

## **THE REFORMED DOCTRINE OF PREDESTINATION AND ELECTION**

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### ***Introduction...***

As we delve into this topic, I want the reader to know that these comments are my own. The other members of the pastoral staff and the Elders at Cornerstone would not necessarily agree with all of my views. However, I believe this presentation is consistent with the Westminster Confession of Faith to which our EPC subscribes. Equally important is this reality: one's understanding of Predestination is never to be a "litmus" test for being a member of the Cornerstone community. This paper is not set forth in the hopes of "converting" those who understand Predestination differently than I do. Yet, to be perfectly honest with the reader, I wish that all would embrace my understanding! Why? Because, in my view, until we understand that salvation is completely of the Lord from beginning to end, we will not worship Him as we should. In any case, my goal is to lend clarity to the discussion and help the reader to more accurately analyze the issues.

A point of clarification will be useful as we begin. Strictly speaking, ***Predestination refers to the sovereignty of God in all spheres of life.*** It is not simply "about" God choosing those who will be saved. The Wycliffe Dictionary of Theology [Hendrickson Publishers edition; Baker Book House 1960 under Baker's Dictionary of Theology] says "We define Predestination as that theological doctrine, primarily associated with Calvinism, which holds that from eternity God has foreordained all things which come to pass, including the final salvation or reprobation of man." [p. 415] Election more precisely refers to the act within the Predestination of God whereby He chooses the individuals who will be saved in Christ. Thus, Election is a specific activity within the salvation plan of God as part of His total sovereignty over all His creation. In this understanding, the blooming of a flower on May 10, 2007 and the opening of a heart to receive the Gospel that day are both predestined by God. However, we are speaking of Predestination as it relates specifically to the Election of sinners to salvation.

A second point of clarification concerns argumentation. The Apostle Paul warned the young Pastor Timothy to avoid needless controversies. In fact, speaking of someone whom he considered to be a troublemaker, Paul wrote:

1 Timothy 6:4 (NIV) <sup>4</sup> he is conceited and understands nothing. **He has an unhealthy interest in controversies and quarrels** about words that result in envy, strife, malicious talk, evil suspicions...

Hence, the servant of Jesus Christ does well to reserve his or her theological passions for issues that really matter! I believe one such issue is the Biblical Doctrine of Predestination. However, few subjects generate so much heat and contention as this aspect of the Word of God. Yet, since it is preached and taught at Cornerstone, and since we are a “Confessional Church” rooted in the Westminster Confession of Faith, we must wrestle with this challenging truth. The Bible says, without apology, that those individuals who are ultimately saved enjoy that salvation because God has *chosen* them to receive it! Indeed, Paul wrote to the Church at Ephesus and opened his letter with these words:

**Ephesians 1:4-5 (NIV)** <sup>4</sup>For he chose us in him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight. In love <sup>5</sup>**he predestined us to be adopted as his sons through Jesus Christ**, in accordance with his pleasure and will—

At the same time, the Scriptures indicate that the free will of man [meaning mankind/humanity] has some role in the issue of salvation. For example, when Paul and Barnabus preached the Gospel to a Jewish group at Pisidian Antioch, they were rejected. Hence, they said:

Acts 13:46 (NIV) <sup>46</sup> Then Paul and Barnabas answered them boldly: “We had to speak the word of God to you first. **Since you reject it and do not consider yourselves worthy of eternal life**, we now turn to the Gentiles.”

At the very least, the student of Scripture is left with what may be called an ‘Antinomy.’ This word simply means that we have two apparently reasonable statements that do not go together and therefore create an internally inconsistent conclusion. How can man have the free will to accept or reject the Gospel if in fact God has chosen those who will accept it? Hmmm...here are my thoughts...

### ***The Believer’s Emotional Investment In The Issue...***

Predestination is a doctrine about which I’ve seen Christians get really angry! I’ve watched them break fellowship and argue in such a heated manner as to nearly come to blows. Some even reject the Doctrine altogether because they simply do not like the way it makes God look! They say things like “I just don’t believe God would be so unfair as to choose some people and leave others out of Heaven!” Or with even greater offense they might say “This sounds like a bait and switch! The Bible says ‘God so loved the world that whosoever...’ in John 3:16. According to Predestination, that’s all nonsense! Is God just pretending to give people a chance? Doesn’t He love everyone?”

