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WHAT DOES THE SOVEREIGNTY OF GOD HAVE TO DO WITH OUR SALVATION?

The answer to that is simply everything, and that includes words such as "fore-ordained" of "predestination" (Rom.8:29; Eph.1:11; I Pet.1:20), "election" (I Pet.1:2; Eph.1:4), "chosen" (Jn.15:16; Rom.1:6; Gal.1:1), "of His own will" (Js.1:18), "effectual calling" (Rom.8:30), "according to the foreknowledge of God" (Rom.8:29; I Pet.1:2), "according to the purpose of God" (Rom.9:11, Eph.1:11), "adoption" (Eph.1:5), and "Grace" (Eph.2:8-10). (I suggest that you look up the above verses so you can make further observation in the context.)

Now in order to grasp a deeper understanding and appreciation of our Sovereign Father and our Salvation, we must take a careful and revealing look at the nature and spiritual condition of the lost, unsaved and natural man, which those outside of Christ are. It is very important that you look up the following verses without going on to the next paragraph or verses because this is a progressive study - which means we're building from this foundation up.

Isa.53:6

Jer.17:9

Rom.3:10

Rom.3:11

Rom.3:12

Matt.15:19

Eph.4:18

Rom.1:21

Eph.2:1-3

I Cor.2:14

Now look at Lk.6:43-45 and Matt.12:33-35 - read over it very carefully because at first glance you may miss the connection Jesus is making. Make some observations in the space below.

To summarize these verses, it's clear that Jesus is saying that a bad, rotten or "evil" tree, or heart, can only produce bad, rotten and evil fruit, or results. This is the same as the unsaved, natural man in his spiritually dead position before God. On the other hand, it's only the good tree or heart that can produce good fruit, or results. The question is, "Can that kind of evil heart produce spiritual understanding and faith"? Obviously not.

To summarize the picture that God gives us of the unsaved natural man and his spiritual condition, we conclude from Biblical observations that he is totally depraved, sinful, lost, helpless, hopeless, gone astray, not even seeking God, deceived, corrupted, blinded and alienated. He cannot understand spiritual truth on his own because he is dead spiritually. All of this means that the unsaved man cannot respond to God. He can't even respond with faith to the Gospel, because faith is a fruit of the Spirit. Therefore only those who already have been made alive can respond in faith because of the indwelling Spirit's work. In Eph.2:5, we are told that it was while we were dead in our sin that God made us alive. The first act or response was God's, not the unsaved individual. It is only after then, that we can respond in faith.

So "it is He who has begun this work in us" says Phil.1:6. He is the author of our salvation (Heb.12:2). It is God's working and plan, according to His will not ours. For further references, look up:

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| Jn.1:13 | Phil.2:12-13 |
| Rom.8:28-30 | Eph.1:11 |
| I Pet.1:20 | I Pet.1:2 |
| Eph.1:4 | Jn.15:16 |
| Rom.1:6 | Gal.1:1 |
| Js.1:18 | Rom.9:11 |
| Eph.1:5 | Eph.2:8-10 |

These verses clearly state that salvation is not by man's will (which is dead) but totally by God's. Therefore, these next verses are better understood.

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| 2 Thess.2:13 | Gal.1:15 |
| Jn.6:44 | Eph.1:4 |
| Jn.6:65 | Jn.15:16 |

You see, since man couldn't choose, God had to choose. Now Paul anticipated the question that this may raise about "What's fair", so read Rom.9:10-23 (note vs.14). Write some observations from this text about the sovereignty of God.

When we consider the question, "Is it fair that God chose some and not others?", we're limiting our definition of "fair" to our perspective. If God did what was "fair", wouldn't we all be in hell right now? No one deserves to be saved. Therefore, it is only by God's "grace" that He chose to save some! Remember grace is God's unmerited favor giving to man what is totally undeserved. So now you can rejoice with a little more understanding in His salvation.

Now after thinking through all this, you may question, "Why witness if God will do it all?" To discover your responsibility in evangelism read J. I. Packer's book entitled, "Evangelism and the Sovereignty of God." We as believers are always responsible to obey God's commandments and according to Matt.28:19-20, He has commissioned us to "preach the Gospel" and "make disciples." Also Acts 1:8 gives us some of the last words of Jesus Christ to his disciples about the very power that is to enable us to this task. There are lost brothers and sisters in Christ out there; since we're not "sovereign" we don't know who they are, but our certainty is that when we share the gospel and one responds, we can be convinced that they are elect! Let's go find them! How shall they hear without a preacher (Rom.10:14). The invitation is clearly to "whosoever will" (Rom.10:13; Jn.3:16, 36; 5:24; Rev.3:20; Jn.11:26; Acts 2:21) but only the "elect" can respond. D. L. Moody put it this way: Over top of the door way to heaven it reads "Whosoever will" - once on the inside look out, over top the door way it reads "The Elect of God from the foundations of the earth".