

Our TULIP series of booklets have been read by Christians around the world and have been used by missionaries and other teachers to disciple their brothers and sisters in Christ.

TULIP SERIES

Man's Sinfulness, God's Sovereignty, and the New Birth (Book T)

How sinful is mankind? Are unsaved people sick and in need of a cure? Or is their condition far worse? Can the natural, sinful man accept Jesus Christ as Savior?

What Must You Do to Be Saved? (Book U)

Is God looking for a few good men or women? Did He look ahead from eternity to see who would respond to the Gospel? What does God want you to do before He will save you?

If Jesus Died for All, Why Are Some Not Saved? (Book L)

If "God so loved the [whole] world," if He "will have all men to be saved," if He is "not willing that any should perish," why every day do people die unsaved?

Can Anyone Refuse God's Grace? (Book I)

Is God pleading with and crying over stubborn sinners who won't accept His grace? Can man thwart God's will?

Once Saved, Always Saved? (Book P)

Can you lose your salvation? Is it arrogant to think you can't? Can you have both security and assurance?

OTHER BOOKLETS

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Paul warned the Galatians, "But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed." But what is the Gospel? And what are some of the false gospels being promoted?

Is Salvation for You?

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WORD OF HIS GRACE

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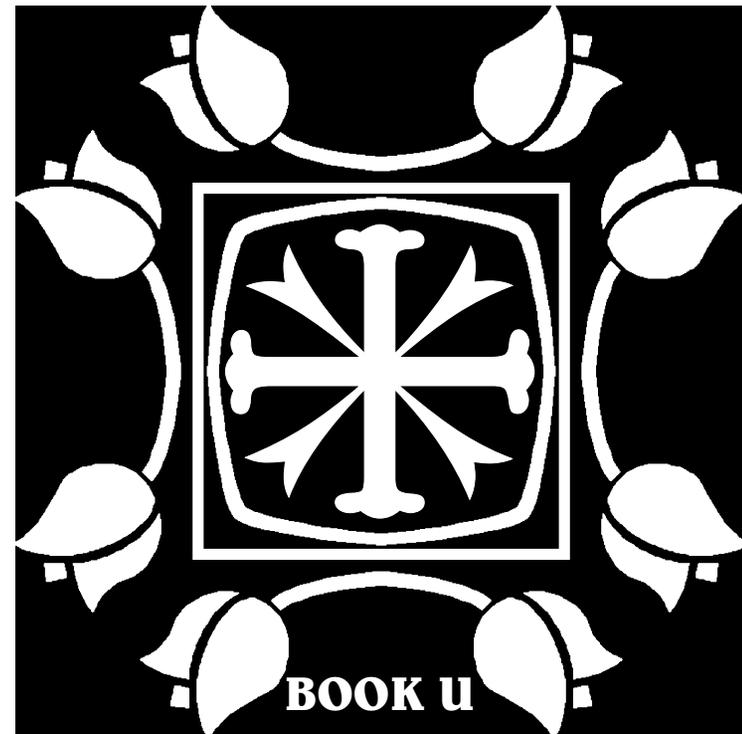
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WHAT MUST YOU DO TO BE SAVED?



TULIP SERIES

THE WORD OF HIS GRACE

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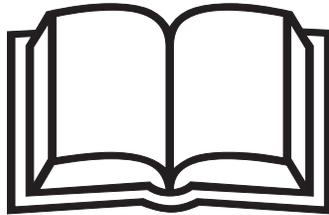
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And now, brethren, I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified.

--Acts 20:32--



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Unless otherwise noted, all Scripture quotations are from the KING JAMES VERSION of the Bible.

Who We Are

I hope this little booklet has been a blessing to you. I was a member of and writer for the Worldwide Church of God until 1991. My wife, Mary, was also a member and a production assistant in the church's television department. But then God began revealing to us the truth of His glorious Gospel of the free gift of grace by Jesus Christ. So, in 1991, we left the Worldwide Church of God, our friends, our worldview, and our employment.

