

Who Do You Say That I Am?

Seeing and Delighting in Jesus through an Expository
Journey through the **Gospel of Matthew**

77- Jesus Demonstrates His Absolute
Authority- Part 15

Jesus Has the Authority to Save Sinners- Part 3

Church November 26, 2023

Matthew 9:9-13

9 As Jesus went on from there, He saw a man called Matthew, sitting in the tax collector's booth; and He said to him, "Follow Me!" And he got up and followed Him.

10 Then it happened that as Jesus was reclining at the table in the house, behold, many tax collectors and sinners came and were dining with Jesus and His disciples.

11 When the Pharisees saw this, they said to His disciples, "Why is your Teacher eating with the tax collectors and sinners?"

12 But when Jesus heard this, He said, "It is not those who are healthy who need a physician, but those who are sick.

13 But go and learn what this means: 'I DESIRE COMPASSION, AND NOT SACRIFICE,' for I did not come to call the righteous, but sinners."

*To the Glory of God the Father; God the Son;
and God the Holy Spirit. Amen.*

Now what Matthew infallibly wrote here- is so that three things will be accomplished. In other words, Matthew has three things in mind and that is *why* he wrote this inspired Passage of five verses:

1. His own personal Testimony (verse 9)
2. The Fact that Jesus ONLY saves “Sinners” (the entire Passage)
3. God saves Sinners by “Calling” them to Salvation (the entire Passage)

... and we covered the first Thing last Time and so, today, I want to look at the other two.

2. Jesus ONLY saves Sinners

Matthew 9:12b&13b

... "It is not those who are healthy who need a physician, but those who are sick... I did not come to call the righteous, but sinners."

Now the main thing that the Apostle Matthew wanted to let his Jewish readers (and us) understand- was, "*Jesus saves Sinners*". As fully God- Jesus has the Authority to forgive Sin; impute Righteousness; and to allow the guilty Sinner to pass through God's Judgment on his Life. And if you are a "Sinner"- then NOTHING is more important than that.

Now the Issue of eternal Damnation in Hell- has NEVER been a popular Subject. Most people- even inside the Church- would rather not think about it- much less talk or teach about it. But Hell is in the Bible. And so, even though the Concept of Hell is very frightening- it is very Important for us to understand about Hell in the Context of "God's Justice."

The hymn books of the modern Church are filled with songs about God's Love and Grace and Mercy. And rightfully so. It is a great Comfort to know that Jesus has forgiven us and is going to bring us into Heaven when we die.

And so, we sing and preach and teach about *the "Glory of God's Grace"*. For example, **Ephesians 1:5&6a** says,

**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 ...**

This tells us that God's *predestinating* (choosing) Sinners for Salvation ("Adoption" in verse 5) is "**TO**" something. In other words, God's sovereign Election of Sinners to save them- has as its *final* and *decisive* Goal:

The praise of the Glory of His Grace.

And this tells us that God's Grace has a "Glory" to it. It has an Importance; a Beauty; a Value; or a shining Brilliance to it. And that Glory will be "seen" with human eyes- when they behold a Sinner- who has been radically changed- by God's marvelous Grace. And when they see that at work in a person's Life- they will praise God; and they will marvel at the Grace that made that Transformation possible. And in seeing Grace at work- they will assign a Value to it- as being very Wonderful and very Important!

And THAT is WHY Sinners are saved! The Praise of the Glory of God's Grace is WHY Sinners are saved! But that means that Sinners are NOT saved simply so they can escape Hell; and enter into Heaven. Now it is true that guilty Sinners WILL escape the Damnation of Hell; and they WILL enter into the wonders of Heaven. I'm NOT *minimizing* or avoiding any of that. Because being allowed by God to escape the horrors of Hell; and to spend all of Eternity in Heaven- is just about the BEST thing that could ever happen to a fallen human being!

But what about God? What does God get out of us missing Hell and going to Heaven? Because us avoiding Hell is great for *us*! And us spending Eternity in Heaven is fabulous- for *us*! But what happens to God through all of this? Because I suggest to you that there is something infinitely BETTER than guilty Sinners missing Hell; and enjoying Heaven forever!

