

# The Sovereignty of God In Salvation

## Effectual Calling – What does the Bible say?

As we have seen, Salvation is actually a supernatural work of God which is accomplished by the regenerating work of the Holy Spirit. This is because mankind has a Natural Inability to see, hear or even understand the Gospel (see the above on Natural Inability). More than this, God unconditionally elects those who will be saved, and he does this from before the beginning of time (see above on Unconditional Election). This is to say that election is not conditioned upon any response in man but happens because of the free electing grace of God. People get saved in time and space, because God has chosen them in eternity past and regenerates them in the course of their life.

**John 3:3** - 3 Jesus answered and said to him, "Truly, truly, I say to you, **unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.**" NASB

**2 Thessalonians 2:13** - 13 But we should always give thanks to God for you, brethren beloved by the Lord, **because God has chosen you from the beginning for salvation** through sanctification by the Spirit and faith in the truth. NASB

Therefore it is necessary, since Salvation is a supernatural work which is initiated by God in election and brought to pass by the new birth, that the outworking of this election have, some point in time and space when it comes to fruition (Regeneration). This is actually a process of “drawing” and “calling” which happens by the Holy Spirit. The Bible plainly declares that those whom God has elected and predestined, are “drawn” by God to Himself.

**John 6:44** - 44 "No one can come to Me, **unless the Father who sent Me draws him;** and I will raise him up on the last day. NASB

**Jeremiah 31:2-3** - 2 Thus says the LORD, "The people who survived the sword Found grace in the wilderness- Israel, when it went to find its rest." 3 The LORD appeared to him from afar, saying, "I have loved you with an everlasting love; **Therefore I have drawn you with lovingkindness.** NASB

**Exodus 19:4** - 4'You yourselves have seen what I did to the Egyptians, and **how I bore you on eagles' wings, and brought you to Myself.** NASB

Not only this, but when speaking of the Church and those who are the recipients of salvation, the Bible plainly declares that they are “called” by Him at some point in their life. This obviously gives light to the fact that **God is the initiator** in the process of salvation.

**Romans 8:28** - 28 And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, **to those who are called according to His purpose.** NASB

**Romans 1:5-7** - 5 through whom we have received grace and apostleship to bring about the obedience of faith among all the Gentiles, for His name's sake, 6 among whom **you also are the called of Jesus Christ;** 7 to all who are beloved of God in Rome, **called as saints:** Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. NASB

**Romans 9:23-24** - 23 And He did so in order that He might make known the riches of His glory upon vessels of mercy, **which He prepared beforehand for glory, 24 even us, whom He also called** , not from among Jews only, but also from among Gentiles. NASB

**1 Corinthians 1:9** - 9 God is faithful, through whom **you were called into fellowship with His Son,** Jesus Christ our Lord. NASB

**1 Corinthians 1:23-24** - 23 but we preach Christ crucified, to Jews a stumbling block, and to Gentiles foolishness, 24 **but to those who are the called,** both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God. NASB

**2 Thessalonians 2:14** - 14 And it was for this **He called you through our gospel,** that you may gain the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ. NASB

**1 Timothy 6:12** - 12 Fight the good fight of faith; **take hold of the eternal life to which you were called,** and you made the good confession in the presence of many witnesses. NASB

**2 Timothy 1:9** - 9 who **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 granted us in Christ Jesus from all eternity, NASB

**Hebrews 9:15** - 15 And for this reason He is the mediator of a new covenant, in order that since a death has taken place for the redemption of the transgressions that were committed under the first covenant, **those who have been called may receive the promise of the eternal inheritance.** NASB

**1 Peter 5:10** - 10 And after you have suffered for a little while, the God of all grace, **who called you to His eternal glory in Christ,** will Himself perfect, confirm, strengthen and establish you. NASB

And more than this, our salvation is spoken of as a “**calling**” by God. This speaks of a divine favor or privilege which has been given to all the saints.

**Romans 11:28-29** - 28 From the standpoint of the gospel they are enemies for your sake, but from the standpoint of God's choice they are beloved for the sake of the fathers; 29 for **the gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable.** NASB

**1 Corinthians 1:2** - 2 to the church of God which is at Corinth, to those who have been sanctified in Christ Jesus, **saints by calling** , with all who in every place call upon the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, their Lord and ours: NASB

**1 Corinthians 1:26** - 26 For **consider your calling , brethren,** that there were not many wise according to the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble; NASB

**Ephesians 1:18** - 18 I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened, so that you may know what is the **hope of His calling** , what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, NASB

**Hebrews 3:1** - 3:1 Therefore, **holy brethren, partakers of a heavenly calling,** consider Jesus, the Apostle and High Priest of our confession. NASB

### All the Elect will be Saved

In fact, the **Bible plainly declares** that everyone whom God the Father chooses for salvation will absolutely be saved and glorified in the end. This is because the purpose of the Sovereign God to save His own people, whom He elects, predestines and calls, cannot be frustrated but rather God works everything after the counsel of His own will (Eph 1:11), especially His plan of redemption. Consider how this is clearly portrayed in the words of Jesus in John Chapter 6.

