

Gospel Truth

Biblical Instruction and Encouragement for the
Mission Field Worldwide.

THE GREATEST INVITATION—MANY ARE CALLED

(Parable told by Christ — recorded in Matthew 22:1-14)

Jesus shared a parable about a royal wedding feast, illustrating the importance of God’s universal invitation to salvation.

The kingdom of God is like a king who provided a bountiful supper for the wedding celebration of his son. The king sent out servants to call people to the wedding who had been invited, but they would not come. He sent out other servants with details of the wonderful dinner that was prepared. “Come to the marriage, everything is ready!”

Many who were invited responded with indifference or contempt, continuing their business—some to their farms, others to their markets. Others, enraged in their hatred for the king, mistreated and ultimately killed his servants. The king heard of this great disrespect and injustice; he sent his armies to kill the murderers and destroy their cities.

The king said to his servants, “The wedding is ready, but those who were invited were not worthy. Go out to the highways, and whoever you find, invite them to come to the feast.” The servants went and did as the king commanded, inviting everyone—both good and bad—to attend the wedding feast. Soon, the wedding was furnished with guests.

The king came to see the guests and saw a man who had not put on the wedding garment.

“Friend,” the king asked, “why did you come without the proper dress?” The man was speechless. The king commanded his servants to bind the man hand and foot and cast him into outer darkness, where there would be great suffering.

Jesus concluded the parable by saying, “Many are called, but few are chosen.”

This parable lays the foundation of a great doctrinal truth. The greatest invitation ever to be extended is to be saved from sin and to experience the blessings of God’s kingdom. The call was first given to the Jews, but as a nation, they rejected Jesus Christ and spurned the opportunity to repent and to enjoy the good things of God. The good news of salvation was then extended to the Gentiles. God’s offer of salvation was given to people of every family, nation, race, and language. “Come and be saved. Repent and be united with Christ, that you might enter into the joy of the Lord.”

Many people are ambivalent—silently ignoring the call to the marriage supper. They are busy with the cares of life and have no interest in serving God. They prioritize money, pleasure, education, careers, and entertainment and do not respond to the gospel invitation. Others are antagonistic and actively rebel and fight against the things of God.

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“The greatest invitation ever to be extended is to be saved from sin and to experience the blessings of God’s kingdom.”

WHAT THE BIBLE TEACHES ABOUT...

Word of God

2 Tim. 3:16-17; 2 Peter 1:20-21; Matt. 24:35

Relationship of Love

Matt. 22:37-40; John 14:21-23; 1 John 4:7-11

Repentance

Acts 3:19; Acts 17:30; 2 Cor. 7:10

New Birth

John 3:3-7; 2 Cor. 5:17; Rom. 6:1-4;
Eph. 2:1, 5-6

Freedom From Sin

1 John 5:18; Matt. 1:21; John 8:11

Infilling of the Holy Spirit

Acts 19:2; Acts 15:8-9; Acts 1:8

Holiness

Luke 1:73-75; Heb. 12:14; 1 Peter 1:15-16;
Titus 2:11-12; Rom. 6:22

Kingdom of God

Luke 17:20-21; Romans 14:17; John 18:36

The Church

Acts 2:47; Eph. 4:4-6; 1 Cor. 12:12-13; Col. 1:18

Unity

John 17:20-23; Gal 3:28; Rev. 18:2-4

Ordinances

Matt. 28:19-20; Matt. 26:26-30;
1 Cor. 11:23-27; John 13:14-17

Divine Healing

Luke 4:18; Isaiah 53:4-5; James 5:13-16

Sanctity of Marriage

Matt. 19:5-6; Luke 16:18; Rom. 7:2-3;
1 Cor. 7:10-11

Outward Appearance

1 Tim. 2:9-10; 1 Cor. 11:14-15; Deut. 22:5

End of Time

2 Peter 3:7-12; John 5:28-29; 2 Cor. 5:10;
Matt. 25:31-46

Pacifism

Luke 6:27-29; Luke 18:20

Worship

John 4:23-24; Eph. 5:19; 2 Cor. 3:17

Great Commission

Mark 16:15

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It is important to note that the invitation of the gospel is to ALL people—no one is excluded. The king wanted everyone to come to the marriage supper, just as God wants all people to be saved today. He invites you to come and enjoy His bountiful supper, in this life and in the life to come.