But most people- even those who sit on the pews of the modern Church- stop right there. They celebrate the Fact that God moved; and Jesus died; and rose again; so that Sinners could miss Hell; and go to Heaven! And many of them sincerely give God Praise for this! Even Lost people praise God for Heaven! And they write Books and sing Songs and otherwise celebrate this amazing Truth.

But as much as people praise God for this- it never dawns on them- that this is entirely what a "Man-centered Theology" is all about. What WE get out of God! What God can do for US! And how WE can benefit from what God does! And yet, all of this is true! And we SHOULD praise God for this! But ALL of this is centered around Man. All of this has MAN at the very Center of all that God is and does. And that is the very definition of a "*Man-centered Theology*". And I will remind all of us that a Man-centered Theology always glorifies Man. And that means that while it is glorifying Man- it is robbing God of the Glory that only rightfully belongs to Him.

O how easy it is for fallen creatures to rob God of His Glory! And even after God gloriously saves us- we still have it in us to twist the Scriptures and turn the Discussion somehow- someway- until WE get the Glory and until WE are praised!

I have long believed and have even taught it from this Pulpit as well as on the Radio- that I firmly believe that the people of the modern Church are perfectly willing to put God *first*! And they can talk about it and pray about it- all the Time. But for many of them- the ONLY reason they are willing to put God *first*- is because they firmly believe that, by doing this- God will put THEM *first*! So, they are willing to pay the fee; they are willing to say the words; and they are willing to go through the motions and supposedly give God the Glory- wrongly thinking that that is what "putting God *first*" means. But the ONLY reason they are willing to do

that- is because underneath it all- they firmly believe that God- somehow and someway- is going to put THEM first!

Because the Concept of “Putting God first” does NOT mean that we come second; or third; or even fifty-third. “Putting God first” means MNORE than that God has the Preeminence; or that God has “first-place” in ALL THINGS! IT is that God has the Preeminence- IN ALL THINGS- ALL THE TIME!

So, it isn't that we hurry up and “put God first” so that we can get to what we *really* enjoy- and that is God putting *us* first. And I began to understand this when I read a verse that David wrote 1,000 years before Jesus was born in **Psalm 37:4**, that says:

Delight yourself in the Lord; And He will give you the desires of your heart.

And many people are very busy this morning- working very hard to make this verse to be a “Formula” for how we can get stuff from God- rather than a humble and joyful Way of Life. How this verse is understood by many is something like this: *“I'm going to delight myself in the Lord- first! So, it's 10;30am. And for the next 10 minutes, I'm going to just think about God. And I'm going to ponder all that He has done for me; and how much He has given me; and of how much God enjoys doing things for me. And I'm going to sing praises to Him; and maybe even sing a few songs; and I'm going to raise my hands; and walk around the room- just singing His praises! And then after I have spent- 10, 15- maybe even 30 minutes; or even a whole hour 'delighting myself in the Lord'- THEN I'm going to ask God to give me what is the Desire of my heart today.”*

Now look, I'm all about singing and praising the Lord. And I think it's great for them to sing praises and to ponder all that the Lord has done for them. And I agree that God loves to give to His children. But what I just described is taking this verse completely out of Context; and using this verse; as well as using God- as a “cosmic sugar daddy” to get more of this world's Goods. And that is Blasphemy! And it has NOTHING to do with what David wrote here.

What David was talking about was a Way of Life- a constant and ongoing Transformation where I learn HOW to “delight myself in the Lord” through every phase of Life that God sovereignly *allows* or *causes* me to be in. Delighting in God is where I learn how to *enjoy* God- when God allows satan to touch my Flesh. It is learning how to be happy when God *takes* from me and not merely when He *gives* to me.

Delighting in God is a slow and relentless and progressive Sanctification of my Mind and Heart- over many years- so that I can find the *fullness* of my own Joy- in God alone being glorified! It is the realization that God's Will is BETTER than my will. That what God desires to do- is infinitely BETTER for me than

anything I could desire to have. And so, “delighting in the Lord” is me learning how to be satisfied in Jesus- *regardless* of what that might mean to me and my Situation here on this earth and in this Life.

So, this is not about me eating my vegetables first before I can eat my ice cream. It isn't about me doing something that is less important and less joyful to me- first before I get to have what really makes me happy afterward. This verse talks about a Life-long Process that changes my Heart; and that changes what I desire- so that the “Desires of my Heart” are no longer at odds with God's Will.

