

Who Do You Say That I Am?

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

78- Jesus Demonstrates His Absolute
Authority- Part 16

Jesus Has the Authority to Save Sinners- Part 4

Church December 03, 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.*

This Sermon represents the 78th Time I have stood before you and heralded the glorious Gospel from the infallible Record about the Birth; Life; Ministry; Death; Resurrection; and Ascension of Jesus, the Christ. Around 50AD- just a few Decades after the Resurrection- God the Holy Spirit "moved" on the Apostle Matthew to write to his fellow- Jews the "*Story of Jesus*". And if God is pleased- these Sermons will be put into a Book that will be published- when I'm finished.

This Sermon also represents the 16th Time I have tried to prove to you- from what Matthew *infallibly* wrote- that Jesus *conclusively* demonstrated, that He had the very SAME absolute Authority that God the Father has- by the amazing Miracles that He performed. Because those Miracles proved that Jesus IS the long-awaited *Immanuel* (God with us). But this Sermon is also the 4th Time I have

endeavored to show you that Matthew is proving beyond any Doubt that this Man- Jesus of Nazareth- like God Himself, has the Authority to save Sinners- among which Matthew confesses here- he was the *worst* of all.

But this Passage also tells us that the Jews of the 1st Century and those who led them and taught them and ruled over them- *spiritually*- were *categorically* Wrong about three things:

1. They were Wrong about the Messiah
2. They were Wrong about Sin
3. They were Wrong about Forgiveness and Salvation

1. They were Wrong about the Messiah

It was very important to Matthew that he demonstrate *conclusively* through the 28 Chapters of his Book that Jesus did NOT meet up with the Expectation that the 1st Century Jews had about the Messiah. And that is true- even though Jesus DID meet up with the Prophecies that the Old Testament Prophets foretold about the Messiah. In other words, the Expectation of the 1st Century Jews was NOT in alignment with the Old Testament. What they wanted in a Messiah was NOT what God wanted to give them; and what He had promised to give them.

In other words, the “Messiah” they were looking for- was NOT the Messiah that was foretold by the Prophets. And, in addition to being *personally* Different from what God had revealed to the Prophets, the Messiah that the Jews wanted and looked for and prayed for- would NOT “do” or “accomplish” what the true Messiah would do.

You see, what the Jews were looking for; what the Rabbis; and the High Priests; and the Lawyers; and the Scholars of the Old Testament was looking for- was a *political* and *military* “Deliverer”. For the most part, the Jews of the 1st Century were NOT looking for a “*Messiah*” who would *save* them; or *rescue* them; or *deliver* them from God’s Wrath against their *individual* Sins. Instead, they were looking for a very real human Man, who would raise a very real, literal, and physical Army- that would, with God’s Help, of course- utterly *vanquish* the pagan Gentile Roman occupying Force; and return the Nation of Israel back to her former Glory that she enjoyed under King Solomon¹.

And when that “Deliverance” would occur- the Jews would then- *wholeheartedly* worship God after the *similitude* of what God gave to Moses and the others in the 39 Books of the Old Testament- complete with tens of thousands of animal Sacrifices. It is very obvious when you read what the 1st Century Rabbis; and Levitical Priests; and the Pharisees; and the members of the Sanhedrin Court

¹ In the Bible, under King Solomon- Israel’s farthest Reach was northward to Damascus and southward to the Border of Egypt.

wrote (and what Orthodox Jews teach today)- they had no Desire *whatsoever* to welcome the New Covenant into the World. All that the Jewish religious Leaders were interested in back then- as well as in our day as well- is in getting the people to *faithfully* adhere to the Old Covenant.

But their Vision of the Messiah didn't stop there. In order to fulfill ALL of the Expectation of the Jews of that Time- this "Messiah"- with his Army- would then go forth- out into the greater Gentile World- and *militarily* conquer ALL of those peoples as well- so that from Jerusalem- their "Messiah" would rule the entire world with a "Rod of Iron". And they based that on what King David had written, 1,000 years before Jesus was born, in **Psalm 2:8&9:**

8 'Ask of Me, and I will surely give the nations as Your inheritance, And the very ends of the earth as Your possession.

9 'You shall break them with a rod of iron, You shall shatter them like earthenware.'"

But in **The Acts 4:24-31**- the Disciples made it clear that the Jews were Wrong about the Messiah- because they attributed **Psalm 2** as being a Prophecy about Jesus.

