

God's Plan to Save His People

God Is Great and Good

There is only one living and true God, perfect, sovereign, holy, wise, eternal, invisible, almighty, unchangeable, just, merciful, everywhere present, and knowing all things. God exists in three persons: God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. Angels and men, and every other creature, owe God whatever service, worship, and obedience he requires of them.

“Behold the nations are as a drop in a bucket, and are counted as the small dust on the balance.... All nations before him are as nothing. And they are counted by him less than nothing and worthless.... It is he who sits above the circle of the Earth, and its inhabitants are like grasshoppers, who stretches out the heavens like a curtain, and spreads them out like a tent to dwell in. He brings the princes to nothing; he makes the judges of the Earth useless.... He gives power to the weak, and to those who have no might he increases strength. Even the youths shall faint and be weary, and their young men shall utterly fall, but those who wait on the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings like eagles, they shall run and not be weary, they shall walk and not faint.” *Isaiah 40*

“All the inhabitants of the Earth are reputed as nothing; he does according to his will in the army of Heaven and among the inhabitants of the Earth. No one can restrain his hand or say to him, “What have you done?” *Daniel 4*

Man Is a Creature of God

Human beings did not evolve from animals or slime; they are the special creation of God.

Man is the image of God: “God created man in his own image.... And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living being.” From the first man Adam God made the first woman Eve. *Genesis 1-2*

God put Adam and Eve in a perfect environment and gave Adam one commandment that he quickly disobeyed: “And the Lord God commanded the man, saying, “Of every tree of the garden you may freely eat; but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die.” *Genesis 3*

The Death of Sinful Man

By disobeying God, Adam became a sinner and all ordinary men who came after him, including Eve, were punished with death, both physical and spiritual. “Through one man sin entered the world, and death through sin, and thus death spread to all men, because all sinned....” *Romans 5*

The sinning of men is continual, if not in action, then in thought: “Then the Lord saw that the wickedness of man was great in the Earth, and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.” *Genesis 6*

All men are wicked. “There is none righteous, no, not one; there is none who understands; there is none who seeks after God. They have all gone out of the way; they have together become

unprofitable; there is none who does good, no, not one. Their throat is an open tomb; with their tongues they have practiced deceit; the poison of asps is under their lips, whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness. Their feet are swift to shed blood; destruction and misery are in their ways; and the way of peace they have not known. There is no fear of God before their eyes.... All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God." *Romans 3*

"Do not enter into judgment with your servant, for in your [God's] sight no one living is righteous." *Psalms 143* "All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned, every one, to his own way; and the Lord has laid on him [Jesus] the iniquity of us all." *Isaiah 53*

The source of man's wickedness is his own heart. "The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked; who can know it?" *Jeremiah 17* "For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, licentiousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness. All these evil things come from within and defile a man." *Mark 7*

Fallen man can do no good at all. "The carnal mind is enmity against God. It is not subject to the law of God, nor indeed can be. So then, those who are in the flesh cannot please God." *Romans 8*

"But the natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; nor can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned." *1 Corinthians 2* "And you he made alive, who were dead in trespasses and sins, in which you once walked, according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit who now works in the sons of disobedience, among whom also we all once conducted ourselves in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, just as the others." *Ephesians 2*

Man can do nothing to save himself from sin or death: "No one can come to me [Jesus] unless the Father who sent me draws him...." *John 6*

The Love of God the Father

Before the creation of the world, even before man had sinned, God made a plan of salvation: God the Father chose those persons who would be saved; Jesus Christ, who was God the Son as well as man, died in their place and for their sins; God the Holy Spirit applies the redemption that Christ earned to those whom God the Father chose and for whom Christ died. God the Father chose those who would be saved completely out of his mercy and grace. He did not choose to save everyone.

God's choosing was done from all eternity. "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ, just as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love, having predestined us to adoption as sons by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will, to the praise of the glory of his grace, by which he has made us accepted in the beloved." *Ephesians 1*

"Who [God] has saved us and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace which was given to us in Christ Jesus before time began." *2 Timothy 1*

God chooses individuals: "Blessed is the man whom you [God] choose and cause to approach you." *Psalm 65*

God chooses men according to his own will, not for anything they do: "For the children not yet being born, nor having done any good or evil, that the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works but of him who calls.... As it is written, "Jacob I [God] have loved but Esau I have hated.... I will have mercy on whomever I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whomever I will have compassion." So then it is not of him who wills, nor of him who runs, but of God who shows mercy.... Therefore he has mercy on whom he wills, and whom he wills he hardens.... Does not the potter have power over the clay, from the same lump to make one vessel for honor and another for dishonor? What if God, wanting to show his wrath and to make his power known, endured with much longsuffering the vessels of wrath prepared for destruction, that he might make known the riches of his glory on the vessels of mercy, which he had prepared beforehand for glory?" *Romans 9*

God does not choose men because they are powerful, or good, or rich, or wise: "But God has chosen the foolish things of the world to put to shame the wise, and God has chosen the weak things of the world to put to shame the things which are mighty; and the base things of the world and the things which are despised God has chosen, and the things which are not, to bring to nothing the things that are, that no flesh should glory in his presence." *1 Corinthians 1*

When God chooses people to save, he actually saves them: "And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to his purpose. For whom he foreknew, he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren. Moreover, whom he predestined, these he also called; whom he called, these he also justified; and whom he justified, these he also glorified." *Romans 8*

Men contribute nothing to their salvation: "But to as many as received him, to them he gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in his name: who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God." *John 1* "For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast." *Ephesians 2*

The Death of Jesus Christ the God-Man

God the Son came to Earth to carry out the plan of God the Father to save his people from their sins and from the punishment they deserve. Jesus actually saves those, and only those, whom God the Father has chosen to be saved.

