



Shelby Christian Church

CORE 52: GETTING RIGHT WITH GOD - ELECTION AND PREDESTINATION

Matthew 22:14, Acts 9:1-31, Joshua 24:15, Romans 8:29-30, 2 Peter 3:9 * 10/26/2025

MAIN POINT

Many are called, but few are chosen.

INTRODUCTION

What is your understanding of election and predestination? Has it changed after reading this week?

How can we best approach the subject like this where smart people who love Jesus can differ in opinion so greatly?

In Mark Moore's Core 52, we discovered that the principle of election is that God alone chooses who goes to heaven and who does not, and God has determined the parameters of salvation, and we get to choose whether or not to enter. God determines the time, place and parameters of salvation. We choose whether to accept the invitation.

UNDERSTANDING

HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ MATTHEW 22:14

Can you share a time when you received an invitation (to an event, party, or opportunity) but either didn't respond or didn't fully take part? How did that feel later?

This verse is part of the parable of the wedding banquet, who is doing the inviting in the parable, and what is the response of those invited?

What does Jesus mean by "many are invited, but few are chosen"?

How does this verse reveal both God's wide invitation to salvation and the seriousness of responding rightly?

Jesus concludes the parable of the wedding banquet by saying, "For many are invited, but few are chosen." This verse highlights that God's invitation to salvation is extended widely, but not everyone responds rightly. While the gospel call goes out to all, only those who accept it through faith and are clothed in Christ's righteousness are truly chosen. It is both a warning against presumption and a reminder of God's grace in calling people to Himself.

HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ ACTS 9:1-31

What was Saul doing at the beginning of this passage? (vv. 1-2)

How did the encounter with Jesus on the road to Damascus unfold? (vv. 3-9)

What does this passage teach us about God’s power to transform lives, even the most unlikely ones?

Why do you think Jesus confronted Saul so directly, and what does that reveal about God’s pursuit of people?

What are some of the specifics of what Paul was called or destined for?

Saul, a fierce persecutor of Christians, set out for Damascus to arrest believers. On the road, he encountered the risen Jesus in a blinding vision and was struck down, leaving him unable to see. Jesus revealed Himself to Saul and redirected his life completely. Meanwhile, Ananias, though fearful, obeyed God’s command to visit Saul, laying hands on him so that he regained his sight, received the Holy Spirit, and was baptized. Immediately, Saul began proclaiming Jesus as the Son of God, astonishing those who once knew him as an enemy of the church.

Though many remained skeptical of his conversion, Barnabas vouched for him before the apostles in Jerusalem, helping Saul to be accepted among the believers. Saul continued preaching boldly, even as he faced threats to his life. The passage concludes with the church experiencing peace, being strengthened, walking in reverence for the Lord, and growing through the encouragement of the Holy Spirit.

| HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ JOSHUA 24:15

What does Joshua’s challenge reveal about the nature of faith—it being a personal and intentional choice?

How can we, like Joshua, declare our allegiance to the Lord in a culture full of competing loyalties?

What does it mean to serve the Lord not just individually, but as a family or community?

At the close of his leadership, Joshua challenges Israel to make a clear choice about whom they will serve—whether the false gods of their ancestors, the gods of the surrounding nations, or the Lord who delivered them. He acknowledges the reality of competing allegiances but declares his own firm decision: “But as for me and my household, we will serve the Lord.” This verse emphasizes that faith is not inherited passively but chosen deliberately, and it highlights the responsibility of leaders and families to set the example of wholehearted devotion to God.

| HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ ROMANS 8:29-30

What does it mean that God “foreknew” His people? How is this more than just knowledge of future events?

How does being “conformed to the image of His Son” describe God’s goal for believers?

Why do you think Paul speaks of “glorified” in the past tense, even though it’s a future reality?

In these verses, Paul outlines what is often called the “golden chain of redemption.” God’s plan for believers is both purposeful and comprehensive: He foreknew His people, predestined them to be conformed to the image of His Son, called them to faith, justified them through Christ, and will ultimately glorify them. While mankind chooses whether to accept God’s salvation, this passage

emphasizes that salvation is entirely initiated and completed by God, from God's eternal purpose to the final perfection of believers.

HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ 2 PETER 3:9

According to this verse, how do some people misunderstand God's timing?

What does this verse teach about God's character—especially His patience and mercy?

Why might people perceive God as "slow," and how does this verse correct that perception?

What does it mean that God "does not want anyone to perish"? How does this connect to human responsibility?

In this verse, Peter explains that God's apparent "slowness" in fulfilling His promises, especially the promise of Christ's return, is not due to delay or neglect. Rather, it reflects God's patience and mercy. He is giving people time to repent because He does not want anyone to perish but desires that all come to salvation. This verse emphasizes both God's long-suffering nature and His loving intention for humanity, highlighting that His timing is purposeful, not careless, and that His ultimate goal is the redemption of all who will turn to Him.

APPLICATION

Share a time when you were chosen for a special honor. What was it and how did that make you feel? What has God done in your life to make sure you had an opportunity to respond to Him?

What can you uniquely do to bring God glory through your life? What were you called to do?

Sometimes God's divine call can come through human messengers. With that in mind, who are you uniquely positioned to invite to church so God can call them to heaven?

PRAYER

COMMENTARY

Matthew 22:14

Jesus ends the parable of the wedding banquet with a sobering statement: "For many are invited, but few are chosen." Throughout the parable, the king sends out repeated invitations, symbolizing God's wide offer of salvation to Israel first and then to the nations. Yet, many refuse to come, and even one who does arrive is cast out for not wearing the proper wedding clothes. The "invitation" represents the gospel call that goes out broadly, but the "chosen" are those who truly respond in faith and are clothed in the righteousness God provides.

This verse underscores both the generosity of God and the seriousness of human response. God desires all to come to the feast, yet only those who accept on His terms—not relying on their own merits but embracing Christ—are welcomed. It serves as both a comfort and a warning: God's invitation is gracious and far-reaching, but salvation requires a genuine response that aligns with His

will. Ultimately, it reminds us that belonging to God's kingdom is not about proximity to religion or external appearances, but about being transformed and clothed by Christ Himself.

Acts 9:1-31

Acts 9 records one of the most significant turning points in church history, the conversion of Saul of Tarsus. At the start, Saul embodies opposition to the gospel, "breathing out murderous threats" against Christians. Yet on the Damascus road, the risen Christ confronts him directly, revealing both Saul's sin and his divine calling. This encounter shows the unstoppable grace of God: even the fiercest enemy of the church can be transformed into its greatest messenger. Saul's blindness symbolizes the spiritual state he had been in, while the restoration of his sight through Ananias highlights the healing and renewal that comes through obedience and the Spirit's work.

Ananias's role demonstrates that God often chooses ordinary disciples to carry out extraordinary tasks. His initial hesitation reflects the natural fear of obeying God when it seems risky, but his obedience becomes a crucial part of Saul's transformation. Likewise, Barnabas later plays the role of advocate, helping skeptical believers accept Saul. Both Ananias and Barnabas remind us that God's work in people's lives often depends on the faithfulness of others willing to welcome, guide, and encourage.

Saul's immediate boldness in preaching Christ testifies to the reality of his conversion. The one who once tried to destroy the faith now builds it up. His story illustrates that no one is beyond God's reach and that true encounters with Jesus lead to radical change in mission and purpose. The chapter concludes with a picture of the church at peace, strengthened and growing under the Spirit's encouragement (v. 31). This final verse serves as a reminder that while persecution had scattered and threatened the believers, the Spirit was still at work bringing unity, maturity, and expansion.

In summary, Acts 9:1–31 highlights the transformative power of God's grace, the importance of obedience in discipleship, and the Spirit's role in sustaining and multiplying the church. It challenges believers to trust God's ability to save anyone, to be willing vessels like Ananias and Barnabas, and to walk in reverence and reliance on the Spirit as the early church did.