At the same time, as a Predestinarian, I am vexed at how “man-centered” the Gospel is to most Christians. They see it as an offer that God makes hoping the sinner will respond. They almost portray God as following the unbeliever around begging him to consider Christ! Until the unsaved person finally says “Ok! Ok! I accept you Jesus!”

And then he thinks that he got together with God and made a deal for Heaven! [Now my emotions are showing! ☺]

So...trying to set aside our preconceptions about Predestination, let's calmly examine the matter. Although hundreds of very thorough books are available on this topic, I will attempt to summarize the primary considerations. Your interaction, as always, is welcome. My email address is ralberta@cornerstoneforlife.com.

### ***Some Historical Background...***

Our title is "The Reformed Doctrine of Predestination." This was the doctrine and teaching of the great Protestant Reformers Calvin, Luther and others. In fact, it is often called "Calvinism." That is misleading, however, because over a thousand years before the Reformation, Christian theologians were wrangling over this topic. So, if you've argued with someone about Predestination, you are [a] in good company and [b] debating an old issue! In the fifth century, an exchange took place between the great theologian Augustine and a learned monk named Pelagius. Augustine argued from Scripture that man was fallen in nature and unable to respond to the Gospel offer. He was impaired by sin in his "origins" (thus, the doctrine of Original Sin refers to the sin nature being passed down from the first Adam, as opposed to its secondary meaning, i.e., the sin of Adam and Eve). According to Augustine, this left natural man unwilling to respond to the Gospel because he was/is *unable* to respond.

At the opposite theological end, Pelagius believed that man was not corrupted and did not have to fall into sin. For him, Adam was a bad example to be sure! But man could lead a good and righteous life and respond to the Gospel call much as a sick person responds to treatment. In contrast, Augustine saw man as dead as Lazarus in the tomb and needing to be first raised up and then given the Gospel. To stand at the tomb of Lazarus and shout to him while he was still dead would be pointless. What came of their dispute as the church leaders of the fifth century considered their views? Augustine won the day and Pelagius was condemned. But many Christians still preferred his understanding.

About a thousand years later, the great theologian John Calvin had essentially the same debate with the brilliant Dutch theologian Arminius. The latter argued that man was capable of responding to the Gospel and that he is predestined on the basis of God's foreknowledge of his faith. Thus, for Arminius, the offer of salvation could be understood, and accepted or rejected by the sinner. The sinner's fate was entirely in his own hands; God makes the offer of Christ but irresistibly saves no one. This is essentially the position of most modern evangelicals in America today. Without calling themselves "Arminians" they hold to these views. However, four and half centuries ago, Arminius and his theology were rejected and condemned. Our question is simply this: why do most Bible-believing Christians today reject the Reformers teaching on

Predestination? Why do most modern Christians essentially agree with a theology that was rejected centuries ago?

*A Theory On Why Most Evangelicals Are Arminian...*

It should be remembered that we all read the Bible thru our personal “lenses.” We “view” the Scriptures inevitably with our own background in mind. Thus, poor people will usually appreciate what the Bible says about poverty. Musicians are drawn to the passages touching on music and worship. Similarly, our political “software” affects our understanding of the Word of God! My observation is that Americans in particular are very concerned about democratic principles, fairness, equal opportunities, etc. Thus, American Christians readily reject the idea that God might not treat everyone the same way when it comes to salvation. The very idea that He might “choose” certain individuals while passing over other people is offensive. I’ve even heard people say “He *can’t* do that! It would be undemocratic and unfair!”

At this point, I usually ask them to consider whether they would really want God to be “fair?” Fairness is when we get what we deserve in life. According to the Bible, we deserve eternal separation from God. Hell itself! God be Praised that He is gracious but not always “fair” as we understand fairness!