In the mid-1990s, I began writing articles that exposed the heresies and spiritual abuses that were continuing in the Worldwide Church of God even after the death of its founder, Herbert W. Armstrong. These articles appeared in *The Quarterly Journal* of the Personal Freedom Outreach, a well-respected Christian apologetics journal. Many people who read the articles wrote asking for help for themselves or loved ones exiting Armstrongism, to ask doctrinal questions, or to share their experiences in Armstrong-type sects.

I soon came to see that cults and unbiblical teachings are flourishing because too many people are ignorant of the basics of biblical Christianity and only give lip service to following the Bible alone. Toward the end of 2000, I launched Word of His Grace to address these issues through both print and our website, wordofhisgrace.org.

The website has since grown in impact and respect. Our increasing number of articles are reproduced and favorably cited on websites around the world. We publish Gospel tracts and small books that have been widely requested and used by a number of missionaries and other Christian teachers. We also publish an email newsletter. Everything we write is centered on Jesus Christ and our commitment to take the Bible alone for our doctrine.

We are family-based. Mary and I are truly a team and always thank God for having given us to each other. We try to be good stewards of the resources God provides. To this end, we have recently put all of our literature on our website. This has enabled us to scale-back our print publishing, which had been growing increasingly expensive as costs rise. We now send printed materials only to those who do not have access to the internet.

We trust that as long as we continue to please God in what we teach, and we remain good stewards of what He supplies, He will provide everything needed to continue these activities. We do not ask humans for money, or anything, but bring our needs in prayer to God.

This does not mean that God has not used people to provide our needs. He has. It means that we make our needs known to God, and if He then makes them known to you, well, that is between you and Him. This is a lesson in faith. You can trust in God's promises found in Scripture: "But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you" (Matthew 6:33). If you are like-minded with us, we would love to fellowship with you. Email us.

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Election

from the Canons of Dort (1618-19), Articles 7–9

Election is the unchangeable purpose of God, whereby, before the foundation of the world, He has out of mere grace, according to the sovereign good pleasure of His own will, chosen from the whole human race, which had fallen through their own fault from the primitive state of rectitude into sin and destruction, a certain number of persons to redemption in Christ, whom He from eternity appointed the Mediator and Head of the elect and the foundation of salvation.

This elect number, though by nature neither better nor more deserving than others, but with them involved in one common misery, God has decreed to give to Christ to be saved by Him, and effectually to call and draw them to His communion by His Word and Spirit; to bestow upon them true faith, justification, and sanctification; and having powerfully preserved them in the fellowship of His son, finally to glorify them for the demonstration of His mercy, and for the praise of the riches of His glorious grace; as it is written "According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love: having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will, to the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved" (Eph 1:4-6). And elsewhere: "Whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified" (Rom 8:30).

There are not various decrees of election, but one and the same decree respecting all those who shall be saved, both under the Old and New Testament; since the Scripture declares the good pleasure, purpose, and counsel of the divine will to be one, according to which He has chosen us from eternity, both to grace and to glory, to salvation and to the way of salvation, which He has ordained that we should walk therein (Eph 1:4, 5; 2:10).

This election was not founded upon foreseen faith and the obedience of faith, holiness, or any other good quality or disposition in man, as the prerequisite, cause, or condition of which it depended; but men are chosen to faith and to the obedience of faith, holiness, etc. Therefore election is the fountain of every saving good, from which proceed faith, holiness, and the other gifts of salvation, and finally eternal life itself, as its fruits and effects, according to the testimony of the apostle: "According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, [not because we were, but] that we should be holy and without blame before him in love" (Eph 1:4).