So, I'm not bribing God to give me the Desires of my Heart by “delighting myself in Him” *first*. I am living my Life in such a Way that allows God the Holy Spirit to radically transform my Heart and Mind- so that I don't *want* something that isn't God's Will.

So, the Reason God gives me the Desires of my heart is NOT because I prefaced my asking with a few minutes of Praise and Worship. So, my “delighting myself in the Lord” is NOT a “downpayment” that I have to pay in order to get whatever my heart craves. It isn't the Instrument that butters God up- so He is more inclined to do whatever I ask Him.

No, God the Holy Spirit begins to mold me and shape me into the very Image and Likeness of Jesus, the Christ- the very moment after I have been born again; been Justified; and been adopted into the Family of God. So, once those three Steps have been made in the overall Process of Salvation- God begins to work on me to change me.

So, it is true that we have to *initially* come to God “*Just the Way we are*”- as Lost people- needing Forgiveness and Righteousness. That is the *ONLY* way Sinners *can* come to God- as wicked Sinners needing Salvation. But it is also true that once we have come to God; once we have experienced the Miracle of the New Birth; once we have been made Righteous by Faith alone; and once we have been adopted into the Family of God; once we have been washed and made Clean- God loves us so much- He isn't about to leave us the Way we are. So, God allows both Trials and Blessings to come into our Lives so we can learn how to love God; and how be faithful under any Circumstance and any Situation. In other words, we yield our Bodies; Souls; Minds; and Hearts to the sanctifying Power of God the Holy Spirit- so that what we desire is brought into Alignment with God's Will and Way.

But most people are NEVER taught about this. So, as soon as they learn that God is going to put HIMSELF- *first- above us- ahead* of us- those people get real nervous. In other words, as soon as people realize that the Bible teaches clearly and repeatedly that God loves Himself and His Glory MORE than He loves us- some, if not all, will actually think that God does not love them- at all. As soon

as they realize that God is going to ALWAYS put Himself and His Will before them and their Desires- they usually panic.

I actually had a woman come to me after Church one Lord's Day and tell me, "*Pastor Blair, when you talk about God valuing His Own Glory MORE than He values glorifying me- I don't feel loved. When you say that God loves Himself MORE than He loves me- my feelings about God loving me go way down when you talk that way!*" And I responded to that dear soul and said, "*My dear sister, the ONLY reason you feel that Way is because of real bad Teaching. Because God has ALWAYS loved Himself MORE than He loves you. That has ALWAYS been true- way before I was saved and started talking like this. But even though that is true- God gave the very BEST that He had- Jesus- to die to save you- even though He values His Own Glory MORE than He values your Salvation!*"

This Truth should NEVER cause anyone to think that God doesn't love us. God unmistakably proved how much He loves us by freely giving the very BEST that Heaven had- His Own Son- to die to save us! And yet- as true as this is- we are NOT the most important thing in God's Mind and Heart- He is!

But all this Truth should do- is to *humble* us and put God's Love in its proper Place in our Minds and Hearts. We are NOT the Center of the Universe- never have been and never will be. God is the Center of the Universe that He created. And what we want or what we desire; or what we lust after- is NOT foremost on God's Mind- His Own Glory is!

So, we should understand that God is NOT interested in the least of having to measure up to some arbitrary human Concept of "*Fairness*". God is *primarily* interested in being God; and in being known; and valued; and praised; and glorified; and loved; and enjoyed; and feared by His Creatures.

God being praised solely for what He does for us- is NOT the same thing as God being praised and enjoyed and delighted in- for Who He is. And I would suggest to you that this is what Salvation is all about. Because it doesn't take being saved to praise God for His Gifts. Lost people do that all the Time. Unsaved people get on television and they give God Glory for helping them make millions of dollars from their new Song. And they point upward and thank God for winning an Award; or for scoring a Touchdown or for hitting a home run.

And lost people are willing to do that- precisely because doing that makes no Demands on their lives. It requires no radical Departure from their normal Way of Life; and it does NOT seek to overshadow their own Accomplishments.

