

## SALVATION IS A GOD ONLY WORK

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Praise be to God for giving us His Word and Spirit to make Himself known. The treasures found in His Word are limitless. I aim to share some of these treasures, but first, I would like to establish a foundational understanding of God's sovereignty. In our finite minds, we can only grasp so much, and it is through God's Spirit that He reveals deeper truths to us. Recognizing God's sovereignty allows us to approach our theology from a solid standpoint.

God is not limited by time; rather, He exists beyond it. We often forget that all things are under His rule and control, and nothing occurs without His direction or permission. For Him, all time—past, present, and future—is equally present. This leads us to a doctrine that has long been contentious and sometimes avoided: the doctrine of Election.

One of the challenging aspects of election is not merely that God chooses some and not others, but rather that humanity cannot and will not come to God on its own. The concept of man's depravity is not addressed sufficiently, which has left the way open for Lordship or works-oriented theology. This perspective places man's destiny in his own hands. If humans are the authors of their salvation, can we truly say that God is sovereign? Scripture tells us that in their state of depravity, people do not possess the spiritual capacity to choose God.

1 Corinthians 2:14. But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.

God in His Sovereign Grace chose His people before the Foundation of the world.

Ephesians 1:1-5 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 (bold my emphasis)

But doesn't the Scriptures say that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life (John 3:16), that it is a choice? This is so, but it says whosoever. If man in his depraved state cannot and WILL not come to God, then who is the whosoever, it is the "chosen us" (the elect).

It is by God's power we become the sons of God,

John 1:12. 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:

God draws us to Him,

John 6: 44. No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day.

God draws us with the Word,

James 1:18. Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth, that we should be a kind of firstfruits of his creatures.

By the Word we are Born-Again

1 Peter 1:23. Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the Word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever.

God gives us the faith for this

Philippians 1:29. For unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for his sake;

All this by God's Grace not our works,

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.

Salvation is all a work of God. It is by faith only. Luther describes the realization like this.

"When God works in us, the will, being changed and sweetly breathed on by the Spirit of God, desires and acts not from compulsion but responsively" (Bondage of the Will, XXV).

I remember my experience when the Word of God was presented to me some 40 years ago "I said I believe that, that's me, that's me". Everyone is different, there isn't a repentant prayer you have to say or a sacrament that you take, just the realization (faith) given by God that you are His child. Until then, I was a dead man walking. When God quickened me by His Word, I became alive in Him.