**BLESSED BE THE GOD AND FATHER OF
OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST, WHO HATH
BLESSED US WITH ALL SPIRITUAL
BLESSINGS IN HEAVENLY PLACES IN
CHRIST: ACCORDING AS HE HATH CHOSEN
US IN HIM BEFORE THE FOUNDATION OF
THE WORLD, THAT WE SHOULD BE HOLY
AND WITHOUT BLAME BEFORE HIM IN
LOVE: HAVING PREDESTINATED US UNTO
THE ADOPTION OF CHILDREN BY JESUS
CHRIST TO HIMSELF, ACCORDING TO THE
GOOD PLEASURE OF HIS WILL, TO THE
PRAISE OF THE GLORY OF HIS GRACE,
WHEREIN HE HATH MADE US ACCEPTED IN
THE BELOVED: IN WHOM WE HAVE
REDEMPTION THROUGH HIS BLOOD, THE
FORGIVENESS OF SINS, ACCORDING TO
THE RICHES OF HIS GRACE.**

In the above passage, found in Ephesians 1:3–7, the apostle Paul declares that God the Father has “predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself.” As we will see, the implications of this passage answer the question posed in this book’s title, *What Must You Do to Be Saved?* Since Paul and the Christian Ephesians were faithful saints—that is, true Christians (see verse 1)—the “us” in the passage refers to true Christians. So, what Paul appears to be saying is that God has predestinated Christians (pre-chosen their destiny) to be His children by Jesus Christ. In other words, Christians (who are the children of God by Jesus Christ) are Christians because God predestinated them to be so, not by any choice of their own.

But can this be so? Don’t we have a choice whether or not we accept Jesus Christ as our Savior and become Christians?

Frankly, no. The Bible does not support the popular but erroneous view that we can choose for ourselves whether or not we will be saved Christians. Jesus said to His disciples, “Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you...I have chosen you out of the world” (John 15:16, 19). Paul wrote of God having chosen people for salvation (1 Corinthians 1:26–28; Ephesians 1:4; and 2 Thessalonians 2:13). In fact, it was these chosen people that Jesus referred to when He said, “For many are called [hear the call of the Gospel], but few are chosen” (Matthew 22:14). As we will see, the Bible sometimes uses the words “the elect” or “the election” in reference to those predestinated to be the children of God, and the predestinating itself is called “election.”

Election, or, more specifically, unconditional election, is the topic of this book, which is Book U in our TULIP series. The books in this series cover the five doctrines of grace (also called the five points of Calvinism). These five points are: Total Depravity, Unconditional Election, Limited Atonement, Irresistible Grace, and Perseverance (sometimes called Preservation) of the Saints. The acronym TULIP comes from the first letters of these points.

You might think the title of this book, *What Must You Do to Be Saved?*, unusual for a book about election. Certainly, there are other biblically sound approaches to answer the question the title poses, and we cover these other angles in other publications. But in this book, we are going to answer this question by examining election.

The Ultimate Purpose of Election

In examining election, a good place to start is its purpose. The ultimate purpose of election (and everything else, for that matter) is God’s glory: “For of him, and through him, and to him, are all things: to whom be glory for ever. Amen” (Romans 11:36). More specifically as concerns God’s purpose in choosing people to be His children, election is to the praise of the glory of His grace in which is shown the love of the infinitely holy and just God toward sinners: “Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will, to the praise of

11. As election is completely based on God’s sovereign will (Romans 9:18, 22–23; Ephesians 1:11) and not on man’s works, it cannot fail (John 6:37, 39, 44; 10:27–29; 1 Corinthians 1:8; Philippians 1:6; 2 Thessalonians 3:3).
12. The ultimate purpose of election is God’s glory (Isaiah 43:21; Romans 11:36; Ephesians 1:5–6, 11–12; 1 Peter 2:9; Revelation 7:9–12), but there are subordinate purposes, such as: that the elect “be conformed to the image of his Son” (Romans 8:29a); that Christ “might be the firstborn among many brethren” (Romans 8:29b); that the elect be called (Romans 8:30a); that the elect be justified (Romans 5:8–9; 8:30b, 33); that the elect be reconciled (Romans 5:10); that the elect be glorified (Romans 8:30c); that the elect be adopted as children (Ephesians 1:5); that the elect exercise the gift of belief or faith (Acts 13:48); that the elect perform the good works God has prepared for them (Ephesians 2:10); that the elect obtain salvation (1 Thessalonians 5:9; 2 Thessalonians 2:13; Romans 5:9–10; 1 Peter 1:2, 5); and that the elect obtain eternal life (Acts 13:48).

