLUSION

(c) When you became a Christian you did not simply turn over a new leaf. Nor did you decide to "follow Jesus" like some choose to follow eastern gurus. When you were 'saved' you became a new creation - something beyond the reach of your own enslaved will: **look up 2 Corinthians 5:17.** You became a 'child of God'.



Before the world began you were the object of God's choice. Then, 2,000 years ago, His Son died to pay the price of your sin. In recent days God has worked in you to draw you to Himself. And God, who has done so much in you and for you, will also keep you by His power for eternity.