As with any wedding, proper attire is expected. In Jesus' time, guests were customarily provided with a wedding garment; they did not provide their own. God has made provision for ALL who respond to His invitation—



“Our own
righteousness
is not suitable
apparel. The only
acceptable garment
is salvation which
only God can give.”

offering robes of righteousness to each one. Our own righteousness is not suitable apparel. The only acceptable garment is salvation which only God can give. However, to receive this salvation, each individual must personally respond to the universal call to be saved.

It is not enough to show up to a church service or to fellowship with the guests. We must be clothed with salvation.

This is why the man in the parable was speechless—for there was no excuse. He had been provided with a garment but refused to put it on. His refusal came at a grave cost: eternal separation from the king's presence in a place of suffering.

God does not force anyone to accept Jesus Christ as their Savior; however, ALL are invited. Some ignore the invitation, and some delay responding. Others show up but maintain their own doctrines and ways and refuse to accept God's way of holiness.

As in the parable, all people are called, but

not all are chosen to enjoy the blessings of God because they are unwilling to meet the prescribed conditions.

Those who are chosen—elected by God and blessed in this life and in eternity—are those that respond to the invitation and put on the provided wedding garment. The greatest of invitations has been extended to us all, but we must choose to respond and be clothed in the garments of salvation. For as Jesus said, “Many are called, but few are chosen.” God is not withholding the possibility of salvation from anyone. The gift of God is freely extended to all by His grace, but each person must choose to receive it.

Friend, have you answered the invitation? Will you stand clothed in Christ's righteousness on that great day? Do not delay—salvation is waiting. ■

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Editorial



If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink. —John 7:37

Jesus extends an open invitation to all who are inwardly thirsty—those who crave something deeper, better, and eternal. I'm so thankful that we have been invited to be saved. The grace of God is extended to all, and He desires each person to respond in faith.

The theme this quarter is "Election and Free Will." Doctrinal questions surrounding this topic have been debated for centuries. Calvinistic theology—rooted in teachings such as unconditional election, limited atonement, irresistible grace, and perseverance of the saints—distorts the beautiful message of salvation. These teachings undermine the biblical truth that God desires all to be saved from sin.

Rather than refuting every point of error, this paper emphasizes the truth—clearly presented through Scripture—that salvation is extended to all and must be freely received. The best way to combat false doctrine is with truth. When we study the Word of God and rightly divide it, we are equipped to recognize and resist error. Isolated verses can appear to support certain doctrines, but Scripture must be interpreted in context and in harmony with the full message of the gospel. The foundation of New Testament teaching is that salvation is offered to all—not just a predetermined few. God has given each person the freedom to choose whether or not to receive His grace.

Many scriptures that mention *election* specifically address the shift from God's covenant with Israel to the calling of the New Testament church. When read in context, it becomes clear that these passages are not about the salvation of individual souls, but about the broader plan of redemption through Christ.

What a sad and compromised message it would be to claim that Christ did not die for all—that His blood is only effective for a preselected group. Praise God, His grace reaches to you and to me! In His sovereign love, He has given us the freedom to accept or reject the gift of salvation.

Though this topic cannot be exhausted in one study, we trust a clear foundation has been laid. May God's Spirit lead you into deeper understanding and firmly establish you in the truth of His Word.

Michael W. Smith

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Eternal Security



IF GOD ALREADY KNOWS EVERYTHING, DOES THAT MEAN WE LACK REAL CHOICES?