*Adapted from various sources, including John Gill, *A Complete Body of Doctrinal and Practical Divinity* (1809; reprint, Paris, Ark.: The Baptist Standard Bearer, 1995), 176–191; and Charles Hodge, *Systematic Theology*, 3 vols. (reprint, Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1993), 2:341–348.

Some Important Points Concerning Election*

1. Preeminent among the elect is Jesus Christ (Isaiah 42:1; Luke 23:35; 1 Peter 2:4).
2. Election can be expressed as being elect, chosen, ordained to eternal life, or having one's name written in the book of life (Matthew 20:16; Luke 10:20; John 13:18; Acts 13:48; Romans 8:33; 11:5, 7; Ephesians 1:4; Philippians 4:3; 2 Thessalonians 2:13; Hebrews 12:23; Revelation 21:27).
3. Election is to be understood as God's choice of certain persons from all eternity to grace and glory (Acts 13:48; Romans 8:30; Ephesians 1:3–4; 2 Thessalonians 2:13).
4. God is the efficient cause of election (Matthew 24:31; Luke 18:7; John 6:37, 44, 65; Romans 8:33; 1 Thessalonians 1:4; 1 Peter 1:2).
5. Election puts men in Christ; it gives them a being in Him and union to Him (Ephesians 1:4 ["him" in this verse is Christ]).
6. Election occurred long before the elect were born; God chose His elect in the beginning, even before the foundation of the world (Romans 9:11; Ephesians 1:4; 2 Thessalonians 2:13; 2 Timothy 1:9).
7. God elects no one because of that person's good works; good works were also foreordained from the beginning (Romans 9:11; 11:5–6; Ephesians 2:8–10; 2 Timothy 1:9; Titus 3:5).
8. God elects no one based on that person's holiness; holiness is an end to which the person is chosen (Ephesians 1:4; 1 Thessalonians 4:7).
9. God elects no one based on that person's faith; faith is one of God's gracious gifts to His elect (Acts 13:48; 2 Thessalonians 2:13).
10. God elects no one because He sees that person will persevere; people persevere because they are God's elect (John 6:39; 10:28–29; Philippians 1:6).

the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved" (Ephesians 1:5–6; see also verses 11–12; 1 Peter 2:9; Revelation 7:9–12).

Secondary Purposes of Election

Romans 8:29–30 lists five other purposes of election: "For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate [1] to be conformed to the image of his Son, [2] that he [Jesus Christ] might be the firstborn among many brethren. Moreover, whom he did predestinate, [3] them he also called: and whom he called, [4] them he also justified [see also verse 33 and Romans 5:8–9]: and whom he justified, [5] them he also glorified." Other Scriptures indicate additional purposes, such as that the elect (those who have been "ordained to eternal life") exercise the gift of belief or faith and obtain eternal life (Acts 13:48), be reconciled to God (Romans 5:10), be adopted as God's children (Ephesians 1:5), and perform the good works that God has determined beforehand (or foreordained) for them (Ephesians 2:10). Put briefly, the elect are predestinated to obtain salvation and to live as saved people.

In support of this, notice 1 Thessalonians 5:9: "For God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ." Also, 2 Thessalonians 2:13 says, "But we are bound to give thanks alway to God for you, brethren beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth." Romans 5:9–10 and 1 Peter 1:2–5 also teach the elect's destiny to be saved.

Election Alone?

God chooses the elect for salvation, but is that election alone enough to bring about their salvation? Or must the elect, or God, do more? Almost within site of where I am sitting as I write, there is a meeting place for a church that claims to believe the five doctrines of grace. But in fact this church so wrests unconditional election out of its Scriptural context that it destroys the

meaning of the doctrines of grace. In fact, it introduces heresy. This church, and there are others across North America that believe as it does, says that election is the only condition for salvation; therefore, many people—perhaps the majority of people in the world—are saved because they are elect even if they never believe that Jesus Christ is their Savior. This church believes that God has elect people throughout the world who live and die without ever coming into contact with the Gospel. And they believe that these people, because they are elect, are saved. Now if you are not a member of this church, you may think I'm wasting your time telling you this. But if you will continue reading, I think you will see lessons we can all learn from this.

