

UNCONDITIONAL ELECTION OF ISRAEL CONTRASTED WITH CONDITIONAL ELECTION OF INDIVIDUALS

God unconditionally elected the nation Israel to carry His message to the nations of the world. In contrast, whosoever willingly cooperates with Holy Spirit conviction to the point of believing in Jesus and receiving Jesus becomes God's elect to salvation and eternal life. So God's election of individuals to salvation is conditioned upon their cooperation and their coming to faith in Christ. God only elects to salvation those who are "in Christ." Before the foundation of the world, God chose to save those who are "in Christ" and make them holy and blameless (Ephesians 1:4). God promises to fulfill and complete all three stages of salvation for those who are "in Christ" (Philippians 1:6).

Therefore, God unconditionally elects some things and conditionally elects some other things.

In Scripture, God chose Israel to be His messenger to the nations. There was nothing special in Israel that caused God to choose them. God chose certain men of Israel to be His spokesman concerning His Promise and His invitation to eternal life. The nation Israel often rejected God's chosen voices who were declaring His message. As a result of Israel rejecting her own Messiah, God allowed Jerusalem and the Temple to be destroyed in 70 A.D.

So, God's choosing of Israel and God's choosing of voices from Israel to declare His message are all unconditional choices on God's part. And the choice of God to send His message to all humanity, both the good and the bad, is an unconditional choice on God's part.

However, God says in Scripture repeatedly, that He only elects to eternal life those who willingly receive Christ through faith and are born again, new creations, clothed in the righteousness produced by Christ. Therefore, election to eternal life is conditional. Those who respond to the conviction of the Spirit and allow themselves to be led to saving faith in Christ are elected to salvation.

Jesus clearly demonstrates this in the parable of the Wedding Feast (Matthew 22:1-14). Many are called but few are chosen. Only those wearing the right wedding garment may enter the feast. Only those who have received Christ by faith and having been clothed by the righteousness of Christ may enter therein. The few chosen are dependent upon the condition of their receiving Christ and His righteousness.

In this parable God made three choices. God unconditionally chose the messengers who would give out the invitations. Then God unconditionally chose to send the invitation first to Israel and then to all other nations. And third, God chose to allow only those who were properly dressed to enter the feast. This third choice is conditioned upon those who respond properly to the invitation.

Personal salvation has 3 stages. In stage one, God justifies Himself in saving cooperating sinners in two ways. First, God condemned sin through the physical death of His sinless Son and raised Jesus with the right and the power to take away sin. Therefore God is justified in taking away our sin and producing righteousness in the believer's life. Second, God is justified in giving eternal life to the believer because He has predetermined to make all believers totally sinless and totally righteous as He completes all 3 stages of our salvation.

Stage 1 of our salvation is rightly called "justification."

Stage 2 of our salvation is called "sanctification." Stage 2 starts the moment we are born again and continues our growth "in Christ" making us fit for heaven.

Stage 3 of our salvation is called "glorification." Stage 3 begins when we depart from our physical body and are given our glorified body. The Holy Spirit of Christ will indwell our glorified body for all eternity. And we will dwell in the house of the LORD forever.

Therefore, Stage 1 of our salvation is conditional upon our cooperating and receiving Jesus.

However, Stages 2 and 3 are unconditional. God promises to complete both in the believer. The believer's salvation is secure because he is "in Christ." And Christ is in the believer. Crucified with Christ, it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me (Galatians 2:20).