No. While God is omniscient and sovereign, He also created us with the power to choose. His complete foreknowledge does not imply that He causes our decisions. When future events were prophesied based on God's prescience—His perfect knowledge of all future events—they were not causal, but revelatory.

Prophecies in Scripture—such as those in Daniel and Revelation—were revealed not to override human will but to demonstrate that God knows the end from the beginning. **God's foreknowledge magnifies His sovereignty without diminishing man's free will.**



Bible Study Guide

Election and Free Will

Sovereignty, Grace, Choice, and Salvation

Scripture Reading:

I call heaven and earth to record this day against you, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing: therefore choose life, that both thou and thy seed may live. —Deuteronomy 30:19

Definitions:

Election: The act of God's choosing or selecting. It is tied to God's grace and foreknowledge, not favoritism or force.

Free Will: The God-given ability of humans to make choices. In the context of salvation, it refers to the capacity to respond to God's call—either by accepting or rejecting His offer of grace.

Summary:

God's sovereign grace works in conjunction with man's responsibility and freedom to choose. God predestined His plan of salvation through the death of Jesus Christ, a plan designed to reach all people. He calls, inviting us to respond.

I. Sovereignty of God

- A. Isaiah 46:9–10 God's counsel shall stand.
- B. Daniel 4:35 God does according to His will.

II. Universal Call to Salvation

- A. John 3:16–17 God so loved the world.
- B. 1 Timothy 2:4 God wills all to be saved.
- C. 2 Peter 3:9 Not willing that any should perish.
- D. Matthew 11:28 Come unto me.
- E. Revelation 22:17 Whosoever will may come.

III. Christ Died for All

- A. 1 Timothy 2:6 Gave Himself a ransom for all.
- B. 1 John 2:2 Propitiation for the whole world.
- C. Hebrews 2:9 Tasted death for every man.
- D. 2 Corinthians 5:15 He died for all.
- E. John 1:29 Lamb takes away sin of the world.

IV. Salvation by Grace Through Faith

- A. Ephesians 2:8–9 Saved by grace, not works.
- B. Titus 2:11–12 Grace hath appeared to all men.
- C. Romans 3:24 Justified freely by His grace.
- D. Acts 15:11 Saved by Jesus' grace.

V. Free Will and Personal Choice

- A. Deuteronomy 30:19 Choose life and live.
- B. Joshua 24:15 Choose whom you will serve.
- C. Hebrews 3:15 Harden not your hearts.
- D. Romans 6:16 You choose whom to obey.
- E. 2 Peter 1:10 Make your calling and election sure.

VI. Receiving or Resisting Grace

- A. Revelation 3:20 If any man hear and open.
- B. 2 Corinthians 6:1 Receive not grace in vain.
- C. Matthew 23:37 I would... ye would not.
- D. Acts 7:51 You resist the Holy Ghost.
- E. Hebrews 5:9 Salvation to those who obey.
- F. Acts 24:25 Felix trembled but delayed.

VII. Election of Grace and Predestination

- A. 2 Timothy 1:9 Salvation purposed before the world began.
- B. Ephesians 1:4–7 Chosen before foundation of the world.
- C. Ephesians 1:10–11 Predestinated according to His purpose.
- D. Romans 8:28–30 Foreknown, predestinated, called, justified.
- E. Acts 4:12 Salvation in no other.
- F. 2 Thessalonians 2:13 Chosen from the beginning.
- G. 1 Peter 1:2 Elect by God's knowledge.
- H. John 1:11–13 Not by will of man.
- I. Romans 11:5–7 Remnant by election of grace.

Conclusion

*And the Spirit and the bride say, Come.
And let him that heareth say, Come.
And let him that is athirst come.
And whosoever will,
let him take the water of life freely.
Revelation 22:17*

Election of Grace

GOD'S SOVEREIGNTY AND THE RESPONSE OF FREE WILL



God calls all people to salvation, but not all respond. How do divine sovereignty and human choice coexist? The election of grace reflects God's sovereign authority—yet invites every soul to answer His call. The choice remains ours.

