

WHAT IF I'M NOT CHOSEN?



YOUTH EDITION

1. What if I'm not chosen?

What if I'm not chosen? The Bible never asks this question, so there's no real need to consider it. Still, it is very possible you yourself are struggling with this question, as well as other related issues like, "Does God even want me to be saved?" Perhaps you fear eternal damnation because you haven't been elected by God, or perhaps you think, "I am so scared that I am deceiving myself for eternity!" Or you have come to believe that you have to wait for God to convert your heart, or, "I want to come to repentance, but is this really what the Lord God wants for me?"

You know, there are thousands of young people your age asking these same questions. This booklet has been written especially for you. It examines the Bible with regards to the question: what if I'm not chosen?

You can choose to read this book in one setting, or you can read it as a daily devotional. Every chapter contains one or more scriptures, an explanation, and a concluding thought or question to ponder on your own. Read this booklet prayerfully.

We hope and pray this booklet will be a blessing to you!

If you're not struggling with this issue personally, would you please consider giving this booklet to someone who might truly benefit from it? Thank you so much for your heart!

God bless!

2. Free money

Once upon a time there was an evangelist who wanted to explain the meaning of *faith* (believing). He pulled a hundred dollar bill from his pocket and asked his audience if anyone would like to have it. His question was met with mixed reactions. Some didn't trust the evangelist. Others thought he was setting them up for a trick or a joke. It appeared no one in the crowd wanted the money, but then a small boy walked up to the evangelist and said he would really like to have it. The evangelist looked him in the eye and kindly said, "Here you go, it is yours now." The boy thankfully accepted the money.



The crowd was holding their breath. What would happen next? But nothing happened at all! Some asked, "Will you really let him keep the money?" "But of course", the evangelist replied. "It wouldn't be fair for me to take back what I have given him, would it?" "If I had known you were serious about it, I would have taken the money myself", others said. The evangelist replied, "I offered it to you all, but there was no one willing to receive it, except for this boy."

The people realized very well that they themselves were the reason they didn't get the money, even though it had been offered to them freely. No one had stepped forward to receive the money, except for the little boy. He simply believed what the evangelist had told him, and took the money home.

God offers much more than just money. He offers us His most beautiful and precious possession: His Son. And we can accept that gift by faith. That is, by believing:

- For God so loved the world (*it doesn't say: "the elect"*), that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life (John 3:16).

Believing means trusting. Anyone who trusts in the Lord Jesus will not perish, but have everlasting life. Do you believe this?

A thought to ponder on your own

Read Numbers 23:19. Do you believe God means what He says and promises?

3. If believing is that important, then what exactly is it?

The Bible speaks about faith and believing many times. For example, the Lord Jesus says:

- Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on Me hath everlasting life (John 6:47).

It may be clear that believing is very important. Another word for believing is: trusting. The question is: do you put your trust in your own works and accomplishments, or do you trust on the sacrifice of the Lord Jesus on the cross only?



The engine: fact (everything God says and promises in the Bible)

Car 1: faith (our belief and trust in God and His Word)

Car 2: feelings (a result of our faith)

The engine always goes first. God's words and promises in the Bible are unshakeable truth. Faith and feelings are the cars that follow the engine. The engine is capable of pulling the cars, but the cars can never pull the engine. The order is: first fact, then faith, and then feelings. Believing means: I trust that the facts in God's Word are 100 percent true and certain, even though I don't feel anything (yet). The Bible never declares that people come to feelings; they come to faith.

Many people wait for many years hoping to receive some kind of feeling. Perhaps a feeling of deep sorrow over their sins, or a feeling that indicates God is working in them. This can be very dangerous, because our feelings can be very deceptive. Nowhere in the Bible does God say that I have to *feel* He saved me or wants to save me. He asks us to believe. Do I believe the veracity of God's words? Ofcourse feelings can follow. Our salvation leads to a deep sense of peace and joy. But at times these feelings come and go, but God's Word will stand forever.

A thought to ponder on your own

Read Hebrews 11:1. What does this verse say about faith?

4. The bridge operator

USA - 1937 Greg's dad was a bridge operator. His job was to operate the railroad bridge that crossed the city's main river. When Greg was eight years old, his father allowed him to come along and spend a day at work with him. For young Greg, witnessing the functioning of the bridge was very interesting. During their lunch break, Greg's dad all of a sudden heard a train's whistle. He jumped up and said, "Greg, you stay here, while I run upstairs to push the button that makes the bridge come down." He had just pushed the button that set all the wheels in motion, when he heard his son's loud scream from below. "Dad, help me!" The bridge operator hadn't noticed his son had followed him up the stairs, where he then lost his balance... Now he was slipping closer and closer towards the grinding gears of the bridge's machinery.