But it DOES require the Miracle of the New Birth for us to delight in God ONLY being glorified! It DOES take being made Righteous for us to delight in God ONLY being praised! And it DOES take being adopted into God's Family for us to truly experience the fullness of our own Joy- in God alone being magnified!

Lost people have NO Desire for any of that. But they can praise the Lord and give Him Glory- as long as God stays “in His Place” and allows *them* to flourish; and allows *them* to be in the spotlight; and allows *them* to receive all the Accolades. And so, they seldom, if ever, even think or care about what God receives from saving guilty Sinners.

But I tell you that the Scriptures are clear about this. There is something infinitely BETTER than guilty Sinners being Forgiven and missing Hell and entering into Heaven- and that infinitely BETTER thing is...

the Praise of the Glory of His Grace...

And if you understand this- you will then *also* understand that the main Reason Salvation is “Wonderful” is NOT only that we get to miss Hell and go to Heaven. Like I said, we WILL miss Hell and we WILL go to Heaven! But that is NOT the *primary* Reason Salvation is Wonderful. Salvation is Wonderful- *primarily* because Salvation demonstrates the Glory of God’s Grace BETTER than anything else. And the Grace of God glorifies God MORE than anything else! Saving guilty Rebels by what He alone does for them- makes God’s Grace look BETTER than anything else!

Now if you grasp that- let me take you one step further. God’s Grace and God’s Mercy are two sides of the same coin. Grace is God sovereignly and actively giving something that we DON’T deserve and CANNOT earn. And God’s Mercy is God sovereignly and passively holding back- what we DO deserve and what we HAVE earned.

So, God giving unworthy rebels both Forgiveness and Righteousness are ACTS of God’s Grace. It is God sovereignly and actively giving us what we DON’T deserve and CANNOT earn. And so, God *forcefully* and *powerfully* and *effectually* coming to where we are- in our Sin and in our Filth- and radically and sovereignly and supernaturally and miraculously changing our Nature- until we begin to genuinely love God; and love the Things of the Spirit of God- is an Act of God’s Grace. God is giving us something that He knows that we NEED; but that He also knows we could NEVER obtain!

God’s Mercy, on the other hand- is seen in God NOT judging us for our Sins- at the very moment we commit them. Mercy is God sovereignly *withholding* His Wrath against our Wickedness and NOT giving us what we deserve (Judgment).

But then there are two more Characteristics of God that we need to understand. God is Merciful. And we praise Him for that. The Bible is filled with verses that *celebrate* God’s Mercy. And remember, every time we read about God’s Mercy- it is God *withholding* something that we deserve; and something we have earned- usually His Judgment and Damnation.

But the flip side of God's Mercy is God's "Just-ness". The Bible teaches that God is "Just"- meaning that God is "Righteous". And God is *perfectly* "Just" or *perfectly* "Righteous"; fully Righteous; totally Righteous. And this has to do with God's "Sinlessness". God has NO Sin and God CANNOT Sin. God has NO Weaknesses in His Character or His Nature that could be attracted to Sin; or that might be enamored or "caught away" with Sin. And God- in all three Persons of the Trinity is the ONLY Being in the Universe that can make that Claim. Every other created Being is *less* Just; or *less* Righteous than God.

And God's "Justness"- His "Righteousness"- is seen in the Fact that God ALWAYS does what is "Right". And "Right" is ALWAYS defined by God's Own, personal Character and Nature- and NOT by some arbitrary human Standard of what we might think is "Right".

So, when God *manifests*; or when He *demonstrates*; or when He *shows*; or *displays* His "Righteousness"- it is done through His "Judgment". So, the one, true, and living God- judges. God judges. He makes Judgments about People; Places; and Events. In other words, God *determines* what is "Right" and what is "Wrong". God alone determines what is "Good" and what is "Bad"; what is "Acceptable" and what is "NOT Acceptable". God alone determines what is "Holy" and what is "Profane". And because All of God's Judgments and Determinations are based on His Own sinless Character and Nature- ALL of God's Judgments are "Righteous"; they are "Right"; "Correct"; "Pure"; and "Holy".

And whatever God has determined to be "Right" also brings Himself Glory. And what God has determined to be "Wrong" does NOT bring Him Glory. What is "Wrong" *dishonors* God and *robs* Him of His Glory.

