

John 6: 60 NASB

“Does God select some and reject others?”

⁵³ “So Jesus said to them, Truly, truly, I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His blood, you have no life in yourselves. . . .⁵⁸ This is the bread which came down out of heaven; not as the fathers ate and died; he who eats this bread will live forever.’⁵⁹

These things He said in the synagogue as He taught in Capernaum.

⁶⁰ “Therefore many of His disciples, when they heard *this* said, ‘This is a difficult statement; who can listen to it?’⁶¹ But Jesus, conscious that His disciples grumbled at this, said to them, ‘Does this cause you to stumble?⁶² *What* then if you see the Son of Man ascending to where He was before?’⁶³

It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh profits nothing; the words that I have spoken to you are spirit and are life.⁶⁴ But there are some of you who do not believe.’ For Jesus knew from the beginning who they were who did not believe, and who it was that would betray Him.⁶⁵ And He was saying, ‘For this reason I have said to you, that no one can come to Me unless it has been granted him from the Father.’

⁶⁶ As a result of this many of His disciples withdrew and were not walking with Him anymore.

⁶⁷ So Jesus said to the twelve, ‘You do not want to go away also, do you?’⁶⁸ Simon Peter answered Him, ‘Lord, to whom shall we go? You have words of eternal life.⁶⁹ We have believed and have come to know that You are the Holy One of God.’⁷⁰ Jesus answered them, ‘Did I Myself not choose you, the twelve, and yet one of you is a devil?’⁷¹ Now He meant Judas *the son* of Simon Iscariot, for he, one of the twelve, was going to betray Him. And He was saying, ‘For this reason I have said to you, that no one can come to Me unless it has been granted him from the Father.’”

In today's text, Jesus said he chose certain people.

This and other Bible statements lead many to think that God picks some people to be saved and “the rest be damned.”

Prominent leaders such as Augustine of Hippo, John Calvin, and many contemporary preachers, taught/teach predestination.

According to them, God elected some folks to go “upward” and others “downward.”

Free will plays no factor.

The Lord predetermines everything.

Some Scriptures seem to confirm that pre-election idea:

Ephesians 1:3-5 NIV

“Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in the heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing in Christ. For he chose us in him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight. In love he predestined us to be adopted as his sons through Jesus Christ, in accordance with his pleasure and will . . .”

Ephesians 1:11 NIV

“In him we were also chosen, having been predestined according to the plan of him who works out everything in conformity with the purpose of his will . . .”

You know what it means to choose.

You’ve been chosen for things.

Although you may have been thinking at the time that you chose your mate, chances are that your mate chose you.

We get chosen to sit on juries, to play on teams, and attend parties.

Jesus prayerfully selected his 12 disciples.



Ephesians appears to say that God chose us before the world began.

It tells something else:

“In love he (God) predestined us to be adopted as his children . . .”

Predestine means;

“mark out ahead of time.”

Does God “mark” and favor certain folks?

We all have our favorites.

We’d rather hang out with some than others.

Does God have preferred people?

Has God chosen certain ones to be saved and others to be lost as Augustine and Calvin apparently thought?

Add Romans 9:22 to the mix.

“What if God, choosing to show his wrath and make his power known, bore with great patience the objects of his wrath--prepared for destruction?”(NIV).

Are certain folks objects of God’s wrath and destined to hell?

Some people seem like no-good connivers.

Years ago, someone sent us this story:

An older lady gets pulled over for speeding.

Older Woman: Is there a problem, Officer?

Officer: Ma'am, you were speeding.

Older Woman: Oh, I see.

Officer: Can I see your license please?

OW: I'd give it to you but I don't have one.

Officer: Don't have one?

OW: Lost it, 4 years ago for drunk driving.

Officer: I see... Can I see your vehicle registration papers please?

Old Woman: I can't do that.

Officer: Why not?

OW: I stole this car.

Officer: Stole it?

OW: Yes, and I killed and hacked up the owner.

Officer: You what?

OW: His body parts are in plastic bags in the trunk if you want to see

The officer slowly backs away and calls for back up. Within minutes five police cars circle the woman's car. A senior officer slowly approaches, clasping his half-drawn gun.

Officer 2: Ma'am, could you step out of your vehicle, please!

The woman steps out of her car.

OW: Is there a problem sir?

Officer 2: One of my officers told me that you have stolen this car and murdered the owner.

OW: Murdered the owner?

Officer 2: Yes, could you open your trunk, please.

The woman opens the lid, revealing an empty trunk.

Officer 2: Is this your car, ma'am?

OW: Yes, here are my registration papers.



The officer is stunned.

Officer 2: One of my officers claims that you do not have a driver's license.

The woman digs into her handbag and pulls out her license and hands it to the officer. The officer examines the license. He looks puzzled.

Officer 2: Thank you ma'am, one of my officers told me you didn't have a license, you stole this car, murdered and hacked up the owner.

OW: Bet the liar told you I was speeding, too.

Do you want this woman in heaven with you?

Did God create people like that

just so he could send them to hell?

Is that what the Bible means when it talks about "vessels of wrath made for destruction"?

On the other hand Paul wrote of being chosen:

(Galatians 1:15, 16 NIV)

"God, who set me apart from birth and called me by his grace, was pleased, to reveal his Son in me so that I might preach him among the Gentiles."

So we have:

A) God choosing, predestining, and setting apart certain people.

B) And we have God creating people for wrath.

Does not sound good, does it?

These matters illustrate why we need to read all Scripture, not just our favorite parts.