His mind was racing. Would he save his son by pushing the button again, to keep the bridge in its upper position? Or..... Then he thought of the four hundred passengers on the train. He had to make a decision. He had to save either his son or the people on the train, who would otherwise perish in the river below. While he was still thinking through this dilemma, his son screamed again. The father knew he could not listen to his father's heart now; he had to save the people on the train. It was the most agonizing decision, but he had no choice. He must let his own son die. He could hear Greg's dying screams as he was swallowed up by the cogs of the bridge. His heart was crushed. He wailed.

The train passed by. In one car he saw a sleeping man. In another car people were talking and laughing. He saw playing children running back and forth. He wanted to run up to their window and scream, "People! Children! Don't you know my son gave his life for this?" But the train passengers had no idea of what had just occurred below. They were all going about their own business, and the train continued its journey, as if nothing had ever happened.

No one in the train realized how great a sacrifice the bridge operator had made to save their lives. In a similar way, we cannot understand the magnitude of the sacrifice of God the Father, when He allowed His Son to die on that cross at Golgotha, to save all the people on the railroad called life from a certain eternal death.

A thought to ponder on your own

Read John 3:16. Do you believe God gave His Son to die on the cross for you? Imagine how much grief and sorrow it must bring to God if you are unwilling to accept the sacrifice of His Son. Or do you not understand how high the price has been? Do you live as if nothing ever happened?

5. Does God even want me to be saved?

All who believe in the Lord Jesus will be saved for eternity. But does God really want all people, including you, to be saved? Or does God only want some to be saved? The Bible gives us two specific verses that deal with this issue in particular:

- God our Saviour, Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth (1 Timothy 2:3b and 4).
- The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance (2 Peter 3:9).

God wants all people to be saved

The above Bible verses tell us very clearly that God wants all people to be saved and come to know the truth. The Lord wants nothing more than this: that all people would come to repentance and none would perish. Please read what God says in Ezekiel 18:23 and 32. God has no pleasure in the death of the wicked but wants them to return from their ways and live. The Lord is gracious and merciful, slow to anger and full of compassion (2 Chronicles 30:9b, Joel 2:13b). God does not want any of those to perish. God looks upon all those billions of people He has created and it is His deepest desire that all of them will be saved. God looks upon you too, in a very personal way. His desire for you is that you will not perish, but will be saved for eternity.

God wants you to be saved for eternity

It is possible that you think in your heart, “I want to repent, but maybe God doesn't want this.” But the two Bible verses mentioned above show that this thought is untrue. The Lord God wants you to be saved.

The devil always tries to depict God as someone who can't be trusted. He started these efforts back in paradise. The devil is a liar and a murderer of people. He tries to do all he can to prevent your repentance and your salvation. He's trying to fool you by telling you that God doesn't want you to be saved. But the truth is the opposite: God desires only the best for us (Jeremiah 29:11). He is not willing that any should perish. It is God's deepest desire that all people, including you, will be saved for eternity. The question is, do you believe it?

A thought to ponder on your own

Read Ezekiel 33:11. Do you believe deep down in your heart that God wants you to be saved?

6. Then what is repentance?

The Bible tells us not only to believe, but also to come to repentance. When the Lord Jesus began His public ministry, He said:

- Repent ye, and believe the Gospel (Mark 1:15b).

The Bible mentions the word “repent” more than a hundred times. It never says we have to wait for God to convert us. No, what we read is an active call to repentance. But what does it mean when God commands us to “repent”? You feel remorse over your sins, you turn away from evil and turn to God. You begin to think differently and act differently and you confess your wrongdoings to God. You don’t want to live for yourself anymore, but daily you try to focus on God, to serve and follow Him.

A change in the way you think

Repentance means a change in the way you think about God and about yourself. The top priority is no longer the way you see things, but the way God sees them.

A change in the way you act

Repentance also means a change in the way you act. Your life takes a U-turn; 180 degrees in the opposite direction. Think of a platoon of soldiers stopping in its tracks and then marching the other way. Before you came to repentance, you walked away from God. But now you turn away from sin, you are walking towards Him and you want to do His will. To give a few examples: Before you didn’t mind deceiving your parents, to gossip about others or to bully your classmates, but now you don’t want to do these things any more. Now you try to be honest and to help others.



A confession of the things you do wrong

Now you feel remorse over your sins and you try to break away from them. You will start confessing the sins you have committed, honestly and specifically, to God – and if necessary to your loved ones also. The Bible calls this “confession”. But if you confess your sins and ask for forgiveness, the Lord God will forgive them instantly:

- If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness (1 John 1:9).