And because God's Judgments bring Him Glory- they are NOT Arbitrary or Silly. They are "Wise" and "Good"; and they are "Beneficial"; "Helpful" and "Proper" to us as well.

For example, God has judged- He has determined; He has ruled that ALL Expressions of sexual Intimacy- *except one*- are Sinful. They are Unrighteous. So, NONE of these other Expressions bring God Glory and ALL of them- *except one*- are NOT "Helpful" nor are they "Good" for us- either.

We must remember that Marriage was God's idea. He established it. But He did NOT establish Marriage for the many Reasons that people have developed over the Centuries. Marriage is "Holy" because God has sovereignly determined; He has ruled and judged that "Marriage" is a physical, natural, earthly and temporary Example of the mysterious Covenant between Jesus Christ and His Church. And because that is true- sexual Intimacy is to be carried out between one naturally born Man and one naturally born Woman- who have been united together into the Covenant of Marriage that will last until either one of them dies or Jesus returns.

So, ALL of the various Expressions of sexual Intimacy that human beings have engaged in since the Fall from Masturbation; to Homosexuality; to Transgenderism; to Pedophilia; to Bestiality; to Polygamy; to Bigamy; to Incest; to Adultery; to Fornication are condemned by God as Sin. And they are Condemned- NOT because God is a “Killjoy”- but because God knows that us engaging in sexual, Intimacy in any other Way other than the one single Way that God has established does NOT glorify Him- but it also kills the Joy that God wants for us. And that is why God the Holy Spirit “moved” on the Apostle Paul to say this in **1 Corinthians 6:16-18:**

16 Or do you not know that the one who joins himself to a prostitute is one body with her? For He says, "THE TWO SHALL BECOME ONE FLESH."

17 But the one who joins himself to the Lord is one spirit with Him.

18 Flee [sexual] immorality. Every other sin that a man commits is outside the body, but the [sexually] immoral man sins against his own body. (Clarification added)

So, in the Bible- God has *permanently* established Boundaries around our Behavior. So, God’s Commandments restrict our Behavior. And God was Good to tell us what types of Behaviors honor Him and bring Him Glory; and which Behaviors *dishonor* God and are Bad for us.

And God *blesses* the Behaviors that please Him while He *judges* the Behaviors that do NOT please Him. And God either judges those sinful Behaviors in this Life or the next- or even both.

And this is where the Wrath of God comes in. The Bible teaches that God is Love. But God is NOT Wrath. Wrath is NOT a part of God’s Character or His Nature. God’s Wrath is a derivative or a manifestation of His Righteousness. You see, because God’s Standards of Behavior are perfect- ANY *deviation* from that Standard is an ATTACK against God’s Righteousness. Sin fights *against* God and robs God of the Glory He is entitled to while also robbing us of the Joy that God intends for us to have.

When a person chooses Sin over Obedience- He has bought into the Lie that says that Rebellion against God’s righteous Standards is BETTER than Obedience. That person has been deceived into thinking that *disobeying* God’s Standards brings MORE Joy and Peace and Happiness and Benefit to him than does his humble and joyful Obedience.

But through his Disobedience- that person is also saying to God, “*You don’t bring me Happiness- Sin does. Your Ways are NOT what is BEST for me- Sin is. I enjoy my Sin MORE than I enjoy obeying You.*” So, Sin *dishonors* God; it *belittles* God; it *insults* God. Sin repeats the Lie that obeying God keeps us from the

fullness of Joy and the ONLY Way we can be truly Happy- is by rebelling against God's Standards.

So, Sin brings dishonor and disrespect to God. And that means that God's perfect Righteousness has now been called into Question. *"If God and His Ways are so Great- why would anyone NOT submit to them? Why would anyone rebel against God's Standards- if they alone glorify God and bring to us the fullness of Joy?"*

And that means that Sin is NOT Wrong because it hurts *us*- even though Sin *does* hurt us. No, Sin is Wrong because Sin *dishonors* God. Sin says that God's Glory is NOT what the Bible says it is.

So, God's Honor and Glory and His very Righteousness have been *attacked* by our Sin. And God MUST either *respond* to this Attack or *agree* with it. He MUST judge the Sin or agree that His Glory is NOT worth defending. God MUST now *judge* the Sin; *damn* the Sin; and *punish* the Sin; or He must encourage others to sin as well. So, God's Righteousness *demand*s a holy Response to the Insult. And that Response is called, *"God's Wrath in Judgment"*.