Joshua 24:15

Joshua 24 takes place at the end of Joshua's life as he gathers Israel at Shechem for a covenant renewal ceremony. Having led the people into the promised land and seen God's faithfulness firsthand, Joshua reminds Israel of their history—from God's call of Abraham to their deliverance from Egypt and victories in Canaan. Against this backdrop, Joshua issues a decisive challenge: choose whom you will serve. His words make clear that faithfulness to God is not automatic; it requires a deliberate, conscious commitment.

By contrasting the Lord with "the gods your ancestors worshiped" and "the gods of the Amorites," Joshua acknowledges the real temptations Israel faced. Their hearts could easily drift toward cultural idols or traditions of the past. Joshua's declaration, "But as for me and my household, we will serve the Lord," models leadership rooted in personal conviction. He does not wait for the crowd's decision; he sets the standard by choosing loyalty to God for himself and his family.

This verse remains a powerful call to believers today. Just as Israel had to decide whom they would serve in the midst of competing influences, so must Christians daily reject the false gods of comfort, success, materialism, or cultural approval. Joshua reminds us that serving the Lord requires intentionality, courage, and consistency. His example also highlights the influence of spiritual leadership within the family and community—our personal devotion impacts those around us.

Ultimately, Joshua 24:15 challenges every generation to move beyond nominal faith and make a clear, public declaration: no matter what others choose, we will remain devoted to the Lord.

Romans 8:29-30

Romans 8:29–30 presents a profound overview of God’s redemptive work in the life of a believer, often called the “golden chain of salvation.” Paul lays out a sequence that emphasizes God’s initiative, purpose, and ultimate goal in salvation.

Foreknew –God doesn't force your hand, but he does see it under the table. In other words, he knows what you'll do before you ever do it. The Greek word means "knowing beforehand."

Predestined - The elect who respond to God's invitation are seen by God long before they ever come to Him, long before they are even born. The Greek Word is only used 6 times in the New Testament. It means "to determine beforehand." The root is where we get the word horizon. It basically means, "to set boundaries." God determines the boundaries of salvation. He sees who will respond and who will not. His call is to all; his election is for those He sees will step into his predetermined boundaries of salvation.

Called - while everyone is called, only a few respond accordingly. God’s call brings His chosen people into the sphere of salvation. This call is effectual—it is not just an invitation, but a divine summons that results in response through faith.

Justified – Through Christ, those who respond in faith are declared righteous. Justification is the legal declaration that their sins are forgiven, fully restoring their relationship with God.

Glorified – Finally, God will bring believers to ultimate perfection, a state of eternal glorification with Him. Paul speaks of glorification in the past tense (“those He glorified”), emphasizing the certainty and inevitability of God’s plan.

Overall, these verses highlight that salvation is entirely God’s work, from start to finish. Each step flows from God’s eternal purpose and love, providing believers with assurance and hope. It reminds Christians that struggles, failures, and doubts do not break God’s chain; He is faithful to complete what He began. The passage also encourages believers to pursue Christlikeness, knowing that God’s ultimate goal is our transformation into His image.

2 Peter 3:9

2 Peter 3:9 addresses a common concern among believers: the perceived delay of the Lord’s return. Some in Peter’s day—and in every generation—questioned why Christ had not yet come to establish His kingdom fully. Peter clarifies that God is not slow in the sense of being negligent or forgetful. His “slowness” is actually a reflection of His patience and mercy, giving people time to respond to His call.

The verse highlights two key aspects of God’s character. First, His patience: God endures human rebellion without immediately executing judgment. Second, His desire for salvation: God does not want anyone to perish but seeks that all would come to repentance. Repentance here means turning from sin and trusting in Christ, which is the pathway to eternal life. God’s timing is purposeful; He is allowing space for as many as possible to be saved.

This passage also underscores the balance between divine sovereignty and human responsibility. While God desires everyone to repent, individuals must respond. The verse invites believers to trust in

God's perfect timing, to live faithfully, and to be patient with others as God extends His grace. It also motivates believers to evangelism and prayer, partnering with God in His redemptive mission.

In application, 2 Peter 3:9 encourages patience amid waiting, hope in God's promises, and a heart aligned with God's desire that people turn to Him. It reminds the church that God's delay is a gift of opportunity, not neglect, and calls believers to reflect His patience and love toward others.