“Though people may choose to act outside of God's will, that freedom exists by God's design.”

God's Sovereign Plan of Salvation

God reigns supreme. His will, purpose, and plans cannot be overruled. As the prophet Isaiah declared, “My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure” (Isaiah 46:10). God directs all things according to His divine wisdom and purpose. As Daniel proclaimed, “He doeth according to his will... none can stay his hand” (Daniel 4:35). This includes God's plan of salvation. God purposed to redeem mankind before the foundation of the world. Salvation was not random—it was God's deliberate plan, designed to reach all people.

A Universal Invitation to All

The gospel is a universal call. God loves the whole world and made salvation available to “whosoever believeth in him” (John 3:16). God “will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth” (1 Timothy 2:4). Peter stated God's will: The Lord is “not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance” (2 Peter 3:9). The invitation of the Spirit is extended to all: “Whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely” (Revelation 22:17).

John the Baptist proclaimed, “Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world” (John 1:29). Forgiveness is not reserved for a select few. Jesus “gave himself a ransom for all” (1 Timothy 2:6) and became the atoning sacrifice for “the sins of the whole world” (1 John 2:2). He “died for all” (2 Corinthians 5:15) and tasted “death for every man” (Hebrews 2:9). No one is excluded!

Salvation Through Grace

Though freely offered, salvation is neither automatic nor universally received. “For by grace are ye saved through faith... not of works” (Ephesians 2:8-9). Salvation is not granted by status, works, lineage, or merit, but by grace—

God's unmerited favor. “Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus” (Romans 3:24). Redemption is available exclusively “through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ” (Acts 15:11). Though not received by all, this grace is offered to all. “For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men” (Titus 2:11-12).

Power of Free Will

God wills all to be saved, and Christ died to fulfill this divine purpose. Yet it was also part of His sovereign plan to create mankind with free will—the ability to choose. God's creation of humanity as free moral agents is fully consistent with His sovereign authority. Though people may choose to act outside of God's will, that freedom exists by God's design.

Scripture affirms humanity's responsibility of choice. “I have set before you life and death... therefore choose life” (Deuteronomy 30:19). Likewise, Joshua challenged the people: “Choose you this day whom ye will serve” (Joshua 24:15). Without choice, there is no true worship or love.

Hebrews 3:15 urges a personal response: “Today if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts.” As free moral agents, we have the capacity to obey or reject God. Paul wrote, “To whom ye yield yourselves servant to obey... his servants ye are” (Romans 6:16). Each one is responsible for their soul's destiny. Peter exhorts, “Give diligence to make your calling and election sure” (2 Peter 1:10). If there were no free will, such appeals would be unnecessary.

Receiving or Resisting Grace

Human choices outside of God's purpose do not undermine His sovereignty—they demonstrate it. Free will exists by His decree, and the responsibility of choice rests fully on each soul. By God's sovereign design, it is up to

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each individual to receive or resist the grace of salvation. Christ stands at the door of every heart and knocks: “If any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him” (Revelation 3:20). Salvation must be accepted. Each person must choose: “Receive not the grace of God in vain” (2 Corinthians 6:1).



“Election of grace harmonizes God’s sovereignty with man’s response—those who believe are chosen, not by coercion, but by grace.”

Jesus looked over Jerusalem with grief: “How often would I have gathered thy children together... and ye would not” (Matthew 23:37). The Lord desired to be their Savior, but they rejected Him. Stephen rebuked the religious leaders, “Ye do always resist the Holy Ghost” (Acts 7:51). Felix was under conviction and was drawn to repentance, yet he chose to resist (Acts 24:25). Jesus “became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him” (Hebrews 5:9). God calls every individual, but each person must accept or reject salvation.