A thought to ponder on your own

Which concrete sins do you still have to confess to God (and your loved ones)? Here are some examples:

- unbelief
- bullying
- cursing
- (porn) addictions
- gossip
- a big mouth
- dishonest
- disobedience
- lies
- theft
- occult game
- other sins

7. Sure. But isn't conversion a work of the Holy Spirit?

In John 3 the Lord Jesus says the following to Nicodemus the Pharisee:

- Verily verily, I say unto thee, except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God (John 3:5).

In this verse, the Lord Jesus clarifies that a person can only be reborn (converted) by the Holy Spirit. Man's salvation is initiated by God (John 6:44 and 1 John 4:19).

Why can a person only be reborn by the Holy Spirit?

The Bible also clearly tells us why a person can only be reborn by the Holy Spirit. Before his or her rebirth, a person is spiritually dead. It is impossible for a dead person to act. This is the reason why people by nature (the way they are born) don't want to seek and serve God; they are spiritually lifeless. When you seek God then the Lord God has worked this in your heart through the Holy Spirit. When a person comes to faith and repentance, it is the work of the Holy Spirit.

How does the Holy Spirit do this?

No one knows exactly how the Holy Spirit operates. God is sovereign and works in different ways in people. Paul's conversion was very different from Timothy's. And the jailer in Philippi was saved in yet another way. They all came to faith in different ways, but all by the same Spirit. The Lord Jesus compares the work of the Holy Spirit to the wind. You can tell the wind is there, because leaves are rustling and clouds are drifting by, but you don't know where it's coming from or where it's going. The work of the Holy Spirit is similar. He is at work in people, which causes them to move and change. But the actual mechanics of this process are hidden from us.

Then what do I have to do?

If a person can only be reborn by the Holy Spirit, does this mean one can simply sit down, fold their arms and wait for the Holy Spirit to start something? Or does it mean one can say, "If the Holy Spirit has to convert me, it will happen sooner or later!" Absolutely not! In His conversation with Nicodemus, the Lord Jesus shows that He wants us to believe in Him. Because if you don't, you will be lost for eternity. But whoever believes in the Lord Jesus and trusts in Him, will have eternal life.

A thought to ponder on your own

Read John 3:14-18 and replace the word "whosoever" with your own name...

8. But I can't convert myself, that is God's work!

You might think, “I can't convert myself, that is God's work.” In and of itself that's a correct statement, but God still asks you to come to repentance. How does this work? An important Biblical principle is the following: whenever God asks us to do something, He will also enable us to do it, otherwise He would not ask that from us. God asks us to do what is possible for us and He will do what we cannot do by ourselves. Consider the following two examples of this principle:

1. The paralyzed man in Bethesda (John 5: 1-9)

In Bethesda, there was a man who had been a paralytic for 38 years. One day the Lord Jesus went up to him and said, “Rise, take up thy bed, and walk.” Wasn't that a cruel thing to say to a paralytic, to get up and walk? After all, he wasn't able! But still it happened. The man got up and took up his bed. How was this possible? Because Jesus said so. Whenever He says something, it is possible, even though it seems impossible.

2. Lazarus (John 11:1-44)

Lazarus had passed away. He had been in his tomb for three days already. He was unable to do anything at all, yet Jesus said, “Lazarus, come forth.” Wasn't that a strange thing to say to a dead person? “Come forth”? After all, Lazarus, being dead, didn't have the ability to walk. Still it happened. How was this possible? Because Jesus said so. Whenever He says something, it is possible, even though it seems impossible.

God's command to you is similar. When He says, “Repent ye, and believe the Gospel”, it is possible because He says so. At the same time He wants to give you the strength to do it. You can also ask for help: “Lord I believe, help Thou my unbelief” (Mark 9;24b).

To further clarify this: we all know we can't do anything at all without God. We wouldn't be able to breathe, work, or even lift our hands. Yet God commands us to live, to work and to use our hands. But there isn't a single person in the world who gets up in the morning to go to school and says, “I can't go to school by myself, God will have to take me there.” No, of course not. You get up, eat breakfast and go to school. It is you doing this, but it is God who gives you the strength to do it.

Repentance is similar. God asks you to come to repentance, but without His strength it would never be possible. That's why every child of God will tell you it was God who saved him or her.

A thought to ponder on your own

Read Matthew 19:25,26. What do you think these Bible verses mean?

9. Now what exactly is grace?

In the previous chapters we talked about what it is God asks of us: faith and repentance. At the same time, the Bible makes it very clear that we can only be saved *by grace*.

- For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God: not of works, lest any man should boast (Ephesians 2:8 and 9).