24 And when they [the Disciples] heard this, they lifted their voices to God with one accord and said, "O Lord, it is You who MADE THE HEAVEN AND THE EARTH AND THE SEA, AND ALL THAT IS IN THEM,

25 who by the Holy Spirit, through the mouth of our father David Your servant, said [in Psalm 2], 'WHY DID THE GENTILES RAGE, AND THE PEOPLES DEVISE FUTILE THINGS?

26 'THE KINGS OF THE EARTH TOOK THEIR STAND, AND THE RULERS WERE GATHERED TOGETHER AGAINST THE LORD AND AGAINST HIS CHRIST.'

27 For truly in this city there were gathered together against Your holy servant Jesus, whom You anointed, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, along with the Gentiles and the peoples of Israel,

28 to do whatever Your hand and Your purpose predestined to occur.

29 And now, Lord, take note of their threats, and grant that Your bond-servants may speak Your word with all confidence,

30 while You extend Your hand to heal, and signs and wonders take place through the name of Your holy servant Jesus."

31 And when they had prayed, the place where they had gathered together was shaken, and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak the word of God with boldness. [Clarification added]

... and then in **The Revelation**- the Apostle John wrote two different Times that the One Who would “rule the “Nations” (Gentiles) with the “Rod of Iron” is Jesus *in His 2nd Coming*- about which the 1st Century Jews knew and said NOTHING:

The Revelation 12:5

And she gave birth to a son, a male child, who is to rule all the nations with a rod of iron; and her child was caught up to God and to His throne.

The Revelation 19:11-16

11 And I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse, and He who sat on it is called Faithful and True, and in righteousness He judges and wages war.

12 His eyes are a flame of fire, and on His head are many diadems; and He has a name written on Him which no one knows except Himself.

13 He is clothed with a robe dipped in blood, and His name is called The Word of God.

14 And the armies which are in heaven, clothed in fine linen, white and clean, were following Him on white horses.

15 From His mouth comes a sharp sword, so that with it He may strike down the nations, and He will rule them with a rod of iron; and He treads the wine press of the fierce wrath of God, the Almighty.

16 And on His robe and on His thigh He has a name written, "KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS."

The Point I am making is that the Vision of the Messiah that the 1st Century Jews had- was Wrong. It was inaccurate; and did NOT represent a true Understanding of the Jewish Prophets- *including* Moses. But you would never know that their Vision was Wrong from the Old Testament alone- without *first* having at least *some* Knowledge of the New Testament. And that is *why* the New Testament writers quoted so much of the Old Testament. The New Testament writers are giving us God the Holy Spirit's *infallible* Interpretation of those Old Testament Passages. And without that *perfect* Interpretation- NOBODY would have understood that Jesus was the Messiah- and that He would have two separate “Advents” (Comings) *unless* God sovereignly revealed that to them.

And so, that is *exactly* what God did! And that is *why*, for example, Dr. Luke has so many older godly saints from the Old Testament in the Beginning of his Gospel Record. These people, like Zacharias, Elizabeth in Chapter 1, as well as Simeon and Anna in Chapter 2 lived their entire Lives under the auspices of the Old Covenant. Yet they KNEW- with absolutely NO Doubt- that John was the “Forerunner”; and that Jesus was the Messiah- without having ANY Knowledge of

a single Teaching by Jesus; without witnessing a single Miracle; without seeing either the Crucifixion or the Resurrection; and without reading a single New Testament Book!

For example, in **Luke 2:28-32**, God sovereignly revealed to Simeon, that the eight day-old Baby that was in Mary's arms was the promised Messiah; the fulfillment of Old Testament Prophecy; as well as HIS OWN PERSONAL SAVIOR:

**28 then he took Him into his arms, and blessed God, and said,
29 "Now Lord, You are releasing Your bond-servant to depart in peace,
According to Your word;
30 For my eyes have seen Your salvation,
31 Which You have prepared in the presence of all peoples,
32 A LIGHT OF REVELATION TO THE GENTILES, And the glory of Your
people Israel."**

... but without that sovereign Revelation- NO Jew was able then and NO Jew is able today- to understand the Connection between Jesus and the Messiah- Who had been promised to them. For example, **Romans 10:1-3** says,