The members of this church have apparently not considered that if a driver in Nashville sets his destination as Los Angeles, he doesn't just immediately appear in Los Angeles. Among other things, he must leave his house, get into his car, start his car, drive out of Nashville, and drive through Memphis, Little Rock, and even Albuquerque before reaching Los Angeles. He must also have gas in his car.

God has set the final destination of His elect, but He gets them there by specific means that He has also predetermined, or foreordained, will happen. The Scriptures we have examined in this book point out some of those means: God calls His elect, they hear the Gospel (is God so weak that He cannot make sure His elect hear the Gospel?), He gives them the faith to believe the Gospel (they are born again), they are justified, they are reconciled, they are adopted as God's children, they live sanctified lives performing the good works God has foreordained for them, they are glorified.

The way to salvation—the only way—is Jesus Christ. Jesus said, "I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me" (John 14:6). He also said,

Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that entereth not by the door into the sheepfold, but climbeth up some other way, the same is a thief and a robber. But he that entereth in by the door is the shepherd of the sheep. To him the porter openeth; and the sheep hear his voice: and he calleth his own sheep by name, and leadeth them out.... Then said Jesus unto them again, Verily, verily, I say unto you, I am the door of the sheep.... I am the door: by me if any man

On the third day, He rose from the grave (1 Corinthians 15:4). This provided evidence of the justification of His saints (Romans 4:25), for if their sins that He bore on the cross were still on Him, He would not have risen. Christ rose, therefore His elect's sins are gone! His rising also proved Him to be the Christ, the Son of the living God (Matthew 28:6; Luke 24:6–7; Romans 1:4). Those who believe the Gospel (because they are elect and have been given saving faith through a miraculous renewing of their minds known as regeneration or being born again) and trust in Jesus Christ alone as Savior have their sins forgiven and are saved (Romans 1:16; 1 Corinthians 1:18). They are declared "not guilty," (justified) (Romans 3:28; 5:1; Galatians 2:16; 3:24). The righteousness of Jesus Christ is counted as theirs, or imputed to them; it is as if they wear Christ's righteousness as a robe, and when God looks on them He sees Christ's righteousness instead of their sinfulness (Romans 5:18; 2 Corinthians 5:21; Revelation 7:9, 13–14; 19:7–8). Because of what Jesus Christ has done, the elect are saved (Romans 6:23b; 1 Thessalonians 5:9–10; 2 Timothy 2:10; Hebrews 5:8–9).

Remember, there is nothing you can do to make yourself elect. Who is elect and who is not is entirely up to God's sovereign will. But if you believe the Gospel, you can know that you are among the elect, and you are saved. But be careful: If you believe that there is something you can add to what Christ has done to make yourself acceptable to God, or if you believe that Christ's sacrifice was not sufficient to save you, you do not believe the Gospel.

If you would like more information about the Gospel, and what the Gospel is not—for there are many false gospels, please send for our book, *What Is the Gospel?*

He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things? Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth.

Romans 8:32–33

day of Jesus Christ” (Philippians 1:6). Remember also Jesus’ words concerning His elect in John 10:28: “And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand.” Please read our book *Once Saved, Always Saved?* (Book P in the TULIP series) to find many more assuring Scriptures.

What Must You Do to Be Saved?

What must you do to be saved? Believe the Gospel, trusting in Jesus Christ alone as your Savior. If you are among the elect, you will do this because it is God’s will (which cannot be thwarted—see 2 Chronicles 20:6; Daniel 4:35; Romans 9:20–21), and because it is not really your work at all, “for it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure” (Philippians 2:13). If you are not among the elect, you will not believe the Gospel; and no works (including believing only whatever part of the Gospel seems reasonable to you and rejecting the rest or believing a corrupt gospel) you try to substitute for this work of God will ever earn you salvation.