Paul wrote something else about the “objects of God’s wrath:”

Ephesians 2:3b-5

“Like the rest, we were by nature objects of his wrath. But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions—it is by grace you have been saved.”



Before we accept Christ, we’re all objects of his wrath.

We weren’t born that way; Jesus said:

“unless you repent and become like little children, you can’t enter the kingdom of heaven.”

We become objects of his wrath through adult sin, pride, and rebellion.

But thank God, through Jesus’ death on the cross, God’s grace and love reach all of us.

What about the choosing part?

Let’s see if we can’t find an explanation.

Recall Galatians 1:15, 16 NIV?

“When God, who set me apart from birth and called me by his grace, was pleased, to reveal

his Son in me so that I might preach him among the Gentiles.”

Paul was guilty of Christian blood.

The Lord mercifully chose Paul, and called him.

For what reason, did God select Paul?

He chose me: “to reveal his Son in me,” said Paul, “so that I might preach him among the Gentiles.

The Lord picked Paul to preach about Jesus.

Did that choosing give Paul an automatic ticket to heaven?

Not according to Paul; **Philippians 3:10-12 NIV:**

“I want to know Christ and the power of his resurrection and the fellowship of sharing in his sufferings, becoming like him in his death, and so, somehow, to attain to the resurrection from the dead. Not that I have already obtained all this, or have already been made perfect, but I press on to take hold of that for which Christ Jesus took hold of me.”

Paul couldn’t claim the prize because he could have lost it by being unfaithful to Jesus, by giving up on Christ.

(13a) “I do not consider myself yet to have taken hold of it.”

Though God chose him to preach, Paul knew that unfaithfulness could disqualify him.

Paul needed to remain faithful to the end.

We'll talk more about choosing and predestination next week, God willing, but today one word in our text needs our attention. The term “belief” deserves consideration.

Many people think Jesus was a great religious leader and prophet.

Yet how many believe that he was the unique—the one and only Son of God?

Our text deals with the “belief” problem.

The great prophet Moses “arranged” manna in the wilderness for a million hungry Israelites.

But Moses died and lay buried on Mt. Nebo, east of the Jordan River.



Mt. Nebo

In contrast, Jesus came from God, stating that fully accepting him gave folks eternal life.

Of himself and his teaching, he declared:

“he who eats this bread will live forever.”

And,

62 “What then if you see the Son of Man ascending to where He was before?”

Jesus would ascend to heaven and unite with God.

Some disciples didn't believe Jesus' divinity and they stopped following him.

The twelve believed him and left everything to be his disciples.

All except Judas.

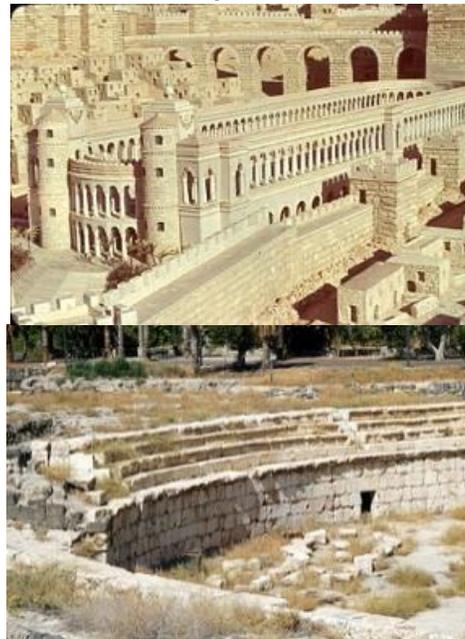
I think Judas knew, but he loved money more than he loved God.

Money is a real stumbling block, isn't it?

For years, I've pondered questions about Judas: Jesus chose Judas to be the group's treasurer and Judas stole money from the bag.

Judas didn't like to see big outlays.

I'll never know the answer this side of heaven, but circumstantial evidence leads me to think Judas had a gambling problem and needed money to cover his debts.



At Jerusalem's Hippodrome, they raced horses, chariots, etc.

When there's competition, folks tend to bet.

Photos show (top) scale model of 1st century Jerusalem at the HOLYLAND Hotel in 1980 Jerusalem (Copyright HOLYLAND Corp). The Hippodrome was located not far south of the Temple. Easy access. Photo of Hippodrome excavated ruins by Bob & Norma ,1980.

Envy affects faith, too!

Many people so fixate on rivals they never take time to consider who Jesus is and they never fully submit to God with love, honor, praise, and thanksgiving.

Sibling rivalries can be especially damaging.

Jesus’ four half-brothers seemed very envious.



John 7:5 tells that they did not believe in Jesus.

The four even persuaded Mary to think that her first son Jesus was mentally imbalanced.

Jesus’ resurrection finally convinced them.

John 20:17 (NIV) is very telling:

Jesus said (to Mary Magdalene), “Do not hold on to me . . . Go instead to my brothers and tell them, ‘I am ascending to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God.’ ”¹

Matthew 28:10 records that Jesus instructed Mary Magdalene and the other “Mary” that they should tell Jesus’s brothers to go to Galilee, where they could see the risen Jesus.

I pray that we’ll all change our stubborn ways, accept God’s mercy in Christ, and fully commit to Him.

God is not willing that **“any should perish, but that all should repent,”** (2 Peter 3:9).

Our loving God wants you in his kingdom. He began making arrangements for you in Christ before the Creation.

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¹ See Matthew 13:53-58, Mark 3:21-35, John 7:5-13