**1 Brethren, my heart's desire and my prayer to God for them is for their
salvation.
2 For I testify about them that they have a zeal for God, but not in accordance
with knowledge.
3 For not knowing about God's righteousness and seeking to establish their
own, they did not subject themselves to the righteousness of God.**

... and **Romans 11:1-11** says,

**1 I say then, God has not rejected His people, has He? May it never be! For I
too am an Israelite, a descendant of Abraham, of the tribe of Benjamin.
2 God has not rejected His people whom He foreknew. Or do you not know
what the Scripture says in the passage about Elijah, how he pleads with God
against Israel?
3 "Lord, THEY HAVE KILLED YOUR PROPHETS, THEY HAVE TORN
DOWN YOUR ALTARS, AND I ALONE AM LEFT, AND THEY ARE
SEEKING MY LIFE."
4 But what is the divine response to him? "I HAVE KEPT for Myself SEVEN
THOUSAND MEN WHO HAVE NOT BOWED THE KNEE TO BAAL."**

5 In the same way then, there has also come to be at the present time a remnant according to God's gracious choice.

6 But if it is by grace, it is no longer on the basis of works, otherwise grace is no longer grace.

7 What then? What Israel is seeking, it has not obtained, but those who were chosen obtained it, and the rest were hardened;

8 just as it is written, "GOD GAVE THEM A SPIRIT OF STUPOR, EYES TO SEE NOT AND EARS TO HEAR NOT, DOWN TO THIS VERY DAY."

9 And David says, "LET THEIR TABLE BECOME A SNARE AND A TRAP, AND A STUMBLING BLOCK AND A RETRIBUTION TO THEM.

10 "LET THEIR EYES BE DARKENED TO SEE NOT, AND BEND THEIR BACKS FOREVER."

11 I say then, they did not stumble so as to fall, did they? May it never be! But by their transgression salvation has come to the Gentiles, to make them jealous.

... and this is WHY I teach that *any* Christian who wants Jews to be saved- MUST live their Lives- *in such a Way*- that their Relationship to God *causes* the Jews, who are chosen for Salvation, to be Jealous!

Now I realize that what I am preaching is very different from most of the Pastors on this Coast. But I have tried to give to you what the Bible actually says and NOT simply what is popular in our Day. But I want to give you yet another Example that I pray will help you to grasp what I'm saying. And this Example will be "*extra-biblical*"- meaning it is *outside* of the Bible.

Recently, I was listening to a pod-cast from Ben Shapiro, the Conservative Journalist, who co-founded the *Daily Wire Company*. Mr. Shapiro is a very knowledgeable and articulate man, who, by all accounts, has been called, a "*Child Prodigy*" since he was 5 years old. Mr. Shapiro is a full-blown patriotic American Conservative, who has helped lead the charge against the Evil of Transgenderism, as well as many of the other Social Problems that we all wrestle with- also happens to be a practicing orthodox Jew- who actually takes his "Jewishness" seriously.

And there are a number of videos on YouTube and elsewhere that feature John MacArthur and other Christian Leaders debating with Mr. Shapiro about the Validity of Jesus being the Messiah- *which he categorically rejects*.

The particular video I was watching had noted Christian Apologist, William Lane Craig presenting Jesus as the Messiah to Mr. Shapiro. And Brother Craig did a great Job of giving Mr. Shapiro enough Evidence to believe. But in response to Brother Craig, Mr. Shapiro, who holds himself out to be an "Expert" on Jewish Law, said,

“... from the Jewish Perspective, this Narrative [when Jesus said, ‘*I Am*’ to the High Priest at His Trial in **Mark 14:62** in response to the High Priest asking Jesus, ‘*Are You the Christ (the Messiah), the Son of the Blessed One (God)?*’] has some holes in sort of Jewish Philosophy. The Narrative begins with the Idea with that Jesus appears in front of the Sanhedrin and then claims to be the Messiah. Well, there’s nothing actually criminally in any of the Tractates [Jewish Law] that say that, ‘If You declare Yourself to be the Messiah’, this is not actually a Punishment a punishable Offense even. There are many Jews, including Bar-Kokhba [A 2nd Century Jew who, declared himself to be the Messiah and led an unsuccessful Revolt against the Romans] who have declared themselves to be messianic Figures. The real Gap here is that, in the Gospels, Jesus’ Vision of Himself as the Messiah is completely different from the prior Vision [the Old Testament Prophecies] of what the Jewish Messiah is; and is actually outside the Scope of how Jews describe the Messiah or really have ever described the Messiah. The Messiah in Judaism has always been a political Figure who is destined to do certain things: restoring the Kingdom of Israel; maintaining Control of that Kingdom; bringing more Jews back to Israel. All of these things are considered, sort of, political Things that the Messiah does. But the idea of the Messiah as (the) ‘Embodiment of God’ [God in human Flesh]- that’s foreign to Jewish religious Philosophy, going all the Way back to the Beginning. So, even the Idea that the Sanhedrin would be questioning Him [Jesus] in those terms and would get from that that what He means is that, ‘*I am God*’ which would be a much more punishable Offense, presumably that’d be actual Blasphemy. It’s an oddity.”²