And what is the Gospel you must believe? Briefly, it is that all humans (including you) are sinful and unable to do anything to save themselves from the damnation that will result from their sinfulness (Isaiah 64:6–7; Jeremiah 17:9; Romans 3:10–12, 23; 6:23a; see also Book T of this series). But the Good News is that the Son of God was made flesh and dwelt among us (John 1:14; Matthew 16:16; Philippians 2:5–8). He lived a perfectly righteous, sinless life (Hebrews 4:15; 1 Peter 2:22; 3:18; 1 John 3:5). He suffered and died for the sins of His people, taking upon Him the punishment they deserved, dying for their sins, and satisfying the justice of the Father and turning away, or propitiating, God’s wrath (Isaiah 53:5–6; Matthew 20:28; Romans 3:25; 4:25; 5:6–9; 1 Corinthians 5:7; 1 Corinthians 15:3; Galatians 1:4; 3:13; Ephesians 5:2; 1 Thessalonians 5:9; 1 Peter 2:24; 1 John 4:10). On the cross, Jesus said, “It is finished,” and by that He meant that He had completely accomplished the salvation of His people (John 19:30; Colossians 1:20; Hebrews 9:28; 10:10). Nothing more need ever—indeed must never—be added to what Jesus has done (Romans 11:6; Galatians 5:4).

enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture.... I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep.... I am the good shepherd, and know my sheep, and am known of mine.... And other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice; and there shall be one fold, and one shepherd.

John 10:1–3, 7, 9, 11, 14, 16

Notice in the above verses that Jesus is the Good Shepherd who knows His sheep. This is because they are His elect. It is these sheep for whom He gives His life (the fact that this is limited to His sheep and not extended to goats, pigs, cows, and horses is addressed in Book L of this TULIP series). The Good Shepherd also calls His sheep by name and they hear His voice and are led by Him. This is a reference to God’s calling of the elect through the Gospel, and the elect’s supernatural recognition of and response to that Gospel through the work of the Holy Spirit.

The members of the church down the street from my home say that people in far off lands never have a chance to hear the Gospel and are saved apart from it and apart, therefore, from exercising saving faith in Jesus Christ. Notice, however, that Jesus said he has “other sheep...not of this fold.” Since He was talking to Jews, we must understand that these “other sheep” are the Gentiles. At the time Jesus spoke, far flung regions of the world were even more difficult to get to than today. Yet Jesus was able to say of these Gentile sheep, “them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice; and there shall be one fold, and one shepherd.” From His emphasis on “one fold, and one shepherd” we should get the message that there is only one way to salvation, and that way is Jesus Christ (see Acts 4:10–12). There is no difference in the way of salvation between one people and another. And Jesus clearly says of these Gentile sheep, “they shall hear my voice.” No matter how remote someone may be, if that person is elect, God will make sure the Gospel gets to him or her. And if the Gospel never gets to a person, that person is not elect.

But, counter the people of this apostatized Calvinist church, so many people in the world who do not call themselves Christians are kind, gentle, considerate, often dedicating their lives to help others. Surely their good

works show these people to be elect and, therefore, saved. But Jesus says, even of people who know His name but have not trusted Him as Savior, “Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven. Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity” (Matthew 7:21–23).

In other words, although the elect do the good works God has ordained for them, not all who do good works are elect. In fact, from the point of view of the righteous God, the good works of those who are not elect are iniquity (see also Isaiah 64:6; Romans 3:10–12; and Book T of this series). We have examined Scriptures, and there are many others, that show that Jesus is the way, and the only way, to salvation. These Scriptures should, along with this passage in Matthew, be sufficient to show that however many good works people may do, if they have not heard and believed the Gospel, they are not saved. And if they never hear the Gospel, then they are not elect.

To teach that Jesus Christ can be circumvented, that people can be saved without believing in Jesus Christ as Savior because they are elect, is heresy. The truth is, all who believe the Gospel, exercising saving faith to trust in Jesus Christ alone as Savior, are elect; anyone who never comes to believe the Gospel and believe that Jesus Christ alone is his or her Savior—even if it is because that person has not heard the Gospel—is not elect.

Why Evangelize?

This information helps us formulate a biblical view of spreading the Gospel, or evangelizing the world. Those who say that most of the world is saved apart from believing the Gospel tend not to evangelize. Why bother? But this view is contradicted by the Bible (particularly Matthew 28:19–20; Mark 16:15; Luke 24:47; all of Acts; and Romans 10:14–15), and, while sometimes associated with Calvinism, it has nothing to do with true Calvinism.