Jesus Christ, who is both God and man, will save his people, the people whom God the Father has chosen for salvation: "And she [Mary] will bring forth a son, and you shall call his name Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins." *Matthew 1*

Jesus prayed only for his people: "Jesus spoke these words, lifted up his eyes to Heaven, and said: "Father, the hour has come. Glorify your son, that your son also may glorify you, as you have given him authority over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as you have given him. And this is eternal life, that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent.

"I have glorified you on Earth. I have finished the work which you have given me to do.... I have manifested your name to the men whom you have given me out of the world. They were yours, you gave them to me, and they have kept your Word. Now they have known that all things which you have given me are from you. For I have given to them the words which you have given me; and they have received them, and have known surely that I came forth from you; and they have believed that you sent me.

"I pray for them. I do not pray for the world, but for those whom you have given me, for they are yours. And all mine are yours, and yours are mine, and I am glorified in them.

"Now I am no longer in the world, but these are in the world, and I come to you. Holy Father, keep through your name those whom you have given me, that they may be one as we are.... I do not pray for these alone, but also for those who will believe in me through their word...." *John* 17

Jesus will actually save all his people: "And Jesus said to them, "I am the bread of life. He who comes to me shall never hunger, and he who believes in me shall never thirst. But I said to you that you have seen me and yet do not believe. All that the Father gives me will come to me, and the one who comes to me I will by no means cast out. For I have come down from Heaven, not to do my own will, but the will of him who sent me. This is the will of the Father who sent me, that of all he has given me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up at the last day." *John* 6

"But God demonstrates his own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. Much more then, having now been justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him. For if when we were enemies we were reconciled to God through the death of his Son, much more, having been reconciled, we shall be saved by his life." *Romans* 5

Jesus died in the place of his sheep, taking their punishment: "I [Jesus] am the good shepherd. The good shepherd gives his life for the sheep.... I am the good shepherd; and I know my sheep, and am known by my own. As the Father knows me, even do I know the Father; and I lay down my life for the sheep." *John* 10

"Moreover, brethren, I [Paul] declare to you the Gospel which I preached to you, which also you received and in which you stand, by which also you are saved...: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, and that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the Scriptures...." *1 Corinthians* 15

Believers are "justified freely by his [God's] grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus...to demonstrate at the present time his [God's] righteousness, that he [God] might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus." *Romans* 3

Christ did not die for all men, but only for his people: "Then the Jews surrounded him and said to him, "How long do you keep us in doubt? If you are the Christ, tell us plainly."

"Jesus answered them, "I told you, and you do not believe. The works that I do in my Father's name, they bear witness of me. But you do not believe, because you are not of my sheep, as I said to you. My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me. And I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; neither shall anyone snatch them out of my hand." *John* 10

“And he [Jesus] said [to his disciples], “To you it has been given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of God, but to the rest it is given in parables, that seeing they may not see, and hearing they may not understand.” *Luke 8*

The Grace of God the Holy Spirit

The people that God has chosen cannot resist God’s saving grace, for God is all-powerful.

God’s Word is all-powerful: “My Word shall not return to me void, but it shall accomplish what I please, and it shall prosper in the thing for which I sent it.” *Isaiah 55*

God raises the dead, both physically and spiritually: “For as the Father raises the dead and gives life to them, even so the Son gives life to whom he will.” *John 5*

God’s saving mercy cannot be resisted: “I [God] will have mercy on whomever I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whomever I will have compassion. So then it is not of him who wills, nor of him who runs, but of God who shows mercy.... Therefore he has mercy on whom he wills, and whom he wills he hardens.... Does not the potter have power over the clay, from the same lump to make one vessel for honor and another for dishonor? What if God, wanting to show his wrath and to make his power known, endured with much longsuffering the vessels of wrath prepared for destruction, that he might make known the riches of his glory on the vessels of mercy, which he had prepared beforehand for glory?” *Romans 9*

Those whom God has chosen will believe: “And as many as had been appointed unto eternal life believed.” *Acts 13* “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and you shall be saved.” *Acts 16*

The Assurance of Salvation

God, who is omnipotent, will not permit anyone for whom Christ died to be lost.

Whoever understands and believes the Gospel has eternal life already: “Most assuredly, I [Jesus] say to you, he who hears my Word and believes in him who sent me has everlasting life, and shall not come into judgment, but has passed from death to life.” *John 5*

Therefore, no believer can perish: “For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have everlasting life.” *John 3*

“My sheep hear my voice, and I [Jesus] know them, and they follow me. And I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; neither shall anyone snatch them out of my hand.” *John 10* “It is not the will of your Father who is in Heaven that one of these little ones should perish.” *Matthew 18*

Nothing can separate believers from God: “Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? As it is written, “For you sake we are killed all day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter.” Yet in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities nor powers, nor things present nor things to come, nor height nor depth, nor any other created thing shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.” *Romans 8*

Salvation is certain for those who believe: “Now may the God of peace himself sanctify you completely; and may your whole spirit, soul, and body be preserved blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. He who calls you is faithful, who also will do it.” *1 Thessalonians 5*

“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to his abundant mercy has begotten us again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled and that does not fade away, reserved in Heaven for you, who are kept by the power of God through faith for salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.” *1 Peter 1*