But it is important to remember that the Punishment MUST fit the Crime. So, the Punishment against Sin MUST NOT be overdone or be MORE than what is called for. And as far as MOST people go- they see HELL as being a gross Over-reaction to our Sin. And so, they deny that Hell exists.

But their effort to ignore Sin doesn't change what the Bible clearly teaches. It merely testifies that they are ignorant about how serious Sin is- to God. You see, Sin has insulted and belittled the very Thing that God loves the MOST- His Own Glory. Because Sin has portrayed God as being less Glorious than He really is. So, Sin is literally the very *worst* Act that can be carried out by human beings. NOTHING is *worse* than Sin as far as God is concerned.

The Screams of the Damned; along with the Agony of Jesus on the Cross- are the loudest and most riveting Sounds and Sights under Heaven that Sin is infinitely Sinful; that God is infinitely serious about His Glory being upheld and magnified and praised; and that Grace is infinitely precious.

And please note that God is NOT *unemotional* or *blasé*; or *apathetic* about His Righteousness nor any Attack against it. God LOVES His Righteousness. And so, God is VERY serious and VERY passionate about His Response to Sin. And so, in the Bible, God's Response against our Sin is called, *"God's Wrath"*. And in other places, God's Response against Sin is called, ***"Fury"*** (Psalm 2:5; 90:9; Isaiah 9:19; 13:9; Ezekiel 16:42; Amos 1:11); ***"Indignation"*** (Psalm 7:11; 38:3; 78:49; Isaiah 10:5; Jeremiah 10:10; Lamentation 2:6; Ezekiel 22:31; Daniel 11:36; Romans 2:8); ***"Vengeance"*** (Numbers 31:3; Deuteronomy 32:35; 2Samuel 4:8; Psalm 18:47; 94:1; Isaiah 34:8; Jeremiah 46:10; Ezekiel 25:14; Micah 5:15; Nahum 1:2; Romans 12:19; Hebrews 10:30); ***"Anger"*** (Exodus

4:14; Numbers 11:10; Deuteronomy 6:15; Joshua 7:1; 2Kings 13:3; 2Chronicles 25:15; Issaiah 5:25; Zephaniah 2:2); and “Retribution” (Deuteronomy 32:35; Hosea 9:7; Romans 11:9; 2Thessalonians 1:8).

Now I realize that this is frightening. But this is the Holy Bible. And it is part of God’s Character and Nature. It is also part of how God operates with us. And the Reason that God’s Wrath against Sin is so little understood today- is because so few actually get into it and study it and learn what God has revealed about it in sacred Scripture.

So, when God releases His holy Vengeance against willful Sin- God’s Grace is silent. But His “Justice”; or His “Just-ness” or God’s “Righteousness” becomes very, very loud! And so, while it is true that God’s Grace is NOT magnified when God issues out His Anger or His Retribution or His Indignation or His Fury- God’s Righteousness IS glorified!

So, the Glory of God’s Grace is seen and praised when guilty Sinners are saved (because of what God alone did for them). But what we MUST try to grasp- is that Hell is NOT a “Loss” for God. Hell does NOT mean that God *tried* to save them- but Sin was just too strong; and satan was just too powerful; and so, God *lost* them; and satan won because now they are in Hell. NO! That is NOT what the Bible teaches. And that kind of talk comes from people who either don’t know or who don’t care what the Bible teaches about God’s Righteousness and God’s Sovereignty.

The Doctrine of the absolute Sovereignty of God means that God NEVER loses! God is NEVER defeated! God has NEVER and will NEVER be defeated by rebellious and sinful Man nor by satan. God ALWAYS Wins! God ALWAYS gets EXACTLY what He wanted!

And that means that God did NOT “lose” the people who go to Hell. I tell you that God is actually *glorified* by the Damnation of the unrepentant people in Hell. How could that be? God’s Grace didn’t win- but God’s Righteousness did! God’s Grace was NOT glorified at the Damnation of unrepentant Rebels- but the Glory of God’s Justice in eternally damning those who *refuse* to repent WAS absolutely Glorified!