Even people who understand election and the need to believe the Gospel

the works of man. In other words, neither the will of man nor the works of man can influence God in the matter of extending mercy toward the elect. It is the sovereign act of the sovereign God.

It is pure sovereign grace which alone determines the exercise of Divine mercy. God expressly affirms this fact in Rom. 9:15.... It is not the wretchedness of the creature which causes Him to show mercy, for God is not influenced by things outside of Himself as we are.... Still less is it the merits of the creatures which causes Him to bestow mercies upon them, for it is a contradiction in terms to speak of meriting “mercy.” “Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us” (Titus 3:5)—the one standing in direct antithesis to the other.

—Arthur W. Pink, *The Attributes of God*
(Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker, 1975), 74

Works After Salvation?

If our works are not a precondition to God electing us to salvation, and if God does not choose His elect by looking ahead to see if they will do good works after they become Christians, can our works have anything to do with our remaining elect to salvation? In other words, does our continuing to be saved depend on our works? If it did, would not our salvation depend on our works? Yes, and the Scriptures we have already examined unmistakably tell us this cannot be. Although, once we are saved, we do the good works God has ordained for us to do, we are not saved by these or any of our works. Ephesians 2:8–10 makes this perfectly clear.

Also consider that if the elect’s continuing in a saved state depended on their works, they might lose their salvation if they didn’t do these works. But the Bible states this is impossible: “Who [Jesus] shall also confirm you unto the end, that ye may be blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ” (1 Corinthians 1:8); and, “Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the

narrow way, Jesus Christ. We read in verses 15–20 about false prophets likened to wolves in sheep’s clothing and to corrupt trees bringing forth evil fruit. Even though the wolves may look like sheep on the outside, they are still wolves inwardly. Notice also that corrupt trees cannot change themselves to bring forth good fruit; only good trees can bring forth good fruit. This is a reference to election and reprobation (reprobation is discussed more fully in Book L of this series).

This is followed by verses 21–23 containing the passage in question, and these verses are then followed by 24–27, the parable of the house built on a rock (Christ) and the house built on sand (not on Christ).

It would be very strange for Jesus, in the midst of these sayings about salvation through Christ and only the good being able to bear good fruit, to say something about having to do works for salvation. In fact, this is not what He is saying; at least, He is not talking about works of human origin.

Verses 21–23 are about those who will be saved and some who will not. Who in these verses will not be saved? Those who do many works (verse 22), but not the will of the Father. Who will be saved? Those who do the will of the Father (verse 21). What is the will of the Father? Jesus, speaking primarily of the Father’s will for Him, but also of the Father’s will for those whom the Father has given Him, says, “And this is the Father’s will which hath sent me, that of all which he hath given me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day. And this is the will of him that sent me, that every one which seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life: and I will raise him up at the last day” (John 6:39–40). Jesus is speaking about election. The will of the Father is what He has foreordained for His elect to do: believe the Gospel and walk in the works “which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them” (Ephesians 2:10). Matthew 7:21–23 is about election and reprobation.

God chose His elect purely by His sovereign will, and He extends mercy to—saves—His elect because they are His sovereignly chosen elect. Read Romans 9:15–16: “For he saith to Moses, I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion. So then it is not of him [man] that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that sheweth mercy.” Willing and running are references to the will of man and

sometimes believe evangelization is unnecessary. They say that since God will make sure the Gospel will get to His elect, Christians need not make an effort to spread the Gospel. God will make sure it gets done. These people are neglecting to realize that if, for example, God wants the Gospel to reach an elect person in Mongolia, He will most likely use someone to evangelize the area in Mongolia where that person lives. The thinking that leads to this neglect toward evangelization is also nonbiblical and a distortion of Calvinism. (These views and other distortions of Calvinism that lead to not evangelizing or trying to limit evangelizing to the impossible task of preaching the Gospel only to the elect—the elect do not walk around with halos over their heads!—are sometimes called hyper-Calvinism.)