Our point is that we read the Bible in the context of our own experiences and realities. Here’s a great example of that truth. When Donna and I were teaching in Russia in the fall of 2005, we noticed a very subdued reaction to the Doctrine of Predestination. Our students were typically well-educated and extremely well-read people in their twenties. So, I was puzzled at their muted response to the idea of God choosing some and passing over others for salvation. When I explained to our Russian students how this teaching usually causes Americans to get agitated, they laughed. They reminded me that they’ve lived under dictators so the idea of the sovereign doing whatever he wants is not foreign to them! In fact, they suggested that God certainly can and should do His own will! In short, Arminianism seems to be “democracy-friendly!” Beyond that, Americans are obsessed with “rights” and “choice.” So, it certainly settles poorly when Paul says:

Romans 8:28-30 (NIV) <sup>28</sup> And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose. <sup>29</sup> **For those God foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the likeness of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brothers.** <sup>30</sup> **And those he predestined, he also called; those he called, he also justified; those he justified, he also glorified.**

The Arminian immediately argues something like this: “Of course! God foreknows who will humbly accept his offer of salvation in Christ and then He includes them on His list of those predestined! So, Predestination is nothing more than God bringing

sinner to himself based on His foreknowledge!" This argument "solves" the problem for the person struggling to reconcile God making a genuine offer of salvation but only saving those He has predestined. But it is fraught with difficulties.

First, there is no reason Paul would be speaking of God specifically foreknowing the sinner's response to the offer of salvation. He does not say that. Why would he? God foreknows everything! He foreknows what everyone will do and choose, so he obviously knows who will be saved. Paul does not seem to be speaking here of a foreknowledge of actions or behaviors. Would the Arminian suggest that there are some actions that God does *not* foreknow?

Second, the use of "foreknowledge" in the Word of God suggests a relationship with the individual. The Greek word used for "foreknew" is "pro-ginosko." That means to "pre-know." God "pre-knows" the individuals whom He will call! There would be nothing new about this phenomenon. God told the Old Testament Prophet Jeremiah:

**Jeremiah 1:4-5 (NIV)** <sup>4</sup> The word of the Lord came to me, saying, <sup>5</sup> **"Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, before you were born I set you apart; I appointed you as a prophet to the nations."**

Furthermore, if it was just a matter of knowing they would accept the offer, why would He have to predestine them? It seems to me that the real offense is the idea that God does the choosing and is the author of our salvation. The Arminian wants man to be the agent of cooperation. Thus, the Arminian "solves" the problem by saying God only chooses those whom He foreknows will be humble enough to accept! Again, why speak of predestining them? What they are really saying is that God predestined them to receive an invitation and God knows in advance that they will "accept" it!

In his efforts to keep God from looking "unfair" the Arminian actually [no doubt unintentionally] diminishes the glory of God! In the "foreknowledge explanation" God and man work together to save man. In the end, this is a "man-centered" salvation! Eternal life, in the Arminian view, depends upon man's humility and not totally upon God's grace.

For the Arminian, God is like a person sending out party invitations only to people whom He knows will come to his party. But the more accurate illustration would be that of a person sending out invitations to the whole community and choosing some to whom he writes a personal handwritten note. A persuasive note that they will not ignore! The extra note is sent to those actually chosen; not all are chosen! Thus, the Lord Jesus Christ himself said:

**Matthew 22:14 (NIV)** <sup>14</sup> "For many are invited, but **few are chosen.**"

Let's look a little more at this question...

### ***Does God Predestine Individuals Without Regard To Their Actions...?***

This is exactly what Paul wrestled with in Romans Chapter Nine. He goes out of his way to argue that salvation in Christ has nothing to do with anything the sinner does either good or bad! What's more, if we accuse God of being unfair, we need to study Paul's analysis of this truth about election. Consider Romans 9:11-24:

“Yet, before the twins were born or had done anything good or bad—in order that God’s purpose in election might stand: <sup>12</sup>not by works but by him who calls—she was told, “The older will serve the younger <sup>13</sup>Just as it is written: “Jacob I loved, but Esau I hated.” <sup>14</sup>What then shall we say? Is God unjust? Not at all! <sup>15</sup>For he says to Moses, “I will have mercy on whom I have mercy, And I will have compassion on whom I have compassion.” <sup>16</sup>**It does not, therefore, depend on man’s desire or effort, but on God’s mercy.** <sup>17</sup>For the Scripture says to Pharaoh: “I raised you up for this very purpose, that I might display my power in you and that my name might be proclaimed in all the earth.” <sup>18</sup>Therefore God has mercy on whom he wants to have mercy, and he hardens whom he wants to harden. <sup>19</sup>One of you will say to me: “Then why does God still blame us? For who resists his will?” <sup>20</sup>**But who are you, O man, to talk back to God? “Shall what is formed say to him who formed it, ‘Why did you make me like this?’ “** <sup>21</sup>**Does not the potter have the right to make out of the same lump of clay some pottery for noble purposes and some for common use?** <sup>22</sup>What if God, choosing to show his wrath and make his power known, bore with great patience the objects of his wrath—prepared for destruction? <sup>23</sup>**WHAT IF HE DID THIS TO MAKE THE RICHES OF HIS GLORY KNOWN TO THE OBJECTS OF HIS MERCY,** whom he *prepared in advance for glory* — <sup>24</sup>*even us, whom he also called, not only from the Jews but also from the Gentiles?”*