Election by Grace

While salvation is offered to all, and every person must choose how to respond, the Bible also speaks of God’s election—His sovereign choice by grace. Consider how God’s invitation and man’s response work together within His eternal purpose and foreknowledge. Salvation was not an afterthought—it was divinely designed by God before time began. God’s redemptive plan was preordained. As Paul wrote, God hath “saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began” (2 Timothy 1:9). Before creation, God instituted a plan of grace through Jesus Christ. Though sovereignly established, it included the means by which individuals could receive salvation—through faith and obedience.

Predestination

Ephesians 1:4-5 states, “He hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world... having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself.” The chosen, or the elect, are those that come to Christ by faith. Verse 11 adds, “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.” God predestined the plan by which believers receive the inheritance—not a predetermined list of individuals, but His predetermined purpose for all who respond to Christ.

Salvation was never for one group only. Paul taught throughout his writings that God’s plan included both Jews and Gentiles. Romans 8:28-30 teaches that those whom God foreknew, He also predestinated. The gospel call was determined before Christ’s appearing and extended to all. The avenue of salvation is fixed: “For there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved” (Acts 4:12). God did not predestine who would believe, but that those who believe would be saved.

2 Thessalonians 2:13 says, “God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth.” God’s election—His choice—is not separate from human response. Those who are chosen are those who believe. Peter confirms this in 1 Peter 1:2, calling the saints “elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father.” God’s decision to grant salvation to all who believe—Jew and Gentile—reveals the mystery of election and predestination. No longer based on lineage or nationality, God’s children are now chosen by grace through faith.

This truth is echoed in John 1:11-13: “He came unto his own, and his own received him not. But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name: which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.” Though the Jews as a nation rejected Christ, all who received Him became children of God, not by birthright or human will, but through faith in Christ.

The Choice Is Yours

Paul concluded in Romans 11:5: “Even so then at this present time also there is a remnant according to the election of grace.” The election of grace refers to those who believe according to God’s plan. Election is not an arbitrary decree, but God’s gracious design for all who respond to the gospel. The call is universal, but those who answer it are the elect.

The election of grace harmonizes God’s sovereignty with man’s response—those who believe are chosen, not by coercion, but by grace. The plan is set, the sacrifice made, salvation offered—now, the choice is yours! ■



If human nature is totally depraved, how is it possible for anyone to choose or seek after God?

The prophet Jeremiah described the fallen condition of man: “The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?” (Jeremiah 17:9). Paul echoed this truth in Romans 3:10: “There is none righteous, no, not one.” Verse 12 adds, “There is none that doeth good.” Before salvation, every person is in a state of depravity. This does not mean that people are incapable of doing anything morally right, but that no one is righteous before God—all are in need of salvation.

In Romans 3, Paul addressed the Jews, showing that they had no advantage over the Gentiles, because all were equally under sin. Without salvation, everyone falls short of God’s holiness. In verse 11, Paul states: “There is none that seeketh after God.”

This raises the question again: How can a sinner in a depraved state seek God? Jesus answered this directly: “No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him” (John 6:44). It takes the Spirit’s drawing to bring an unregenerate person to a place of decision. No one seeks God apart from this grace. But the good news is that this drawing grace reaches all people.

Jesus said the Holy Spirit was sent to “reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment” (John 16:8).

He also declared: “And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me” (John 12:32). John 1:9 describes Jesus as “the true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world.” This convicting and drawing grace is not limited to a predestined group—it extends to all, even the vilest sinner. Jesus came “to seek and to save that which was lost” (Luke 19:10).

God is the initiator. He calls, convicts, enlightens, and draws. Yet the sinner must respond in faith or resist this grace. While no one seeks God on their own, everyone is drawn, and thus the responsibility to respond lies with each soul. Even the smallest desire for God is not from within ourselves—it is evidence of His drawing grace.

If Jesus said, “Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you,” does that mean we don’t have a choice in salvation?