On the other end of the spectrum in this regard are those who are in anguish because they believe people are continually being lost who could have been saved but for a lack of funds and people for missionary work. These people understand neither election nor the omnipotence of God.

The God of the Bible loses none of His elect. The biblical view of evangelization is that we must do what we can to evangelize as God leads us, makes opportunity, and provides the resources. But we can be assured as we do this that it is sufficient for God to save all He intends to save (this attitude can be seen in Acts).

Getting back to the question posed in the title of this book, we have so far seen that the works of those who are not elect will not save them. But what about the elect? We have seen that the elect must believe the Gospel. But is this belief a work that is a condition to becoming elect? Does election have conditions? Are there good works we must do to remain one of the elect? Is Jesus’ statement in Matthew 7:21 that those who “doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven” will “enter into the kingdom of heaven” a reference to such works?

How Does Election Occur?

Before we answer these questions, we must understand when election occurred. Jacob is listed among the faithful in Hebrews 11. Although he lived before the time of Christ, he was among the elect (as demonstrated by his

faith in God's promises of what was to come). We read of his election in Romans 9:11–13: “(For the children [the twins, Jacob and Esau] being not yet born, neither having done any good or evil, that the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works, but of him that calleth;) it was said unto her [Rebecca], The elder shall serve the younger. As it is written, Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated.” The Scripture tells us that Jacob was elect before he was born, and that his election—because it was before he was born—was not based on any works he could have done. Some might object that God may have made an exception for Jacob in electing him before he was born. Let's see if other Scriptures concerning election agree with what happened to Jacob.

In 2 Thessalonians 2:13, Paul tells the Christians in Thessalonica that “God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth.” Here we see election occurring not just immediately before birth, but long before birth, “from the beginning.” And Ephesians 1:4 says, “he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world.” This is a reference to eternity. In fact, the Greek words translated “from the beginning” in 2 Thessalonians 2:13 are often used to mean eternity.

Our questions about whether election has conditions are answered plainly in 2 Timothy 1:9: “Who [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.” Our election is from eternity, before the world began. Notice also that it is specifically not according to our works, but according to God's own purpose and grace.

If election is by grace, then it is not by works. They cannot both be the cause of election: “Even so then at this present time also there is a remnant according to the election of grace. And if by grace, then is it no more of works: otherwise grace is no more grace. But if it be of works, then is it no more grace: otherwise work is no more work” (Romans 11:5–6). Election occurred in eternity completely by grace.

But there are those who agree that works are not a precondition to election in time—that is, works do not precede election in time as we experience it. But these people say that God looked ahead from eternity and

elected only those whom He saw would do good works—these works include accepting the call to salvation and the good works they would do once they are saved. Then God elected only these people.

Those who have devised this view, which does not have biblical support, have done so because they are concerned not to interfere with man's free will. This view implies that God's decisions are reactions to man's will. God, they say, looks ahead from eternity, sees if someone will believe the Gospel and live a good Christian life, and then He puts that person among His list of the elect. This strips God of His omnipotence, and gives man a vital part in his own salvation, something the Bible emphatically denies. Read Ephesians 2:8–9: “For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: not of works, lest any man should boast.” Paul also says this: “Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus.... Where is boasting then? It is excluded. By what law? of works? Nay: but by the law of faith. Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law” (Romans 3:24, 27–28).

Christian philosopher and theologian Gordon Clark points out another problem with the erroneous “looking ahead” idea:

But if this “looking ahead” were accurate, and unchangeable, the man's will would not be free. Some factor in the dim distant past would have had to determine the will so that it could not change. If it was not God who determined the act of faith, then there must be some power beyond God's control that did so, for a completely free will is not subject to accurate prediction. For reasons such as these Paul wrote “God chose you from the beginning.”

—Gordon H. Clark, *First and Second Thessalonians* (Jefferson, Md.: The Trinity Foundation, 1986), 102

But what of Jesus' statement in Matthew 7:21 that those who “doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven” will “enter into the kingdom of heaven”? Isn't this a reference to some sort of works upon which election is conditioned? Let's look at the context.

Verses 13 and 14 tell us to enter eternal life through the strait gate and