**John 6:37-39** - 37 "**All that the Father gives Me shall come to Me,** and the one who comes to Me I will certainly not cast out. 38 "For I have come down from heaven, not to do My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me. 39 "And this is the will of Him who sent Me, **that of all that He has given Me I lose nothing,** but raise it up on the last day. NASB

Jesus emphatically states the certainty of the salvation of **ALL** that the Father has given Him. Oh what comfort for the saints! What certainty upholds their salvation, even the purpose of the Sovereign Almighty God. This will be examined further under the doctrine of Eternal Security. This idea is repeated by Paul when speaking of those who were being saved in Acts chapter 13.

**Acts 13:48** - 48 And when the Gentiles heard this, they began rejoicing and glorifying the word of the Lord; and **as many as had been appointed to eternal life believed.** NASB

Question - How many believed? Answer, “**as many as had been appointed to eternal life.**” This is repeated again in Romans 8:30 where Paul tells us that **ALL** who have been predestined will in fact be Called, Justified and Glorified.

**Romans 8:30** - 30 and **whom He predestined, these He also called; and whom He called, these He also justified; and whom He justified, these He also glorified.** NASB

### The Golden Chain

In Romans Chapter 8, we have a passage which is referred to as “**the Golden Chain of Salvation.**” This is because of the profoundly assuring and comforting words which express the purpose of God in Salvation there.

**Romans 8:28-30** - 28 And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, **to those who are called according to His purpose. 29 For whom He foreknew, He also predestined** to become conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the first-born among many brethren; 30 and **whom He predestined, these He also called; and whom He called, these He also justified; and whom He justified, these He also glorified.** NASB

Here we see several truths which undeniably show us the “**Effectual Calling**” of God upon His saints. Notice first that God is the active protector and divine initiator of His eternal blessing of salvation upon those whom He has called.

**Romans 8:28** - 28 And we know that **God causes all things to work together for good** to those who love God, **to those who are called according to His purpose.**

Here we see that **“God is causing all things to work together” “to those who are called.”** Surely this is foremost a statement about God’s purpose to save them. He will cause all things to work for their good until they are finally saved. In this causing He will certainly draw them and regenerate them and bring them to “Conversion”, even to a saving repentance and faith in Christ.

**1 Peter 1:3** - 3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His great mercy has **caused us to be born again** to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, NASB

**Philippians 2:12-13** - 12 So then, my beloved, just as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your salvation with fear and trembling; **13 for it is God who is at work in you, both to will and to work for His good pleasure.** NASB

Second, we see that those who are **“foreknown”** (foreloved) by God, He has predestined them to be like Christ. This is absolutely a statement about salvation for no one can be like Christ until they are ultimately glorified by God at the resurrection.

**Romans 8:29** - **29 For whom He foreknew, He also predestined** to become conformed to the image of His Son.... NASB

See here that those whom God has **“foreknown”**, have been **“predestined,”** that is, their **“destiny”** has been **pre-determined** by God. This is taught in many places in Scripture.

**Ephesians 1:5-6** - **5 He predestined us to adoption as sons through Jesus Christ to Himself,** according to the kind intention of His will, 6 to the praise of the glory of His grace, which He freely bestowed on us in the Beloved. NASB

**Ephesians 1:10-12** - In Him 11 also we have obtained an inheritance, **having been predestined according to His purpose who works all things after the counsel of His will,** 12 to the end that we who were the first to hope in Christ should be to the praise of His glory. NASB

Thirdly, notice how a brief order of the process of salvation are brought to light in verse 30.

**Romans 8:30** - 30 and **whom He predestined, these He also called; and whom He called, these He also justified; and whom He justified, these He also glorified.** NASB

See here that those whom have been predestined, are called and that these are brought to Justification because the calling by the Spirit **“effects”** salvation in them. Thus it is an **“Effectual Calling.”** Through the revelation of the Spirit, those who are called are brought to a place of **willing response** to the Gospel, by the enabling of the Holy Spirit in regeneration. Jesus speaks of this in John Chapter 6....

**John 6:65** - 65 And He was saying, "For this reason I have said to you, that **no one can come to Me, unless it has been granted him from the Father.**" NASB

We also see this “Effectual Calling” at work in many who were saved in the narrative passages in the Book of Acts. Paul, Lydia and Cornelius are a few examples (see page 58 above).