No. Salvation is freely offered, but it is never forced on anyone. “Whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely” (Revelation 22:17).

The scripture in question is John 15:16: “Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit.” The word chosen here is derived from the same root as elect. Context is very important when studying God’s Word.

In this passage, Jesus was speaking specifically to His disciples. It was Christ who called and ordained them to go and preach the gospel. Their callings and spiritual giftings were not from themselves—they were from God. While there is a universal call to salvation, this verse refers specifically to the disciples’ call to ministry and service—not to a denial of human choice in salvation.



Does Romans 9 teach that God chooses who will be saved and who will be lost?

No. Romans 9 emphasizes God’s sovereign right to bless whom He wills and to carry out His redemptive plan. It does not teach arbitrary salvation. When God said, “Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated” (v.13), He was not speaking of Jacob and Esau as individuals, but of their descendants. He was referring to nations and their roles in His purpose—not individual salvation. Just as God, in His sovereignty, chose to bless the descendants of Jacob above all nations, so He has the authority and right to open the plan of salvation to the Gentiles. The elect are no longer determined by Jewish birth, but by spiritual birth.

“I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy” (v.15) declares that mercy is God’s to give. Yet other scriptures show that He offers mercy and salvation to all people. When Paul writes, “It is not of him that willeth...” (v.16), he is underscoring that salvation is not earned by human effort—it is by grace. Romans 9 affirms God’s right to extend mercy on His terms—yet those terms still invite all to respond in faith.

This passage also contains a warning: when someone persistently rejects God’s dealings, and God withdraws His Spirit’s conviction, the heart will grow hard.



DID YOU KNOW?

Calvinism and Arminianism represent two major theological views on salvation. Calvinism, rooted in the teachings of John Calvin (1509-1564), emphasizes God's sovereignty, including predestination—the belief that God elects individuals for eternal life. Arminianism, based on the views of Jacob Arminius (1560-1609), stresses human free will, asserting that people can accept or reject God's grace. The perspectives differ on election, grace, and perseverance—fueling centuries of debate.

What a blessing to stand on Christ's simple, clear invitation: "Come unto me... and I will give you rest" (Matthew 11:28).



A Word
in Season

KEEP INVITING— GOD IS STILL CALLING

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Go out into the highways and hedges, and compel them to come in, that my house may be filled. —Luke 14:23

It can be discouraging to share the gospel and be met with rejection, resistance, or indifference. Jesus experienced this, and so will we. However, God is still calling, and the invitation has not expired. The door of grace is still open. Our responsibility is not to decide who will respond but rather to faithfully extend the invitation.

Even in Paul's ministry, some mocked, some delayed, and some believed. The results varied, but the call remained consistent. Keep preaching. Keep loving. Keep serving. Keep inviting.

There are still hearts that will say "yes." There are still prodigals who will return. There are still souls hungry for truth, longing for hope, and ready to receive the robe of righteousness. They may not come in droves, but even one sinner saved causes great rejoicing in Heaven. The seed we sow does not bear fruit instantly, and the results are not our responsibility. Our calling is simply to sow the good seed of the gospel.

When people respond, it will not be because of our eloquence, strategy, or wisdom—it will be by God's mercy and grace. This should empower us to invite without fear. We should not shrink from telling people about Jesus, as we are not offering something weak or uncertain. We proclaim the greatest gift in this world: salvation.

While the time of judgment is upon us, it is not yet. As long as there is life, God is still calling. Because He is still calling, we should still be inviting. Let us be challenged to go into the highways and hedges and compel people to come. There are thousands in need of the healing, saving grace of Jesus Christ. So, let us go and preach one more message, pray one more prayer, reach one more soul.

When someone is saved, all glory goes to God. But what joy it brings to be a small part of this great, divine work. Keep inviting, my fellow gospel worker, for God is still calling. ■



HOLINESS UNTO THE LORD