Receiving grace means two things:

1. You do not get what you deserve: an eternal punishment;
2. You do get what you don't deserve: you receive forgiveness of your sins, you become a child of God, and you receive eternal life.

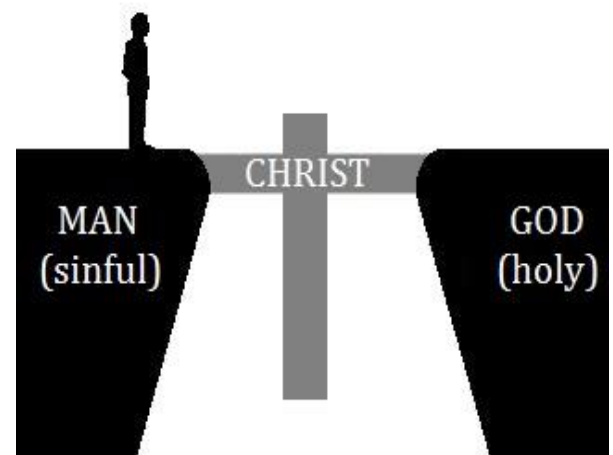
“By grace” actually means: completely free of charge! We find it very difficult to receive God's grace, because in daily life we hardly ever get anything for free. You have to work hard for your money, and you have to perform well to work your way up in this world.

In God's economy things work differently. There is absolutely nothing you can do to earn your salvation. Some people think, “If only I will pray a lot, I will be entitled to receive God's grace.” Others say, “If only I will mourn over my sins often, I will be entitled to receive God's grace.” Many people even think they are more entitled to God's grace than others, simply because they go to church or live pious lives. All of this is untrue. Of course it is a good thing to go to church, but you can't earn anything by doing that. And of course it is good to be sorrowful over your sins, but in no way this can be a foundation for your salvation.

Why can't we do anything for our salvation?

Because it is impossible and unnecessary:

- It is impossible because we people can never bear the punishment we deserve and can never make it back to God in our own strength;
- It is also unnecessary because the Lord Jesus has paid the penalty for all sin on the cross. The Lord Jesus has fulfilled all requirements for our salvation.



A thought to ponder on your own

Read Romans 3:24. What does the following statement mean: “Grace: it is free, but it isn't cheap”?

10. 100 percent grace and 100 percent personal responsibility

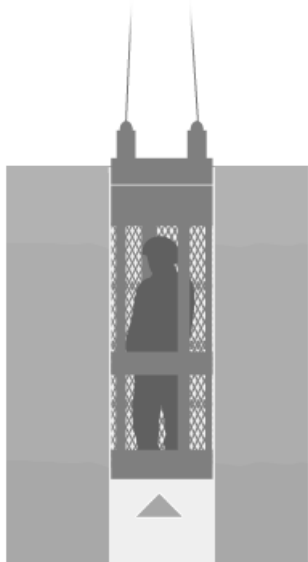
It is possible you find this very confusing. On the one hand, the Bible tells us our salvation is 100 percent by grace, while on the other hand it says God asks you to make a decision.

- Choose you this day whom ye will serve (Joshua 24:15b).

Now how does that work? Is it by grace, or does a person have to make a choice also?

An example: a rescue operation in 2010

In August of 2010, 33 Chilean miners were trapped in their mine, at a depth of about 2000 feet. Chances were they were all going to die. But rescue workers decided to dig a 2000 feet deep shaft. They lowered a cage into this shaft, by which all miners were lifted to the surface. Not a single one of them perished.



How do you think these miners were saved? Did they rescue themselves? No, of course not. They were fully dependent on those who dug the shaft and lowered the cage. But if they hadn't decided to step into the cage, would they still have been rescued? No. They had to get in the cage to be saved. So the miners were fully dependent on others for their salvation, yet at the same time fully responsible themselves. They trusted and expected they were going to be saved when they saw the means of their salvation.

Once they reached the surface, they were extremely grateful that they were saved because others had helped them.

God's rescue operation in 33 AD

Some 2000 years ago, another rescue operation took place. The Lord Jesus also descended from above to save people. He gave His life on the cross at Golgotha. If He hadn't come, no one could be saved. Not you either. But because the Lord Jesus died on the cross, the penalty for our sins has been paid. This opened the way for your salvation. However, He does ask us to come to Him in faith, just like the miners had to step into the cage (Matthew 11:28). To come means to (actively) take a step to Him, not to passively wait. To come means: to actively surrender yourself to Him in prayer, to confess your sins and to want to live daily with Him, to serve and follow Him. Those who will not accept Him by faith will perish for eternity, but those who surrender to the Lord Jesus will be saved.

A thought to ponder on your own

What does Matthew 22:1-12 and 23:37b say about personal responsibility?