Now this is precisely why the Apostle Paul said this in **Romans 11:25**:

For I do not want you, brethren, to be uninformed of this mystery—so that you will not be wise in your own estimation—that a partial hardening has happened to Israel until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in;

Now the phrase, “**the Fullness of the Gentiles**” has been interpreted by some to mean the “full NUMBER of Gentiles”³ - in the sense that there is a set number of Gentiles who will be saved. And that may be true- but I would suggest to you that that is NOT the *best* Way to understand what Paul was saying here. And my Logic is this:

² <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hL-zJzE5cIA>

³ The “Christian Standard Bible” says this in **Romans 11:25**.

The New Covenant is Permanent- the Old Covenant was NOT

There is NO Doubt that the Nation of Israel brought God *some* degree of Glory under the Old Covenant. But it was *limited*. And it was limited- on Purpose. And that *purposeful* Limitation was placed on Israel- precisely because it was NOT going to carry over into the New Covenant! The Old Covenant primarily involved a single Nation (Israel) and a single group of people (the Jews).

But the New Covenant involves people out from **“EVERY Nation and Tribe and Tongue” on earth (The Revelation 14:6)**! And the crescendo of Praise and Adoration to the King from the mouths of hundreds of millions of redeemed souls- infused with the many different languages and dialects of those many people- ALL magnifying the infinite Value of Jesus Christ- brings God infinitely MORE Glory than anything Israel or the Jews by themselves could ever do!

But the Jews of the 1st Century, for the most part simply didn't see this. And the New Testament says they were blinded; they were **“partially hardened”**- by God- *on Purpose*- until something marvelous happens with the Gentiles.

But we must also understand that the Fact that God closed their Minds to Jesus- proves that those who rejected Him- were NOT chosen by God for Salvation! In other words, we cannot simply say, *“Well, the Reason they didn't believe is because God wouldn't let them and therefore- it wasn't their Fault!”* Because that faulty Logic was dismissed by the Apostle Paul when he wrote this in **Romans 9:18&19:**

So then He has mercy on whom He desires, and He hardens whom He desires. You will say to me then, "Why does He still find fault? For who resists His will?"

Now this is asking, *“Since God is Sovereign- if God doesn't open our Hearts- then no one can be saved; but God would be Unjust to damn them!”* That's a great Question that people ask even today. But look at Paul's inspired Answer:

Romans 9:20&21

20 On the contrary, who are you, O man, who answers back to God? The thing molded will not say to the molder, "Why did you make me like this," will it?

21 Or does not the potter have a right over the clay, to make from the same lump one vessel for honorable use and another for common use?

Now be careful that you see what Paul was asking here. Paul was NOT asking, *“Is it true that God choses some but not all?”* He was NOT asking that

Question because he just taught in the preceding verses that God absolutely DOES do that. No, Paul was asking, “Does God have the RIGHT to chose some but not all?” In other words, Paul was asking, “Is God unrighteous to do this?” or “Is this Choosing outside of God’s Authority?” Now look at Paul’s inspired Explanation to that Question from

Romans 9:22-24:

22 What if God, although willing to demonstrate His wrath and to make His power known, endured with much patience vessels of wrath prepared for destruction?

23 And He did so to make known the riches of His glory upon vessels of mercy, which He prepared beforehand for glory,

24 even us, whom He also called, not from among Jews only, but also from among Gentiles.

So, we MUST come to the Conclusion that people who do NOT come to Jesus- reject Him because they DO NOT see Jesus as being the Treasure of the Universe. And the Reason they don’t see- is because...