Beloved, it is a “Man-centered Theology” that teaches that God *wanted* to save people; but He lost them- because the people or satan wouldn’t let poor old God save them. So, God *tried* to save them- but the supposed “supremacy” of “*Human Self-determination*” or what is commonly called, “*Human Free-will*” fought against God and won- and that is *why* those lost the souls are cast into Hell. The Bible does NOT teach that. It NEVER has taught that and NEVER will. The Holy Bible says that people perish in Hell because God never chose them for Salvation. But why would God do that? For the SAME reason God does EVERYTHING! God was glorified in the damning of unrepentant Rebels. How?

God's perfect Justice was glorified by the eternal Damnation of those who *refuse* to repent.

People willfully and repeatedly *rebelled* against God's perfect Standard of Behavior. And to make Matters worse- they then *refused* to repent. So, they spent their Time on earth- continually rebelling against God and His Ways. And that Rebellion and Refusal is called, "Sin". So, ALL human beings- from the greatest to the smallest- have sinned against God. And they sinned because they *wanted* to; because they *chose* to. And they sinned *repeatedly*. So, every single human being on earth is a "guilty Sinner".

And at that point, God COULD have just destroyed the world with everybody in it and started all over again. And if God had done that- He would be perfectly Righteous. Because God was NOT obligated to save anyone. Or, God COULD have *overpowered* ALL the Rebellion of ALL the people and sovereignly *caused* them to repent and be saved. God *could* have done either one.

But what God chose to do- was to save people "out from" every Nation; Tongue; and "People- Group" on earth. And God decided to save them; to rescue them from His Wrath- by what He alone did for them- in all three Persons of the Trinity! And so, God decided to save unworthy rebels "BY" His Grace and "THROUGH" the Gift of "saving Faith" that He would give to those He chose to save.

And God did just that- to 100% of ALL the people He chose to save- from before the Foundation of the world. He NEVER chose to save EVERYBODY. He chose to save "SOME". Now we don't know how many "SOME" is. I hope and pray that "SOME" represents the *Majority* of all the people on the earth. And I am praying and laboring as hard as I know how- based on that being true. But what I DO know. And what God HAS revealed in His Word- is that He did NOT choose to save EVERYBODY.

So, before God ever made the Universe- He determined to save SOME guilty Sinners by the *forceful* and *effective* Imposition of His Grace into their Lives. And that *forceful* and *effective* Imposition radically changed their Natures. And it gave them "eyes that can see"; and "ears that can hear"; and a "heart that is both able and willing to believe".

And those are the people who will be used by God to magnify the Glory of God's Grace. Because they will spend all of Eternity in the Glories of Heaven- even though they don't deserve to be there. And they will sing throughout the endless eons of Time- about God's Grace and Mercy that allowed them to escape Hell and to spend all of Eternity in the Beauty of Heaven!

Now I have no idea who God has chosen for Salvation or who has NOT been chosen. That's God's Business. So, my Obedience to God involves me

working with EVERYBODY. I don't have the Right to exclude ANYONE. And so, I preach the Gospel to every creature; I pray with EVERYONE; I work with EVERYONE; I beg EVERYONE to repent; and I labor with EVERYONE- hoping and praying that they will be saved- but knowing that ONLY those God has chosen will respond to God's Grace with Gladness and Joy- while those who have NOT been chosen- will respond to God's Grace with Anger and continued Rebellion.

So, what about those who have NOT been chosen for Salvation. How will they glorify God? They will glorify and magnify and exalt and demonstrate and show and display the "Glory of God's Justice" on unrepentant Sinners. But they were NOT lost by God. It was NOT that God *tried* to save them; and *wanted* to save them; but wasn't strong enough to overpower their Rebellion. That is NOT what the Bible teaches- even though that is *exactly* what many in the modern Church teaches.

No, these people remained Lost; and were cast into Hell; and will spend all of Eternity in everlasting Torment and Suffering- because they DID NOT repent. And they DID NOT repent because they COULD NOT. And they COULD NOT repent because they DIDN'T WANT to.

