

Can Man Choose Salvation

Let's examine the whole question of man's moral ability or lack of it, and listen to what our Lord himself teaches. Let's start with giving some attention to some very crucial statements that Jesus made regarding man's ability or the lack of it.

1 Corinthians 2:14

This verse highlights that the "natural man" does not accept the things that come from the Spirit of God. To him, these things are foolishness, and he cannot understand them because they are spiritually discerned. This implies that the unsaved man is limited in his ability to grasp spiritual truths that are discerned through the Holy Spirit.

Romans 8:5-10

These verses contrast the mindset of those who live according to the flesh with those who live according to the Spirit. The carnally minded (unsaved) are at enmity with God, cannot please God, and are spiritually dead. In contrast, being spiritually minded brings life and peace. The unsaved man is portrayed as being unable to submit to God's law and lacking the Spirit of Christ.

These passages suggest that an unsaved person, while capable in many human respects, lacks the spiritual discernment and inclination towards the things of God. This limitation is primarily spiritual, affecting their understanding of and ultimately standing in the way of a relationship with God.

John 6:64-65, and he was saying, for this reason, I have said to you that
"no one can come to me unless it is given to him by the Father"

If we apply the categories of logic to the first two words in this statement, "no one", we see that this statement is what we call a universal negative. That is to say it is all inclusive. What Jesus is saying is without exception, no human being can come to Him unless it is given to him by the Father. So this is an absolute, it's a negative absolute, and we have to understand that.

Now, the next word is also crucial to our understanding. It is the word **can**. No one can. Now, the word can is often mistaken for an other word may. We've all been corrected at some point,

"I'm sure you can. And, Yes you may."

The word can has to do with ability. What is it that no one has the ability to do that Jesus is talking about here?

No one has the ability to come to Me.

*Does man in and of himself according to Jesus,
have the ability to come to Jesus?*

No.

The word unless introduces an exception and unless points to what is called in philosophy a necessary condition. A necessary condition or a prerequisite, something that has to happen before something else can possibly happen, that is what a prerequisite is. Jesus is saying that there is a necessary condition that must be met before anyone can come to Him.

What does He identifies in this verse as the necessary condition for anyone to be able to come to Him? Answer:

unless ***The Father gives it to him***

There is another question that is still hanging out here. If a necessary condition is provided, does a necessary condition guarantee that the result you want will in fact take place? No, that's why we make a distinction between **necessary conditions and sufficient conditions**.

A sufficient condition is a condition that if it is met, guarantees the result. An example of a necessary condition would be in the case of fire. If you wanna build a fire, oxygen is a necessary condition for there to be a fire. But the mere presence of oxygen does not guarantee a fire.

Okay Now, that we understand the difference, we can see all that this verse is teaching is that:

In terms of man's natural ability, none of us has the ability in and of ourselves to come to Christ unless God does something.

At this point we have not defined what it is that God does, but we know it is a necessary condition, a prerequisite for salvation.

John 6:37

John 6:44

What is the nature of this necessary condition? The necessary condition that Jesus spells out is that:

the Father draws.

So can we say this categorically without any, fear of being contradicted, that our Lord Jesus Christ taught that it is impossible for a human being to come to the Lord Jesus Christ unless that person is drawn by the Father. God must draw people. But there's still a debate. And the debate is what does it mean that **God draws.**

Now the classical American Church approach to this is that nobody can come to Jesus unless the ***Father entices him or woos him.***

The word draw here is has been mis-interpreted to mean woo or to attract, just as honey draws bees and lights draw moths. But if we look at:

James 2:6

We find this same Greek word used here in the sixth verse, “but you have dishonored the poor man. Is it not the rich who oppress you and personally drag you into court.”

Guess which word is used in this verse that is exactly the same Greek word that is translated by the word draw in **John 6:44.**

Answer: Drag

Acts 16:19, “But when her masters saw that their hope of the prophet was gone, they seized Paul and Silas and dragged them into the marketplace before the authorities.”

The word dragged again! This text clearly indicates an act of force in dragging Paul and Silas into the marketplace. That would make you wonder why it is that the translators use:

the word draw rather than the word drag?

Whenever I have doubt as to the precise meaning of a word in the scriptures, the first thing to do is go to the Greek, but then after I go to the Greek, it is still dependent upon the science of linguistics and lexicography in order to have an

understanding of the meaning of that term at the time it was used in the writing of the documents.