... the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelieving so that they might not see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God. (2Corinthians 4:4b)

But then some might say, “*But God sovereignly overrode that Blindness and opened SOME minds and they were saved. So, God had to make a conscious Decision to NOT open the minds of everyone.*” And the Bible answers that Question like this:

Romans 9:15&16

15 For He says to Moses, "I WILL HAVE MERCY ON WHOM I HAVE MERCY, AND I WILL HAVE COMPASSION ON WHOM I HAVE COMPASSION."

16 So then it [Salvation] does not depend on the man who wills [human Will and Choice] or the man who runs [human Works], but on God who has mercy. [Clarification added]

So, God alone is Sovereign in Salvation! And that is WHY God alone receives ALL Glory; Honor; and Praise for saving unworthy rebels by what He alone did for them! And so, the Jews, who remained Lost, did NOT see and savor and repent because they COULDN’T. But they COULDN’T because THEY DIDN’T WANT TO! And so, all satan did was to help keep them in their willful

Blindness. And this is what is called, “*Moral Inability*”- The “non-elect” DO NOT see; savor; and repent- because they CAN’T; and they CAN’T because they DON’T WANT TO! And that means that anyone who rejects Jesus CANNOT blame God. They reject Jesus because they want to- NOT because God forced them.

Okay, but what about the “Elect”? They didn’t want to embrace Jesus, either. True. But in His Mercy- God chose to sovereignly override their Rebellion and Unbelief with His Grace- so that they WANTED to repent and trust in Jesus. And that sovereign “Overriding” of the Rebellion and Unbelief of those whom God chose to save- is called, the “Miracle of the New Birth”.

So, the people who reject Jesus- Jew or Gentile- bear full Responsibility for that Rejection. They are fully Accountable for their Rebellion and will, eventually, be damned by God- so they may magnify the Glory of God’s Justice on them- as they burn in Hell.

But the people who embrace Jesus- Jew or Gentile (who are JUST as Sinful and JUST as undeserving as the others)- do so ONLY because God chose to sovereignly *impose* Himself on them; radically *change* their Nature; and *cause* them to love and obey Jesus. And that sovereign Imposition is called, “Grace”.

But what about the Fact that God chose the Jews? The Apostle Paul answered that Question in **Romans 9:1- 8:**

1 I am telling the truth in Christ, I am not lying, my conscience testifies with me in the Holy Spirit,

2 that I have great sorrow and unceasing grief in my heart.

3 For I could wish that I myself were accursed, separated from Christ for the sake of my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh,

4 who are Israelites, to whom belongs the adoption as sons, and the glory and the covenants and the giving of the Law and the temple service and the promises,

5 whose are the fathers, and from whom is the Christ according to the flesh, who is over all, God blessed forever. Amen.

6 But it is not as though the word of God has failed. For they are not all Israel who are descended from Israel;

7 nor are they all children because they are Abraham's descendants, but: "THROUGH ISAAC YOUR DESCENDANTS WILL BE NAMED."

8 That is, it is not the children of the flesh who are children of God, but the children of the promise are regarded as descendants.

When we see Jews rejecting Jesus- we must NOT despair. Why? Because God the Holy Spirit through the Apostle Paul infallibly said,

... it is not as though the word of God has failed. For they are not all Israel who are descended from Israel; nor are they all children because they are Abraham's descendants, but: "THROUGH ISAAC YOUR DESCENDANTS WILL BE NAMED. "That is, it is not the children of the flesh who are children of God, but the children of the promise are regarded as descendants.

So, it was NEVER that God chose ALL the Jews- even under the Old Covenant. How do we know that? Three Reasons:

1. That's what Paul says in **Romans 9**
2. All the Jews DIDN'T love and serve God
3. God killed Jews- because they DIDN'T believe

God chose SOME of the Jews- just like God has chosen SOME of the Gentiles. And we can see that in the 1st Century, the overwhelming majority of the Jews- *especially* those in Leadership- were NOT chosen- and therefore, they did NOT embrace Jesus.

So, the Jews who were WRONG about the Messiah and who did NOT believe in Jesus and come to Him for Salvation- died in their Sins and are in Hell today. But before that Generation of Jews died- many of them lived to see the *cataclysmic* Judgment of God poured out on unbelieving Israel; and *especially* on the City of Jerusalem; and the Temple that was there!

2. They were Wrong about Sin

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.