### ***The Central Issue...***

Probably every Christian would agree that the Resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ from the dead was the quintessential example of God’s Glory! His might and majesty broke forth wonderfully in this demonstration of His power over physical death. In my view, the same is true of salvation. I believe that the Word of God teaches that the unsaved are actually spiritually dead...in need of spiritual resurrection!

Is the sinner dead and unable to respond unless God acts upon his heart and mind and soul? This may be the single most critical point to be made. The crux of Augustine’s argument and that of the reformers later was this: the sinner in his or her natural state is dead to God! They simply do not have the ability to respond to the Gospel offer. Left on their own, their dead consciences and spiritual emptiness will not prompt them to seek God. When they finally *do* seek God, it is because He awakens them to new life and gives them the gift of faith upon which they act. He changes their will and desire.

In theological terms, “regeneration” precedes “salvation” in the same way Lazarus had to be physically raised from the dead before he could follow Christ.

For the Apostle Paul, this was a given...that unsaved man is spiritually dead! He writes:

Ephesians 2:1-5 (NIV) <sup>1</sup> **As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sins,** <sup>2</sup> in which you used to live when you followed the ways of this world and of the ruler of the kingdom of the air, the spirit who is now at work in those who are disobedient. <sup>3</sup> All of us also lived among them at one time, gratifying the cravings of our sinful nature and following its desires and thoughts.

Like the rest, we were by nature objects of wrath. <sup>4</sup> **But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy,** <sup>5</sup> **made us alive with Christ even when were dead in transgressions--it is by grace you have been saved.**

For Paul, grace was not just the offer of salvation but rather God doing the saving work in the life of the lost sinner! This was decided before the world began! We saw earlier:

**Ephesians 1:4-5 (NIV) <sup>4</sup> For he chose us in him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight.** In love <sup>5</sup> he predestined us to be adopted as his sons through Jesus Christ, in accordance with his pleasure and will—

This makes perfect sense in Pauline theology because he taught, led by the Holy Spirit, that even the faith response of the sinner is a gift from God!

Ephesians 2:8-9 (NIV) <sup>8</sup> For it is by grace you have been saved, **through faith-- and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God--** <sup>9</sup> not by works, so that no one can boast.

At this point, the Christian asks “Did Jesus teach this idea...that the unsaved are dead?” Certainly! Consider:

Matthew 8:21-22 (NIV) <sup>21</sup> Another disciple said to him, "Lord, first let me go and bury my father." <sup>22</sup> But Jesus told him, "Follow me, and **let the dead bury their own dead.**"

When many did not respond to the Gospel offer, Jesus said the cause was their inability to do so! Consider:

John 6:61-65 (NIV) <sup>61</sup> Aware that his disciples were grumbling about this, Jesus said to them, "Does this offend you? <sup>62</sup> What if you see the Son of Man ascend to where he was before! <sup>63</sup> The Spirit gives life; the flesh counts for nothing. The words I have spoken to you are spirit and they are life. <sup>64</sup> Yet there are some of you who do not believe." For Jesus had known from the beginning which of them

did not believe and who would betray him. <sup>65</sup> He went on to say, *"This is why I told you that no one can come to me unless the Father has enabled him."*

For the Lord Jesus Christ, belief was/is rooted in being called to be part of his flock. The person predestined inevitably will come to saving faith! Consider a time when some men asked him very clearly to tell them who he was. Notice how Jesus explains their unbelief:

John 10:24-30 "The Jews gathered around him, saying, "How long will you keep us in suspense? If you are the Christ, tell us plainly," <sup>25</sup>Jesus answered, "I did tell you, but you do not believe. The miracles I do in my father's name speak for me, **<sup>26</sup>but you do not believe because you are not my sheep.** <sup>27</sup>My sheep listen to my voice: I know them, and **they follow me.** <sup>28</sup>I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; no one can snatch them out of my hand. <sup>29</sup>**My Father, who has given them to me,** is greater than all; no one can snatch them out of my Father's hand. <sup>30</sup>I and the Father are one."