In Kittel's Theological Dictionary, the word that is being translated draw here in this text is defined by Kittel as meaning to:

to compel by irresistible superiority.

Again, if that's the case, if the linguistic and lexicographical evidence is so heavily weighted to mean something that is compelling, why would translators in various translations use this term draw when they translate the same word **"drag elsewhere."**

Well, when you have a word like this, say, oftentimes how you choose to translate it will be determined by the context.

Most translators and teams of translators are not that arbitrary when they're working on translations of the Bible. They try to be as honest and as careful as possible in rendering the Greek into English.

Reportedly, there is an instance of where this verb is used in classical Greek language, in some play by some one somewhere. Where the verb that the Greeks used when they drew water out of a well is this same verb. Some argue that it's a perfectly legitimate use to use the word draw because you don't drag water out of a well.

I grant that you don't drag water out of a well, but how do you get water out of a well? Do you stand up at the top of the well and say, here, water, water, water? Or do you woo water out of a well? Do you entice water out of a well? No! You must do something that will compel that water to go against gravity and get it up there where you can use it. I think even with that obscure reference in the Greek language the fact is that this verb implies force:

the force of divine compulsion.

And if that is true, then Jesus himself says that no man can do it unless the Father compels him to do it.

John 3:3

John describes the encounter that Jesus has with the Pharisee, the theologian Nicodemus, in which he says in verse three, "Jesus answered and said to him, truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born again. He cannot see the kingdom of God."

You have to be born again!

So regeneration precedes seeing the kingdom of God. Is that a legitimate interpretation of this passage? Yes, in fact, nobody can see it at all unless they are first, **Born again**.

Jesus said, truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the spirit, he cannot enter into the Kingdom of God. So regeneration is a prerequisite for entering and seeing the kingdom of God.

It boggles my mind why the American Church position has people who are not yet born again, putting faith in their ability to choose the King of the Kingdom of God.

As I see it, regeneration is a necessary condition for faith.

Ephesians 2

Paul says that **while we were dead** in sin and trespasses, God has quickened us that has made us alive in Christ. And then tells us that therefore it is by grace you are saved through faith and that is not of yourselves, but is the gift of God.

So we see **faith is the gift of God**. That is the result of the Spirit's work of regeneration within us, that God Himself supplies the necessary condition to come to Jesus.

That's why it is by grace alone that we are saved. Now Jesus says that which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. Do not marvel that I said to you that you must be born again. Jesus said, why should this surprise you you're a theologian Nicodemus. Don't you understand the fundamental point of man's fallen nature, that which is born of the flesh is flesh.

And he tells us that, **"the flesh prophesies nothing."**

But if we believe that God entices us to Christ and all we have to do in the flesh prior to our regeneration is cooperate or consent, then I ask you, what would the flesh prophet?

Not just something everything!

This belief is a direct contradiction to the scripture's definition of what the flesh or an unregenerate has the ability to prophesy.

Romans chapter 7-8

Now here the apostle tells us something about man's moral inability in the flesh. He says that man in his fallen state in the flesh is hostile to the law of God and he does not obey the law of God, and those who are in the flesh cannot please God. I might add to you that if God only wooed us to Christ while we are yet unregenerate and left it to us, still in the flesh, to make the final decision, and we choose to consent this would please God. Another direct contradiction to the scriptures account of the state of an unregenerate man. The apostle tells us that **in the flesh there's nothing that man can do to please God.**

We now know the crucial prerequisite for salvation is a work of the Holy Spirit. That is the necessary condition, for faith to be present. That's why we insist that the first step of our regeneration that which quickens us from spiritual death and makes us and enables us to come to Jesus at all is the gracious work of God, the Holy Spirit and is never the fruit of the flesh.

An unregenerate man is dead in sin and can not please God. To be saved he must be given a work of the Holy Spirit that instills the supernatural miracle of regenerative Faith from the Father, allowing Christ to begin His work His work of regeneration in you that He promises to finish.

Christ is our only hope of salvation it is not a work of our flesh so that any man can boast. So surrender yourself to the mercy of God.

1 John 4:19

Romans 8:30

Philippians 1:6

Philippians 2:12-13

Proverbs 16:9