Now Matthew's own personal Testimony of Salvation at the "**Tax-Collector's Booth**" was given here in verse 9. But then the Scene changes and in verse 10- Matthew puts the Reader in a "**house**"- with Jesus *inside* the house-

“**reclining at the Table**”. Now Matthew didn’t tell us how we got from the Tax-Booth to the House- but Dr. Luke did. And so, in **Luke 5:27-29**, we read:

27 After that He went out and noticed a tax collector named Levi sitting in the tax booth, and He said to him, "Follow Me."

28 And he left everything behind, and got up and began to follow Him.

29 And Levi gave a big reception for Him in his house; and there was a great crowd of tax collectors and other people who were reclining at the table with them.

Now I told you before that the Apostle Matthew was also called, “Levi”. And he was also the “**son of Alpheus**”- just like one of the James’ was. So, Levi was the brother of the James who was the “**son of Alpheus**”.

And so, to celebrate his Salvation- Mathew (Levi) did what he knew to do- he threw a Reception for Jesus at his house! And who was invited to the Party? Well, he wanted to invite Jesus- because Jesus had just forgiven him and saved him. But Matthew also invited other tax-collectors; as well as the thugs that the collectors hired to force the Jews to pay their taxes.

You see, Matthew wanted these Sinners to be saved like he was. And that’s why they were there. But there was another Group that was there that Day- but they were NOT invited and they were NOT in the House. They were standing outside the House. And when the Disciples of Jesus walked up to them- they complained about this Scene with Jesus and all those Sinners!

So, this Reception inside the House had the very *worst* people in town there. And right in the middle of it all- was Jesus- reclining at the Table. And that means that Jesus was eating and drinking with the terrible riff-raff of the City! But it also meant that He was talking with them as well. And the Jewish rulers were about to go crazy about this. And that’s because they were Wrong about what they THOUGHT they understood about Sin.

So, the religious Hypocrites reasoned to themselves that if Jesus really was God- WHY would God be in the Company of these all wicked men- who made a very good Living- imposing Taxes and Violence- even Death against the “chosen people of God”?

Now the most common Objection to all the Truth that I told you from **Romans**- which is the biblical Teaching that says that God has chosen from before the Foundation of the world to rescue SOME unworthy Sinners from the terrible Wrath of God with His Divine Mercy; while giving the rest His Justice- is that this just isn't “Fair”.

And on a human level that is true- in the eyes of sinful, wicked fallen Man; who has *limited* Vision; and *limited* Comprehension of the Plan and Majesty of God- it *isn't* "Fair".

But what those people who object to Sovereign Election seldom acknowledge is that what would be "Fair" would be to allow ALL Sinners to die in their Sin; and for God to save NOBODY! That would be "Fair- because we would be *getting what we Deserve!*" So, for those who want God to be "Fair"- may I suggest that you teach that the ONLY thing that would classify as God being "Fair" would be for God to only give to Man what Man deserves- the full brunt of His Righteous Fury!

So, in a nutshell, what I'm saying to you is that there are Aspects about God that are NOT "Fair" from a human Perspective. And those Aspects will NEVER be "Fair"- like God's Mercy; and His amazing Grace; and His Kindness toward undeserving Rebels by forgiving and saving them.

And what we need to realize, dear friends, is that God is NOT interested in the least with having to meet up with some arbitrary Standard of "Fairness" that wicked and sinful Humans have developed. God is interested in being God; and in being Almighty. And God is *passionately* interested in being rightly and fully known; and loved; and admired; and feared; and enjoyed; and obeyed and worshipped!

But what most people overlook in their speed to denounce what the Bible has always taught- is that the Grace of God- BY DEFINITION- means that God doesn't save anyone based upon some Action on *our* part. God saves Sinners based solely on His Own Sovereign Will and BY His Grace and THROUGH the Gift of saving Faith!

And while many in the modern Church scream out, "*That's NOT Fair!*"- they neglect to realize that because God chose to set up Salvation like this- it doesn't matter how Bad someone has been! It doesn't matter how many Sins we may have committed; or how long we have dwelt in Sin! Jesus saves Sinners based on one Criteria- the Fact that, BEFORE the Foundation of the World; BEFORE they were born; and BEFORE they did ANYTHING "Good" or "Bad"- God chose to "set His Love" on some of the guilty Sinners and chose to save them! So, the Reason Jesus welcomes evil Sinners into His Forgiveness and Salvation- is because He sees them as being "Gifts" that His Father *gave* to Him; and people who the Holy Spirit sovereignly *drew* to Him! And because Jesus loves His Father *perfectly*- Jesus receives ALL that the Father gives Him and does NOT refuse ANYONE! And that is why Jesus said this in **John 6:37**:

All that the Father gives Me will come to Me, and the one who comes to Me I will certainly not cast out.