11. But what if I'm not chosen?

You might believe that the Lord Jesus wants to be our Savior, but you still think, “But what if I'm not chosen? Then what?”

What does election not mean?

Take a look at the picture on the right. It is a depiction of a conveyor belt, which ultimately leads people into the fire. Only one person is plucked from the belt, just in time, by a hand from above. Some people look at the doctrine of election this way. They think that almost all people will perish, except for a select few, who (sometimes in the nick of time) are saved by God. What a horrible picture of God this is! It suggests that God allows most people to go to hell and wants to save only some. But nowhere in the Bible can such a picture of God be found. On the contrary. It is God's desire that all people will be saved. He has done everything necessary to save us. He even gave us His own Son because He doesn't want anyone of us to perish.



Then what does election mean?

When the Bible speaks of election, what does it mean?

1. Election means that God chooses us, not that we choose Him.
2. Election means that eternal salvation is 100 percent secure.

If there were no election, no one would be saved. No one chooses for God on their own. But because God has chosen to save people, people are being saved and their salvation is one hundred percent certain. That is the comfort of election. It also means that all the glory belongs to God and not to us.

Election is not meant to be a roadblock preventing you from coming to God, but is instead a gateway to salvation. As if you are standing before a gate which reads, “Come unto Me, all ye...”. Once you have entered through this gate, the other side reads, “I have chosen you”. We should not make election our starting point but hindsight it is possible to see that you have been chosen (by God).

A thought to ponder on your own

Read Romans 5:8 and 1 John 4:9. Do you believe that the Lord God has done everything necessary to save us?

12. Chosen for service

When the Bible speaks of election, it is often in the context of a task or service, not in the context of being elected to be saved. It doesn't mean one is chosen to be saved forever, but chosen for a particular task.

Consider the following three examples in the Bible:

1. King Solomon's task

King David wanted to build a temple for the Lord. But God told him that not he, but his son Solomon, was chosen for this task:

- Take heed now; for the LORD hath chosen thee (*Solomon*) to build an house for the sanctuary; be strong, and do it (1 Chronicles 28:10).

2. Paul's task

Paul was also chosen for a particular task, namely to be a missionary:

- But the Lord said unto him (*Ananias*), Go thy way, for he (*Paul*) is a chosen vessel unto Me, to bear My Name before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel (Acts 9:15).

3. The Christian's task

If a Christian were only destined for eternal life, only life after death would matter. But this isn't true. A Christian is destined for more. We are chosen for a glorious task on this earth; we are chosen to tell others who God is and to testify of His name:

- But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of Him Who hath called you out of darkness into His marvelous light (1 Peter 2:9).

Election for a purpose or task is never intended to be at the cost of others, but God chooses one person or a group of people to be a blessing to others.

But this never means that those not chosen for this particular task will perish forever. An example is Ananias (Acts 9:10): he was not chosen to be a missionary to the Gentiles, but he was saved for eternity.

A thought to ponder on your own

Read John 15:16. What is the task God has for you in His Kingdom?

13. How does God choose?

People make choices all the time. They choose which clothes to wear and what to put on their sandwich, they choose an education and their friends. Sometimes people make choices that will hurt the people around them.



You probably have experienced this personally. In Physical Education class, when students had to be split up in teams, you were always chosen last because you weren't very athletic. Or maybe in your elementary school years you

were never invited to the birthday parties of your classmates.

In the Bible we read that God makes choices too, but His way of choosing is very different from ours:

God's choices are always good, never mean or unfair

- For there is no iniquity with the LORD our God, nor respect of persons, nor taking of gifts (2 Chronicles 19:7b).

Maybe this is not at all the picture you have of God. Maybe you see God as a cruel tyrant who selects or rejects people at will. But the Bible shows us that God is no tyrant, but a God of love, Who even sent His own Son to earth to save you!

God chooses because of His love, not because of anything we have to offer

God doesn't choose people because they're capable of doing things, or because of their good looks. On the contrary. When Moses wrote about the election of Israel, he said:

- The LORD did not set His love upon you, nor choose you, because ye were more in number than any people; for ye were the fewest of all people. But because the LORD loved you (Deuteronomy 7:7 and 8a).

God didn't choose Israel because they were a particularly good or great people. The nation of Israel was very tiny. But the reason for their election was God's love. It's still the same today. God doesn't choose people because of who they are, but because of His love. God chooses people because He loves them. That's the God of the Bible! He is more trustworthy than the most reliable person you have ever known. God does not have favorites, neither does He exclude people beforehand. All who put their trust in the Lord Jesus (no one excluded) will be saved (Romans 2:11 and Romans 3:22).