Jesus has just made it clear. His sheep believe because they were called by the Father to follow him ...and they will do so! He calls them out of their deadness and enables them to believe in him! We saw that in Romans Nine when Paul said:

<sup>22</sup> What if God, choosing to show his wrath and make his power known, bore with great patience the objects of his wrath-- <sup>22</sup> What if God, choosing to show his wrath and make his power known, bore with great patience the objects of his wrath--prepared for destruction? <sup>23</sup> **What if he did this to make the riches of his glory known to the objects of his mercy, whom he prepared in advance for glory--**

### ***But Doesn't The Bible Teach That God Would Like Everyone Saved?***

It certainly seems to say exactly that! Consider:

2 Peter 3:9 "The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness. He is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance." 1 Timothy 2:3-4 "This is good, and pleases God our Savior, **(4) who wants all men to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth.**"

Here then is the great mystery. I believe that the Word of God tells us [1] that God would be pleased to see all people saved and [2] that none can be saved unless He brings them to faith and [3] He only brings a few to faith and passes others by. I cannot explain that choice on the part of God. Neither could I explain why God chose Israel in the Old Testament and not the Ammonites, Moabites or any of the other "Ites." But for the Biblical writers, God's right to do so is a given.

The writer of Acts, Luke, shared this truth without any attempts to explain it. We alluded to it earlier in Acts Chapter Thirteen. Let's review the entire text with a view to Luke's explanation as to why some people believed:

Acts 13:46-48 Then Paul and Barnabas answered them boldly: "We had to speak the word of God to you first. Since you reject it and do not consider yourselves worthy of eternal life, we now turn to the Gentiles. <sup>47</sup>For this is what the Lord has commanded us: "I have made you a light for the Gentiles, that you may bring salvation to the ends of the earth." <sup>48</sup>**When the Gentiles heard this, they were glad and honored the word of the Lord; and all who were appointed for eternal life believed.**"

This is an impossible verse to explain away. Many commentators strain to suggest that it is not teaching that the basis for belief was their "appointed" status. Yet the words used suggest precisely that. The Greek text uses the word "tasso" in its passive form clearly indicating being "acted upon." The same word was used in military matters to indicate troops being 'put in place" or "appointed." Picture a Lieutenant standing in front of a platoon of soldiers directing them into squads within the platoon. That is the word used. What soldier just stands wherever he wants to in the ranks? Rather, he is passive in this process!

Luke's point may have also been that Gentiles were also chosen by God's election. But, in any case, he says the ones who believed did so as a function of their having been "appointed."

### ***Why Then Does God Bother To Offer Salvation To Those He Has Not Chosen Or Predestined?***

Short answer: to bring Himself glory! This question reflects a certain belief that may be the cause of all of our confusion. That belief seems to be: "The main objective of God undoubtedly is to save as many people for Heaven as possible! That's what God's big purpose should be! Right?" Almost as if God owes man the opportunity for salvation. But the Bible never says that. In fact, it says "All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God!" [Romans 3:23] If God saves even one person, He is to be praised! Actually, all people deserve eternal death.

To teach the actual position of humanity before the Holy God, allow me to share an illustration used by a former Professor of mine, Dr. Roger Nicole. Picture a group of families on a boat on a beautiful summer day. They are on their way to a picnic on an island when a terrible storm develops. They are all about to drown when a huge police helicopter comes by overhead. Ropes are lowered down and only four or five people are saved! The rest are left to die in the tumbling lake! Any observer would say "That was not fair! The pilot of that helicopter **should** have saved them all! He **could** have saved them all!"

But let us change the illustration. Suppose the boat was filled with a hundred convicted murderers on their way to be executed. The same storm arises and the same helicopter saves just a few. Notice: the ones left to drown would be getting exactly what they deserved anyway! Thus, the ones saved were saved by grace and no apology would be needed from the helicopter pilot! In this way, Dr. Nicole pointed out that we all deserve separation from God and *He must save no one!* What the Arminian fails to grasp in that lost man deserves to stay lost! If he goes to Hell and eternal death, he is only getting what he deserves.