... and God had already given Matthew to Jesus.

But there is the great Possibility that some of the other Tax-Collectors and thugs that worked for them had also been given to Jesus by God the Father- and THAT is why Jesus was eating and drinking and talking to them!

Now it is important to say that Jesus was NOT agreeing with their Sin. He NEVER did that with anyone. But they were Sinners. And in case you've never noticed- Sinners- *sin*. That's what Sinners *do*. Fish *swim*; birds *fly*; and Sinners- *sin*. So, don't be surprised when you see Sinners *sinning*- because, in Reality, they can't do anything else. EVERYTHING a lost Sinner does- is Sin.

But their Sin will cause them to burn in Hell forever. So, in His Mercy God saves "Some". Now I hope and pray that "Some" means "MOST". I personally agree with Charles Spurgeon, who believed and taught that, before Jesus comes back- the MAJORITY of people will be saved. I really hope that's true- because I don't want my *worst* enemy to go to Hell. Hell is terrible and it is forever- so, I wouldn't want a dog to go to Hell. And so, if anyone I know goes to Hell- they will go with me wrapped around their leg- begging them to repent.

But we always need to remember that God is Sovereign. So, if God has chosen you to be saved- then He will move Heaven and Earth to "see to it" that you are rescued from eternal Damnation! And all three Persons of the Trinity are going to sovereignly *cause* you to be marvelously washed; and wondrously cleansed; and graciously redeemed; and mercifully adopted into God's Family! And NONE of that is "Fair!"

Now there is a "Fine Line" sometimes about hanging around with Sinners- so you can win them to Jesus. And most of the people I know who have tried that- usually end up sinning with the lost Sinners- which is the *worst* thing anyone can do. But I eat with lost people all the Time. I spend time with lost people. But I'm NOT *agreeing* with their Sin. And I'm certainly NOT *participating* in Sin with them. I'm trying to make Jesus look *irresistible* to them; and call them out of Sin and into the Light of Forgiveness and Salvation.

And that is what saved people are called to do. And that is *why* Jesus was in that House- eating and drinking with the *worst* people in town. But the Reality that we always need to keep in mind is that Salvation did NOT stop us from sinning. Sadly, saved people still sin.

Now it is true that we sin- LESS than we used to. We *hate* our Sin and we *love* God and so, we have "*Union with Christ*". So, we fellowship- ongoingly- with God the Holy Spirit and God's people. We spend Time with God's Word; and we spend Time in Prayer. We also avail ourselves of the "*Means of Grace*" that empower us to "Walk this world in White".

But we still Sin. So, the ONLY difference between saved people and the Lost- is that our Sins have been forgiven- while theirs has NOT.

Now the “Name of the Game” as it pertained to the Pharisees; Scribes; Sadducees; Essenes; and Zealots was “*Righteousness*”. That’s all they talked about and all they worked for. But the Righteousness they were trying to obtain required them to obey the law of Moses- *perfectly* in Thought, Word, and Deed- 24/7/365- with Joy! So, even though they worked *harder* than any Group on earth to become Righteous- they were actually further AWAY from true Righteousness than Sinners, who knew nothing about it.

So, they were forbidden to get anywhere near to a Sinner- wrongly thinking that Sin would rub off on them if they were in proximity to it. And even though those people knew full well that they failed at keeping God’s Law *perfectly*- they continued to teach as though they were. And that is called, “*Self-Deception*”.

And they wrongly thought that God would be pleased with them- above the others- yet Jesus NEVER said anything Good about them. So, they were completely deceived about the eternal Issues that mattered the MOST- like God; and Grace; and Mercy; and Salvation; and Sin; and Forgiveness. So, the sad Reality was that the men who were trying *harder* than anyone else to be Righteous- were actually the *worst* people on earth. The men who were trying *harder* than anyone else to be Righteous- were the biggest Sinners!