A thought to ponder on your own

Read Romans 10:12,13. What beautiful promise is contained in these Bible verses?

14. But doesn't the Bible say, "Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated"?

This chapter deals with a scripture that is sometimes used to show that God chooses some people to be with Him for eternity, but rejects others for eternity:

- Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated (Romans 3b 9:1).

However, this passage is not about an election for salvation, but about the election of Israel. God chose Jacob as patriarch of the people of Israel. We find a very similar verse in Malachi 1:2b,3. But what does it mean that God hated Esau?

In the original manuscripts "hate" can mean two different things:

1. To put someone or something in second place.
2. To detest someone or something because there is a reason for it.

1. God put Esau in second place

Before Jacob and Esau were born, God had told their mother Rebekah, "The elder (*Esau*) shall serve the younger (*Jacob*)." Even though Esau was the oldest son, entitled to the birthright, it was instead given to Jacob, the younger of the two. God put Esau in second place, after Jacob.

2. God hated Esau and his descendants because of their evil deeds

Esau was indifferent. Earthly things were more important to him than serving God. He sold his birthright and took heathen wives, who were displeasing to his parents. And the descendants of Esau (the Edomites) were such great enemies of the people Israel, that they even wanted to destroy them. In the book of Malachi, God looks back on all the evils committed by Esau and his descendants and He detests it. That is why He says, "I have hated Esau". But notice that God says this more than 1400 years after Esau's life, at the end of the Old Testament, and not prior to Esau's birth!

What does this Biblical verse not mean?

So this verse doesn't speak about the eternal destinations of Jacob and Esau. It doesn't say that God rejected Esau from before the foundation of the world, predestining him to perish for eternity. Neither does it mean that you yourself have to think, "Maybe I have been rejected for eternity, just like Esau." That's not what this verse implies.

A thought to ponder on your own

Read Luke 14:26. What does the word "hate" mean in this verse?

Who or what is taking first place in your life?

15. For many are called, but few are chosen

In Matthew 22 we find the parable of the Royal wedding. At the end of this passage, we read:

- For many are called, but few are chosen (Matthew 22:14).

The first part of the parable (verses 1-7)

The first part of the parable is about the Jewish people in Jesus' days. Many of them were called to follow the Lord Jesus, but only a small number of people believed in Him. Most did not *want* to follow Him.

The second part of the parable (verses 8-13)

The second part of the parable is about the Gentiles. They were also called by the message of the Gospel. Many came to faith (the wedding hall was filled with guests). Yet there was one person without a wedding garment; a hypocrite. He refused to wear the wedding garment that was offered to him at the door. He thought he could partake in the wedding banquet on his own terms and therefore he was cast out.

With this parable the Lord Jesus shows us that an invitation alone is not enough; you have to use it! Coming to the Lord Jesus is the same. He invites you to come to Him, but if you will not come, or if you are only willing to come on your own terms, you are the one to blame when you perish.

Those who did come to the wedding and did wear their wedding garments, those are the ones called “chosen” in this passage. These are relatively few in number, compared to all those who have been called but refused to come, but it is still a multitude no one can count. If you believe in the Lord Jesus, you are one of them!

EXPERIMENT – A man in England decided to conduct an experiment. For several hours he handed out letters to the public. The letter informed the readers they would receive 5 English pounds for each letter they returned. The man handed out hundreds of letters, but only 10 people came back to return the letter and receive the money.

Why did so few people return the letter and receive the money promised? Because most people did not *want* to read the letter, or did not *want* to believe what it said.

A thought to ponder on your own

Read Revelation 22:17. What does it say about people who are willing?

Do you want to accept God's invitation and come to Him?

16. What does the Bible say about becoming a child of God?

How can one become a child of God? Do you have to experience something really special? Or do you have to be an old person? Fortunately, no. Have a look:

- But as many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on His Name (John 1:12).

What does it mean to receive the Lord Jesus?

The word “receive” doesn't mean “to take” or “to steal”, but to accept something that is offered to you. It's like a present: someone offers you a gift and you accept it. But God doesn't offer us any presents, but something much, much more precious: His own Son. You can reject Him or receive Him. The question is: are you willing to receive Him? You can only receive the Lord Jesus as He is. This means you have to accept Him as your Savior (He forgives your sins), but also as your King (He is the boss over all things). If you compare your life to a house full of rooms, this means the Lord Jesus becomes the Owner of your lifehouse. He gets the keys to all rooms: the living room, the dining room, the basement, but also the bedroom. In all areas of your life He will be Lord and Master: your thought life, your time, your body, etc.