And in their eternal Agony; in their eternal Suffering- with every ounce of their Being- those people will exalt and magnify the Glory of God's Justice against their Sins. And so, even though Hell is both Frightening and Horrible to even consider- it is both Real and Correct- because it represents the Adjudication of the Insult and the Offense that those people made- repeatedly- against the perfect Righteousness of God.

We must be clear about this. Every single person who is in Hell right now; or who will be in Hell at some point in the Future- DESERVES to be in Hell. They rebelled against God and sinned against His perfect Standard of Righteousness- *repeatedly!* And yet, they *refused* to repent! They refused to humble themselves to God and bow their knees and cry out for a Mercy they didn't deserve. And so, they received what they worked so hard to get- Damnation! And as they burn- they will magnify the Glory of God's Justice.

But we also have to understand that everybody who sings God's Praises in the glories of Heaven- DESERVES to be in Hell, too. They too, sinned against God and they rebelled against God's perfect Standard of Righteousness- repeatedly! So, EVERYBODY is a guilty Sinner! NOBODY deserves to go to Heaven! EVERYBODY deserves to go to Hell!

But in God's Mercy- He chose to "set His Love" on SOME of those guilty Sinners. And so, God sent His Grace to forcefully and effectively change the very Nature of those guilty Sinners. That is called, the "New Birth". So, the New Birth is God sovereignly and effectively giving guilty Sinners new, spiritual Life! And

with that new, living Nature- those guilty Rebels are given eyes that can see; ears that can hear; and a heart that is both able and willing to believe.

And with those new eyes- they see the Glory of God in the Person of Jesus Christ. And they love what they see; and they are changed into what they see. And once they see the Beauty and the majesty and the Glory of God in Christ- they despise and hate what they see in themselves.

And in their God-given Desperation- these people will cry out to God for Mercy and Forgiveness. And it will be easy for them to repent. And so, they will be forgiven and washed and made Righteous by Jesus and what Jesus alone has done.

And these people will then become determined to be ongoingly and continually transformed into the very Image and Likeness of Jesus. And even though their Efforts will NOT be Perfect; their Efforts to obey and to not sin and to follow Jesus will NOT be without Fault and Flaw- they will press on- hating even the Garment that is spotted by the Flesh.

And when they die- they will enter into the Beauty and Glories of Heaven. And there- these unworthy Sinners will praise and magnify Jesus- FOREVER! And so, by the Grace of God- and through the Gift of saving faith- these people- who may have actually been *worse* Sinners than the others- will demonstrate and display and show and manifest and magnify the Glory of God's Grace- FOREVER!

So, in either Case- God wins! Those who are given the Will and the Ability to repent- will repent. And God will use them to demonstrate just how amazing His Grace really is. And those who scream in Agony in Hell through the eons of Time- will testify loudly throughout the Universe about the Glory of God's Justice and of how PERFECT God's Judgments really are.

And the Jew of the 1st Century understood all of this. And that is *why* they were *terrified* of Hell. For the most part, the people of the modern Church are NOT terrified of Hell- because they either don't believe it exists; or they don't understand how God could be glorified by its Existence. But I pray that, after Today- you CAN understand. And through your Understanding- you will make SURE that you never enter into Hell.

So, whoever the Messiah will be- He MUST be able to recuse people from the terrifying Wrath of God against their Sins. And so, the Messiah MUST be able to not only forgive ALL Sin- He MUST be able to give wicked Sinners the Righteousness they need to escape the frightening Vengeance of God in the Fires of Damnation.

And Matthew is telling his fellow-Jews- in no uncertain Terms that Jesus- IS the Messiah! And because Jesus is the Messiah- HE and He alone can deliver them

from an Eternity in Hell and give them the Righteousness they need to spend all of Eternity in Heaven!

And that is WHY Jesus performed this amazing Miracles. They were NOT carried out to banish Sickness and Disease from Israel. Many Jews, both saved and lost were sick and were not healed before, during and after Jesus lived on the earth. The Miracles of Jesus were giving Him the “Divine Credibility” that He needed that would prove beyond any doubt that Jesus could give them EVERYTHING they needed to bypass Hell and spend all of Eternity in Heaven- because of one Fact:

JESUS SAVES SINNERS!

Amen. Let’s pray.

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The Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit. Amen. Be watchful and quicken your pace. Soli Deo Gloria. For the Glory of God alone.