## **Is Grace Irresistible?**

First, it can be plainly reasoned that because salvation is a supernatural work of God, given to those whom He has elected and predestined in eternity past, and because they will ALL eventually come to saving faith by the working of the spirit in effectual calling and regeneration, that none will or can, resist the Spirit’s work in the saving process.

**Deuteronomy 30:6** - 6 Moreover **the LORD your God will circumcise your heart and the heart of your descendants, to love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul,** in order that you may live. NASB

Second, is it not plain that because regeneration precedes faith, and that regeneration is actually a divinely initiated and supernatural work of God which changes the human mind and will and raises the sinner from spiritual death to life, implanting the very nature of God into them, that this is a divinely powerful work of the Creator God which is accomplished according to the good pleasure of His will and cannot be thwarted by the creature.

**Titus 3:5** - 5 He saved us, not on the basis of deeds which we have done in righteousness, but according to His mercy, **by the washing of regeneration and renewing by the Holy Spirit,** NASB

**Ezekiel 36:26-27** - 26 "Moreover, **I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you;** and I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. 27 "And **I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes,** and **you will be careful to observe** My ordinances. NASB

Consider this quote from David N. Steele...

*"The gospel invitation extends a call to salvation to every one who hears its message. It invites all men without distinction to drink freely of the water of life and live. It promises salvation to all who repent and believe. But this outward general call, extended to the elect and non-elect alike, will not bring sinners to Christ. Why? Because men are by nature dead in sin and are under its power. They are of themselves unable and unwilling to forsake their evil ways and to turn to Christ for mercy. Consequently, the unregenerate will not respond to the gospel call to repentance and faith. No amount of external threatenings or promises will cause blind, deaf, dead, rebellious sinners to bow before Christ as Lord and to look to Him alone for salvation. Such an act of faith and submission is contrary to the lost man's nature. Therefore, the Holy Spirit, in order to bring God's elect to salvation, extends to them a special inward call in addition to the outward call contained in the gospel message. Through this special call the Holy Spirit performs a work of grace within the sinner which inevitably brings him to faith in Christ ...  
"Although the general outward call of the gospel can be, and often is, rejected, the special inward call of the Spirit never fails to result in the conversion of those to whom it is made. This special call is not made to all sinners but is issued to the elect only! The Spirit is in no way dependent upon their help or cooperation for success in His work of bringing them to Christ. It is for this reason that Calvinists speak of the Spirit's call and of God's grace in saving sinners as being 'efficacious,' 'invincible,' or 'irresistible.' For the grace which the Holy Spirit extends to the elect cannot be thwarted or refused, it never fails to bring them to true faith in Christ!"*

Lastly, let us consider what we have learned. Are people saved because they have chosen to follow Christ because they were wise enough to choose Christ, or because God has chosen to save them before they were born and had done anything good or bad?

**Romans 9:11** - 11 for though the twins **were not yet born, and had not done anything good or bad, in order that God's purpose according to His choice might stand,** not because of works, but because of Him who calls, NASB

And what does this say about people's ability to resist the Spirit's work in salvation? Could Paul have chosen not to be God's appointed instrument to take the Gospel to the Gentiles?

**Acts 9:13-17** - 13 But Ananias answered, "Lord, I have heard from many about this man, **how much harm he did to Thy saints at Jerusalem;** 14 and here he has authority from the chief priests to bind all who call upon Thy name. " 15 But the Lord said to him, "**Go, for he is a chosen instrument of Mine, to bear My name before the Gentiles and kings and the sons of Israel;** 16 for I will show him how much he must suffer for My name's sake." NASB

**Galatians 1:15-16** - 15 But **when He who had set me apart, even from my mother's womb, and called me through His grace,** was pleased 16 to reveal His Son in me, that I might preach Him among the Gentiles, I did not immediately consult with flesh and blood, NASB

Could Jeremiah have decided not to be God's prophet to the nations? Not hardly....

**Jeremiah 1:4-5** - 4 Now the word of the LORD came to me saying, 5 "**Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, And before you were born I consecrated you; I have appointed you a prophet to the nations.**" NASB

With this in mind, let us consider again whether or not we would take a Semi-Pelagian or an Augustinian view of this doctrine.

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| Man's will is free and he can successfully resist the Spirit's call. | Human Resistance | Effectual Calling | The calling of God to the elect does effect salvation infallibly. |
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Let us consider that in the final analysis, no one who is saved would have it any other way. Are not the saints eternally grateful that God has effectually called them to Himself? Will they not rejoice forever in Heaven that **Salvation Belongs to the Lord** and glorify Him for saving them by His free grace! Indeed they will.