It is important that you realize you can only receive with empty hands. You cannot accept a gift and at the same time hold on to other things. It is the same with the Lord Jesus. When you receive Him, you have to let go of all your other things. Another way to say this: you have to surrender to Him. That might sound very scary, but don't forget He is the best

Person in the entire world you could possibly surrender to.

What does it mean to believe in the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ?

The name Jesus means: Savior, Redeemer (Matthew 1:21). Do you believe that the Lord Jesus is the Savior, the promised Messiah, the Son of God?

Believing in the Lord Jesus means: to trust Him. You personally trust in the things:

- He did for you: He died on the cross for your sins.
- He does for you: He leads your life day by day.
- He tells you: all the things written in the Bible.

A thought to ponder on your own

Read Acts 16:30-34. How did the jailer become a child of God?
Can you yourself know by grace you are a child of God?

17. Can I know for sure whether I am chosen and have eternal life?

Do you believe that the Lord Jesus died for your sins on the cross too and do you follow Him daily? Do you trust Him with all your heart? Then you can know for sure you are chosen and will have eternal life. Do you know why? Because God's Word tells us the following:

- And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life. These things have I written unto you that believe on the Name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the Name of the Son of God (1 John 5:11-13).

The dangers of searching for certainty about your election are the following:

- If you first *try to be sure* you are chosen and only then want to believe in the Lord Jesus, you will not have any certainty;
- If you first want to *feel* you are chosen and only then want to believe in the Lord Jesus, you will also not have any certainty.

An example: Napoleon

Napoleon tried to hold a speech seated on his horse on top of a hill. As he was speaking, his horse became so agitated, it became uncontrollable. The officers surrounding Napoleon were too afraid to help. But when the horse started to rear, a common soldier stepped forward from the ranks. While all generals and captains were unable to move, this simple soldier jumped in front of the horse and risked his life for Napoleon. Of course he had no idea how this would end. Still he grabbed the animal's reins and managed to calm it down. Napoleon looked down from his horse and said to the soldier, "Thank you very much, captain!" The soldier turned around and joined the ranks of the captains. He believed what Napoleon had said to him. He didn't say, "Oh no, Mister Bonaparte, I don't feel that way! I'm not worthy!" No. He believed he was a captain now, because Napoleon himself had said so. That was the only reason.



The same applies to you: if you personally believe in the Lord Jesus as your Savior, He says to you, "You will have eternal life." Then you may know for sure that you are chosen!

A thought to ponder on your own

Read John 6:47. Do you believe that the Lord Jesus died for your sins on the cross too? Do you trust in Him only? Can you be sure you are chosen and have eternal life?

18. But I have always been told differently. How do I know what is true?

You might find all of this very confusing, especially if you've always been told some teachings of the Bible in a certain way, but then you hear or read something totally different. Now how do you know what's true? Who's right and how can you know what the truth is?

The things God says are more important than the things people say

People can say all kind of things, but what God says is much more important. The Bible gives us a beautiful example of this in the book of Acts. The Pharisees and the Scribes (the spiritual teachers in those days) wanted to forbid the apostles to preach the Lord Jesus any longer, but Peter and the other apostles knew it was much more important to listen to God than to the Pharisees. They replied:



- We ought to obey God rather than men (Acts 5:29b).

Study the Bible to find out what is the truth

To find out what God says, you do have to read your Bible, because God's Word is truth (John 8:31,32). That's why studying the Bible is so important. But studying the Bible doesn't just happen. You will have to make time for this. The Lord desires you will have daily contact with Him, for instance through prayer. Sometimes people call this "devotional time" (because you devote this time to the Lord) or "quiet time" (because in the quiet you try to discern what God is telling you). Here are some practical ideas for your quiet time:

Practical ideas for your quiet time:

- Pick a fixed time of day (preferably in the morning).
- Turn off your mobile phone and computer.
- Read a number of Bible verses.
- Pray and ask God to clarify what this Bible passage means for you.
- Keep a journal to write down your thoughts and experiences.
- Thank the Lord God and pray e.g. for the things that are on your mind.



A thought to ponder on your own

Read John 5:39. Do you have quiet times with the Lord? Are you willing to start them?

19. Think it through!

Why are there so many people who don't (yet) want to be a child of God? The reason is the following: many people want to have the cake and eat it too! Later - when they die - they do want to go to heaven, but now – here on earth – they want to live any way they want. But this isn't possible. The Lord Jesus says:



- For which of you, intending to build a tower, sitteth not down first, and counteth the cost, whether he have sufficient to finish it? (Luke 14:28).

Do you want to follow the Lord Jesus?

This passage in the book of Luke is about following the Lord Jesus. He compares it with a man who wants to build a tower. Before he starts building, he should first calculate what the project will cost, so he doesn't have to quit building when it's only halfway done because he ran out of money.