You see, under the Old Covenant- the Focus was on getting rid of Sin. And so, they stoned people to death who had sinned. And by killing the Sinners- they removed Sin from their Midst. But under the superior New Covenant- the Sinner is saved. And Sin is still removed- but you save the person alive!

But in order for Sinners to be saved- they MUST hear and believe and obey the Gospel. But in order for them to hear the Gospel- the Gospel MUST be preached. But in order for the Gospel to be preached- there MUST be someone who goes to the Sinner and preaches the Gospel to them! So, if you stay away from the dirty Sinners- how will they hear? And if they don’t hear- they won’t believe. And if they don’t believe- they won’t be saved. So, it is important that we connect the Gospel to the Sinner. And that is done today by several “Means”:

- Letters
- Tracts
- Radio
- TV
- Telephone
- Internet
- In Person

... but in some Way- we MUST get the lost Sinner in contact with the glorious Gospel of Jesus Christ- if souls are to be saved.

Now we have been hearing that- our entire Lives. In fact, it is ALL we have ever known- because it is a New Covenant Truth. But that simply wasn't done under the Old Covenant. The Old Covenant was a "*Come and See*" Covenant- where the lost Sinner had to come to Israel; to Jerusalem; and to the Temple- in order to see the Glory of God.

But the superior New Covenant- is a "*Go and Tell*" Covenant- where we are *commanded* to go into all the earth and preach the Gospel to every Creature- every single Sinner! But until Jesus did this- it was unheard that a saved man- *especially* someone as Holy and Righteous as a Prophet or a Messiah- would have anything at all to do with a wicked Sinner.

One of the main Hinderances to Salvation to the 1st Century Jew- was the fact that BEFORE anyone can be saved- he MUST admit; confess; and believe he is Lost. Before anyone can be forgiven- he must confess; admit; and believe that he NEEDS to be forgiven- which is saying he is a lost Sinner. And that means that he MUST admit; confess; and believe that ALL the Effort he has put forth to be Righteous was NOT getting the Job done. The 1st Century Jew had to admit; confess; and believe that ALL the animal Sacrifices; ALL the religious Duties; ALL the memorization of Scripture; ALL the Labor and Effort to earn God's Favor- had failed!

So, this was way beyond normal human fleshly Pride; Arrogance; and Self-righteousness. This was *spiritual* Pride; *spiritual* Arrogance; and *spiritual* Self-Righteousness- that the individual Jew had developed by actually DOING things to cause God to approve of him. So, for him to be saved- he would have to admit; confess; and believe that ALL of those noble; good; nice; and religious Things had caused him to be further AWAY from God than a tax-collector!

So, in order for the 1st Century Jew to be saved- he had to admit; confess; and truly believe that keeping the Commandments that came to Moses from God was NOT the Pathway to his own Salvation. He had to admit; confess; and truly believe that ALL his Efforts at being Righteous had failed miserably and he was JUST as Lost; and JUST as needful of Forgiveness and Salvation as the worst person in that House that Day! He had to come to realization that the Pathway to Salvation was admitting and confessing and truly believing that He was a wicked Sinner- who deserved Damnation and there was NOTHING he could do to change that! And in that holy Desperation- the Jew had to cry out to God for a Mercy that He had not earned; A Grace that he did not deserve and a Forgiveness that he was NOT entitled to and that God was NOT obligated to give!

But in addition to all of that- a Jew in the 1st Century was required by God to NOT merely repent and trust in God. That worked until Jesus came. But now that Jesus had come- the Jew would NOT receive either Forgiveness nor Salvation by repenting and trusting in God- he HAD to repent and trust in Jesus or he would NOT be forgiven and saved!

So, the Man the religious elite said was a “devil” and that got His Power to perform Miracles from “Beelzebul”- was the very Man that the Jew HAD to come to- in order to receive Forgiveness and Salvation!

And the Truth of the matter is that there was NOTHING in 1st Century Judaism that would allow for that. But it is also true that there is NOTHING in 21st Century Judaism that will allow for it either! So, as far as Forgiveness of Sin and Salvation are concerned- there is NO difference between Judaism and Islam; Buddhism; or Hinduism! Which means that the Jews of the 1st Century were Wrong about Sin.

Now I’m going to stop here- but, Lord willing, next week- we will complete this miniseries on Jesus saves Sinners by looking at how Wrong the 1st Century Jew was about Forgiveness and Salvation. But we will also look at what Jesus meant when He said,

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