

**Schedule of Meeting Times:**

WKAC 1080 AM Sunday 7:30 AM  
*Speaker, Robert Emerson*  
Study Sunday 10:00 AM  
Worship Sunday Morn 11:00 AM  
Worship Sunday Eve 5:00 PM  
*Singing every 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday evening*  
Study Wednesday 7:00 PM

**Preacher / bulletin editor:**

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**“In him we have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to the purpose of him who works all things according to the counsel of his will...”**

— Ephesians 1:11



**Servants during December:**

**Songleader:** Stanley (4), Larry (11), Peter (18), Stanley (25)

**Reading:** Stanley

**Announcements:** Marty

**Table:** Mike M, Mike B, Larry, Peter

**Wednesday Lesson:** Stanley (7), Kris (14), Larry (21), Stanley (28)

**Meetings: Eastside in Athens,**

Dec 11, 3pm, Nick Woods

**Hays Mill church of Christ**

21705 Hays Mill Road

Elkmont, AL 35620

# The Bible . Examiner

*“Examine everything carefully...” –1 Thessalonians 5:21 NASB*

Volume 5

December 11, 2022

Number 29

## A Sovereign God Can Choose to Save Whom He Wants

*by Danny Pickett*

My good friend and neighbor passionately believes this... and so do I. Our discussions have been on occasion too spirited, but we still debate. Where we differ: how does God choose the elect? We both read the first chapter of Ephesians and form differing conclusions:

“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places, even as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him. In love he predestined us for adoption as sons through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of his will, to the praise of his glorious grace, with which he has blessed us in the Beloved. ...In him we have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to the purpose of him who works all things according to the counsel of his will, so

that we who were the first to hope in Christ might be to the praise of his glory,” Eph 1:3-6,11,12.

Read this passage again replacing every “us” and “we” with: “us... the frozen chosen.” This is the humorous term my friend and I use for his view of “the elect.” And in this, we see a belief embraced by a multitude of followers for generations, beginning with John Calvin and further codified in the mid-1600s by the Westminster Confession of Faith and its subsequent modifications. It’s all about salvation, isn’t it? Who will spend eternity in heaven, and who will not? The second chapter of Acts is where I begin my search for answers, as this is the beginning of the church, the new covenant. Peter’s sermon was a powerful presentation of the gospel: Acts 2:36-40, ““Let all the house of Israel therefore know for certain that God has made him both Lord and Christ, this Jesus whom you crucified.’

Now when they heard this they were cut to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, 'Brothers, what shall we do?' And Peter said to them, 'Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. For the promise is for you and for your children and for all who are far off, everyone whom the Lord our God calls to himself.' And with many other words he bore witness and continued to exhort them, saying, 'Save yourselves from this crooked generation.'"

Was Peter merely improving the listeners' religious scholarship? Or was he telling them what they needed to do to be saved? A call to action?

"Cut to the heart" means they were guilty of sin and knew it, once Peter had spoken. Peter's revelation allowed the listeners to gain faith in Jesus the Christ. This faith was demonstrated by the question they asked: "what shall we do?" By their reaction, we can see that this was not a scholarly discussion; this crowd of Pentecost needed to be told the good news of Christ risen so they could act on that information.

It was in their power to take the action required to resolve their guilt—repent. In verse 40 Peter says, "save yourselves." Like a sailor overboard in the sea, a life ring is tossed into the waves, but the sailor has to grab hold. The blood of Jesus offered redemption, but they had to repent and be baptized in order to be saved. Baptized for what? "The forgiveness of your sins."

If they were already of the "elect," why did they have sins? Why did they

need forgiveness? Why did they have to do anything?

To whom was this "forgiveness" offered? "For you and for your children and for all who are far off, everyone whom the Lord our God calls to himself." This passage begins by offering forgiveness to what appears to be everyone, but then it qualifies the offer: "everyone whom the Lord our God calls to himself."

Whom does God call? We are told whom the Lord our God calls to himself: 2 Thess 2:13,14, "But we ought always to give thanks to God for you, brothers beloved by the Lord, because God chose you as the firstfruits to be saved, through sanctification by the Spirit and belief in the truth. To this he called you through our gospel, so that you may obtain the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ."

God's part is "sanctification by the Spirit." Our part is "belief in the truth." We are called "through the gospel." ...So we can share in the "glory of our Lord Jesus Christ."

So the question to be answered is this: Is our salvation conditional or unconditional? Did God select certain individuals, or did he offer salvation through Christ for those who are obedient?

Heb 5:9, "And being made perfect, he [Jesus] became the source of eternal salvation to all who obey him..."

Mt 7:21, "Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven."

In 15:10, "If you keep My commandments, you will abide in My love; just as I have kept My Father's commandments and abide in His love."

We saw this at Pentecost: hear the word → obey.


Other examples of God's plan at work include the Ethiopian eunuch: Acts 8:35,36, "Then Philip opened his mouth, and beginning with this Scripture he told him the good news about Jesus. And as they were going along the road they came to some water, and the eunuch said, 'See, here is water! What prevents me from being baptized?'"

Simon and the Samaritans: Acts 8:12, "But when they believed Philip as he preached good news about the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women. Even Simon himself believed, and after being baptized he continued with Philip. And seeing signs and great miracles performed, he was amazed."

The jailer at Philippi: Acts 16:30-33, "Then he brought them out and said, 'Sirs, what must I do to be saved?' And they said, 'Believe in the

Lord Jesus, and you will be saved, you and your household.' And they spoke the word of the Lord to him and to all who were in his house. And he took them the same hour of the night and washed their wounds; and he was baptized at once, he and all his family."

Saul, also known as Paul: Acts 22:14, "And he [Ananias] said, 'The God of our fathers appointed you to know his will, to see the Righteous One and to hear a voice from his mouth; for you will be a witness for him to everyone of what you have seen and heard. And now why do you wait? Rise and be baptized and wash away your sins, calling on his name.'"

God predestined man's salvation. God foreordained the provisions of salvation, setting the conditions and tests by which we would be saved. He left every man free to choose or reject these requirements—free will. God predetermined to save a body of people—the church. Who can become a part of this body? All who believe and obey, but only through the blood of Christ which makes man's salvation possible. Salvation is granted when man turns to God in simple obedient faith. (All scripture references in this article are from the ESV). 

## Remember in Prayer

**Joyce** continues to wrestle with cancer. **Hazel's son-in-law, Shane Reed**, is still dealing with Leukemia. Both the **Emerson** and the **Beddingfield**

families are undergoing various trials. Please continue to remember **Carolyn Dennis** and **Dot Hice**. 