Following the Lord is similar. If you want to follow Him in your life, He asks you to think this through very carefully. You can only follow Him when you're willing to give up everything. This doesn't mean you have to be perfect. On the contrary; God redeems sinners to Himself. He does not look for people who have restored themselves. You can come as you are (but you cannot stay that way). It means you have to be willing to surrender to God.

You could create a list now of what it would cost you to follow the Lord Jesus; things you would have to give up, like your (porn) addiction, gossip, disobedience, greed, or your dreams. But in summary it comes down to the following: are you willing to give up yourself (your way of thinking, your selfishness, your pride) and bow down to the Lord Jesus? Will you allow Him to run your life?

NOT  **, BUT**  **CHRIST**

(Galatians 2:20)

A thought to ponder on your own

Read Matthew 19:16-29. What aspect of his life did the rich young man not want to surrender? What will it cost you to follow the Lord Jesus?

What does God promise those who give up everything to follow Him?

20. Weighing your options: what if you died today?

Where would I go if I would die today? It is good to honestly ask ourselves this question. Around the world, over 150,000 people pass away daily. That is a gigantic number. And one day you will die too - provided that the Lord Jesus doesn't return first. Now this can be a really frightening thought. But that's unnecessary when you know the Lord Jesus as your Savior. Because when you do, you will go to heaven after you die and be with Him.

America, September 10, 2001 – The day prior to the terror attacks in New York City, a passenger on an American Airlines flight noticed a flight attendant crushing ice in a bucket with a bottle of wine. He was afraid the young lady would harm herself. He asked if there really was no other way to crush the ice. The attendant was impressed with his concern. After a short conversation, she thankfully accepted a Christian tract he offered her. A few hours later she told him this was the sixth tract she had received within a very short time frame. She asked, “What does God want from me?” The man answered, “Your life.” He went on to tell her about her need to have peace with God through Jesus Christ. Less than 24 hours later, the flight attendant was on the plane that plunged into the World Trade Center. She died that day.

We don't know whether or not the young flight attendant gave her life to the Lord God in these final hours of her life. She probably had no clue she only had such a short time remaining on this earth. You don't know when you will die either, but it is important for you to realize that you (unexpectedly) could die too, even at a young age.

Seek the Lord before it is too late! No matter how young or old you are, if you still don't know (for sure) you are saved, please don't go to bed today before you are sure. The Lord still stands with open arms and invites you: “Come to Me!” So come to the Lord Jesus and confess your sins. Turn to Him and in faith receive Him as your personal Savior and Redeemer. Thank the Lord Jesus that He also died for your sins on the Cross of Calvary. Put your trust in Him alone and He will save you for eternity. The Lord Himself has promised:

- For the LORD your God is gracious and merciful, and will not turn away His face from you, if ye return unto Him (Chronicles 30:9b).
- And him that cometh to Me I will in no wise cast out (John 6:37b).

A thought to ponder on your own

Are you absolutely positive you will go to heaven when you die? If so, thank God for this. If you don't know the answer (for sure), or if your answer is “no”, don't continue your life without being sure you're saved for eternity!

About this brochure

We hope this booklet will be an encouragement to those who live in despair because they believe they are not chosen. We hope this brochure will be an encouragement also to those who think they can't or shouldn't do anything themselves, and are passively waiting for God to convert them. It is our prayer they will no longer wait inactively or remain indifferent.

In this brochure we have emphasized the responsibility God has given us people: Repent ye, and believe the Gospel (Mark 1:15b).

Because certain views on election oftentimes are a roadblock for people to come to the Lord Jesus Christ, we want to invite and encourage you to read and study for yourself what the Bible has to say about this topic. We hope and pray that this brochure will be a blessing to you and will help you to discover the truth of the Gospel; For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life (John 3:16).

All Bible quotations in this brochure are taken from the King James Version of the Bible.

This brochure has not been written in a critical or conceited spirit, but in love and compassion (2 Corinthians 5:14, 20).

This brochure contains examples from daily life and illustrations for the sake of clarification. These examples don't always fully correspond with the spiritual meaning they are supposed to represent, but nevertheless serve as explanations intended to make certain topics easier to understand.

The text of this brochure can also be downloaded from the following website:
www.benikweluitverkoren.nl.

For more information about the doctrine of election, you can also download from this website the more exhaustive Bible study 'What if I am not chosen?' with references from the King James Version.

This site also features the original Dutch youth edition as well as the Dutch Bible study 'Ben ik wel uitverkoren?', both using Bible verses taken from the Statenvertaling.

You are free to download (at the above mentioned website) this youth edition as well as the comprehensive Bible study 'What if I am not chosen?' in various languages.