Yet we struggle because we think God owes humanity much more. Many people, including most born-again Christians, actually think that God owes humanity salvation! They might say “We didn’t ask to be born into a world of sin and inherit Adam’s sin nature! The least God can do is give us a way out!” Therefore, the Gospel is interpreted as God’s offer to rescue all of fallen humanity instead of his Elect. More importantly, I think God’s purpose is deeper than man’s eternal well-being. What then is the primary motive of God in sending His son Jesus Christ?

To review...we said above that man thinks God’s agenda must be to save as many as possible. But what if He has a very different agenda? One that is focused on His Glory and not man’s salvation? What if He insists on bringing Himself glory by saving some? What will glorify Him by His grace? What if the point is that salvation as God gives it brings Him glory for His mercies? What if it’s not “all about us” but “all about God’s Glory!?”

Is this not exactly what the Apostle Paul has said?

**Romans 9:22-25 (NIV)** <sup>22</sup> What if God, choosing to show his wrath and make his power known, bore with great patience the objects of his wrath--prepared for destruction? <sup>23</sup> **What if he did this to make the riches of his glory known to the objects of his mercy**, whom he prepared in advance for glory-- <sup>24</sup> even us, whom he also called, not only from the Jews but also from the Gentiles? <sup>25</sup> As he says in Hosea: "I will call them 'my people' who are not my people; and I will call her 'my loved one' who is not my loved one..."

I have always thought the Christian will never love God as he should until he grasps how God saved him entirely by His grace! And when the Christian said “Save me!”...even that was because God enabled him to do so! Oh let us fall to our knees with worship! As Paul put it:

**Romans 11:33 (NIV)** <sup>33</sup> **Oh, the depth of the riches of the wisdom and knowledge of God!** How unsearchable his judgments, and his paths beyond tracing out!

### ***Some Final Thoughts About The Mind Of Jesus Christ...***

Jesus told his disciples to “Go and make disciples of all nations!” [Matthew 28:19] Predestination does not undermine this command! It does not impede missions and evangelism. Why? Because we are God’s means of sharing the Good News! In fact, Predestination and Election assure us that some will respond! Our role in this and the nature of God’s mercy are illustrated in a parable. Admittedly, this story is probably about the Jews rejection of the Gospel and the Gentiles coming into the Kingdom. But I think it also gives us a wonderful hint at the mind of Christ when it comes to sinners. It shows us their natural rejection of the Gospel and their need for His determined grace! Consider:

**Luke 14:15-24 (NIV)** <sup>15</sup> When one of those at the table with him heard this, he said to Jesus, "Blessed is the man who will eat at the feast in the kingdom of God." <sup>16</sup> Jesus replied: "A certain man was preparing a great banquet and invited many guests. <sup>17</sup> At the time of the banquet he sent his servant to tell those who had been invited, 'Come, for everything is now ready.' <sup>18</sup> **"But they all alike began to make excuses.** The first said, 'I have just bought a field, and I must go and see it. Please excuse me.' <sup>19</sup> "Another said, 'I have just bought five yoke of oxen, and I'm on my way to try them out. Please excuse me.' <sup>20</sup> "Still another said, 'I just got married, so I can't come.'

We see immediately that *all were invited* and *all said “No thank you!”* Not one single person responded with gratitude! But the founder of the feast was obviously sincere in his invitation. Thus, he was angry. Notice what happens next...

<sup>21</sup> "The servant came back and reported this to his master. Then the owner of the house became angry and ordered his servant, 'Go out quickly into the streets and alleys of the town and bring in the poor, the crippled, the blind and the lame.' <sup>22</sup> "Sir,' the servant said, 'what you ordered has been done, but there is still room.' <sup>23</sup> **"Then the master told his servant, 'Go out to the roads and country lanes and make them come in,** so that my house will be full. <sup>24</sup> I tell you, not one of those men who were invited will get a taste of my banquet."

The Lord Jesus Christ portrays the host as saying “Make them come in!” In my view, this is exactly what happens with sinners who are saved. They are made to come in! Not against their will but their will is changed! Thus, I close with another quote from my beloved Professor Dr. Nicole: “He does not make us come against our will; He makes us willing to come!”

**Jonah 2:9c (NIV)** Salvation comes from the Lord."

God be Praised!

