

“Do We Choose God Or Does He Choose Us?”

2 Thessalonians 2:13-17

Sermon Series: “You Asked For It”

Introduction: Question-Do we have free will or does God either choose us or harden our hearts against Him?

Main Idea: God is sovereign, and we are responsible.

Luke 22:22, Acts 2:23, Acts 4:27-28, 1 Peter 2:8, Genesis 45:8 and 50:20, Acts 13:48 and 14:1

How does this relate to salvation in particular? It is from 2 Thessalonians 2:13-14, which says, "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."

This is the doctrine of salvation in a nutshell. I think it addresses some of the debates that happen in Christian circles between divine sovereignty vs. human responsibility, Calvinism and Arminianism, does God choose us or do we choose Him, do we need to evangelize, etc. We may still disagree about some of the details, but these two verses affirm five basic truths about salvation that any Bible-believing Christian should affirm. They are:

1. God’s motivation for saving us is His love (Ephesians 2:4, Romans 8:31-39).
(Cheerleading example)

2. God chose us for salvation in eternity past ("God from the beginning chose you for salvation"). Once again, we may disagree on some of the details, but Scripture is very clear that God choose us instead of us choosing Him. (John 15:16, Acts 13:48, Ephesians 1:3-6, 11).

3. Salvation is brought about through the supernatural work of the Holy Spirit, but we must respond in faith ("through sanctification by the Spirit and belief in the truth").
John 6:44

So Scripture teaches both divine sovereignty and human responsibility.

4. God ordains the end, which is the salvation of the elect, and the means, which is the proclamation of the gospel. ("to which He called you by our gospel"). This affirms the necessity of evangelism. These verses show us that God ordains the ends (the salvation of the elect) and the means (the proclamation of the gospel). Election and evangelism are not divorced in Scripture but forever wedded together. Paul wrote, "Therefore I endure all things for the sake of the elect, that they also may obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory" (2 Timothy 2:10). The gospel is the good news that Jesus is God's Son who came from heaven to earth, lived as a sinless life, died on the cross as our substitutionary sacrifice for the forgiveness of our sins, and rose from the dead to give us new life.

5. The ultimate purpose of salvation is the glory of God ("for the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ").

A. We are glorified (Philippians 3:20-21).

B. We are in the presence of the glory of the Lord (Revelation 21:23).

C. We are glorifying Jesus (2 Thessalonians 1:10).

Applications:

1. Explanation

2. Encouragement

Romans 8:28-30; Believer's Bible Study Notes

Instead of attempting harmonization of those truths which are ultimately understood only by God (11:34), one ought to ask the question, "Why is the doctrine of election present in the Scripture?" Four distinct answers emerge from this passage:

A. As long as the doctrine of election is in the Bible, salvation must be the gift of God alone. (Include last line of Jonah 2:9). Predestination framed in God's foreknowledge assures us that salvation is from start to finish the work of God.

B. The doctrine of God's elective purpose guarantees the perpetuity of salvation. Unthinkable is the idea that one of God's elect could forfeit his salvation.

Those whom He *has* justified He *will* glorify. So certain is that sequence that "glorified" is an aorist tense in Greek, meaning that glorification is already a settled issue in the mind of God. (vv. 30). How could God lose one of His elect?

C. The doctrine of election assures a peculiar providence which attends the way of every believer. If God's heart is set on us in His elective purpose, we may be sure of His concern and providential intervention in our behalf (v. 28).

D. Finally, that same personal providence bound up in election extends throughout the entire course of history. There is no runaway world. God's hand is systematically guiding the age to its intended consummation (Romans 8:21, 22)."

3. Exhortation (2 Thessalonians 2:15)

4. Examination (1 Thessalonians 1:4-10)