

Appointed to Eternal Life

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[Scripture quotations taken from the NASB](#)

The writer of the Book of Acts spoke of those whom God has chosen, or God’s elect, as being those who are *appointed* to eternal life. In Acts 13 we read: “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.*” (Acts 13:48, emphasis added).

Who were those who believed? It was those who were “appointed” to eternal life who believed. Let us not overlook the order of the events in this verse: the appointing to eternal life by God came first, and then as a result came the believing in Christ.

Those who do ultimately come to faith in Christ are those whom God chose before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in His sight. These are the ones whom He appointed to eternal life. In God’s time these individuals are born into the world, and again in God’s time they are all called by Him to faith in Christ. When they are called, they all come to Christ.

When we believe in Christ, it is *evidence* that God has chosen us and has appointed us to eternal life. In fact, it is evidence that we have already been called to faith in Christ by God the Father; it is evidence that we have already been born again.

Believing in Christ is not an act of our own will that we choose to do when we are still unregenerate and dead in our sins, by which we avail ourselves of

God's "offer" of salvation, as some say. Paul taught in Ephesians 2:8-9 that it is by God's grace we have been saved, through faith, and this faith which saves us is not a result of *any* works of our own. Rather our faith in Christ is a gift that God gave to us apart from any work, action, merit, or decision of our own. The Scriptures teach us that salvation is something that happens to an individual as a result of God's choice and His calling, and it is not something that unregenerate man attains by way of his own choice or decision to believe in Christ.

If we believe in Christ, it is because we have been appointed to eternal life, and all of those appointed to eternal life will come to faith in Christ at such time as they are called by God, as Jesus taught in John 6:44. When these elect are called to faith in Christ, they all come to Him, regardless of their present hostility toward the Gospel, and regardless of any decision of their own, just as was the case with Saul of Tarsus when he was called to faith on the Damascus road, even while he was still hostile toward God and intent on persecuting the church (Acts 9:1-16, 22:1-10).

In his letter to the Ephesians, Paul wrote: "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ, just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we would be holy and blameless before Him. In love He predestined us to adoption as sons through Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the kind intention of His will". (Ephesians 1:3-5).

The letter to the Ephesians is written to God's saints (Ephesians 1:1). God's saints are those who have, or will in God's time, be brought to faith in Christ. Speaking of God's saints, Paul taught that God "chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we would be holy and blameless before Him". Paul also said that God "predestined us to adoption as sons through Jesus Christ to Himself", and that He made His choice of us "according to the kind intention of His will".

As Paul continued his teaching in Ephesians 1, he wrote that in Christ "we have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to His purpose who works all things after the counsel of His will" (Ephesians 1:11). In this verse Paul taught that God works out "all things" in conformity with His sovereign will, plan, and purpose, and "all things" includes His choice of those who will be

brought to faith in Christ, receiving redemption through His blood, which bought for us the forgiveness of our sins. God Himself chose to reveal His Son to those whom He foreknew, His elect, and it is the result of His choice of us that we are brought to faith and believe in Christ.

We are those whom the Father has given to His Son Jesus Christ, and we will indeed come to Christ (John 6:37). Jesus referred to those of us who were given to Him by the Father as His “sheep” in John 10. Elsewhere in the Bible, those of us chosen to receive eternal life are referred to as “the elect”. Elect means chosen, and an election simply means a choice.

Considering once again Paul’s teaching in Ephesians 1, we will notice that it is God who chooses men for salvation, and that man’s choice or decision is not mentioned (Ephesians 1:4-5, 11). In another passage in the Gospel of John, Jesus spoke to His disciples, and He told them plainly that it was not they who had chosen Him, rather it was He who had chosen them and appointed them to bear fruit that would last (John 15:16).

As we can see from John 6:44 and 6:63-65, Jesus taught that unregenerate men are *not able* to come to Him apart from His Father’s drawing or calling. Let us consider once again Paul’s teaching in Romans 8 where he wrote: “the mind set on the flesh is hostile toward God; for it does not subject itself to the law of God, *for it is not even able to do so.*” (Romans 8:7, emphasis added). If it were not for God’s irresistible grace demonstrated by His effectual calling to faith of His elect, no one would be saved, because we would all remain hostile toward Him, and unable to come to Christ.

Our coming to faith in Christ has nothing to do with any decision that we make while we are still unregenerate and dead in our sins, either to receive Christ or to reject Him, because we are incapable of coming to Christ when we are still dead in our sins. Rather, our faith in Christ is the gift that results from the decision of God, who “chose us in Him before the foundation of the world” (Ephesians 1:4) and “predestined us to adoption as sons through Jesus Christ to Himself” (Ephesians 1:5). We believe in Christ because we are those who have been appointed to eternal life (Acts 13:48).