

## Faith—Gift and Choice

---

Faith is a gift of God. God purposed to save sinners before the world began. Jesus, God's precious, chosen, elect One, was foreordained to be a lamb slain before the world began (1Pet 1:18-2:6; Rev 13:8). God ordained spiritual blessings to be in Christ and through Christ (Eph 1:4-7). God also ordained that the eternal benefits of Christ's gracious work be received *by faith* in Christ (2Thes 2:13). God chose the elect *in Christ* before the world began (Eph 1:4; 2Tim 1:9; Matt 25:34). Election is in accordance with God's foreknowledge of the elect believers (Rom 8:29-33; 1Pet 1:2). In the fullness of time, God's Son came to the world and lived a sinless life, died for the sins of the world, and rose again from the dead. After Jesus' ascension, God sent the Holy Spirit to testify of Christ and build His church (John 15:26; Matt 16:18). God calls (1Pet 5:10), reproves (John 16:8), invites (Rev 22:17), draws (John 6:44; 12:32-33), leads (Rom 2:4), guides (Acts 8:31), reasons with (Isa 1:18; Acts 17:2; 18:4; 18:19; 24:25), preaches to (Rom 10:13-15; 1Cor 1:21), exhorts (Acts 2:40), testifies (1Jn 4:14), teaches (Col 1:28), persuades (Acts 28:23; 2Cor 5:11), beseeches (2Cor 5:20), convinces (Titus 1:9), and warns (Ezek 3:18-19; 33:7-8; Col 1:28) sinners. God hereby gives repentance and faith through His goodness, His word, His Spirit and His children, revealing who Jesus is, opening sinners' hearts to Christ (2Tim 2:25; Rev 2:21; Heb 12:2; Acts 14:27; 16:14; Matt 16:16-17; Acts 16:14). No sinner can have faith in God without God. God is the source and object of spiritually effectual faith (Rom 10:17; Acts 14:27; Heb 12:2; 2Pet 1:1).

Faith is a choice of man. God ordained spiritual blessings to be in Christ and through Christ (Eph 1:4-7). God also ordained that the eternal benefits of Christ's gracious work be received *by faith* in Christ (2Thes 2:13). In accordance with this divine plan, God *gave* spiritual blessings to the believing elect in Christ *before the world began* (Eph 1:1-4; 2Tim 1:9). They *receive* these benefits and are saved *in time after* hearing and believing the gospel (Jn 5:24; Eph 1:13; 2:11-13; Col 1:21; Gal 3:26-28; Eph 1:13). Before faith, the elect are described as being in Adam, enemies of God, dead in trespasses and sins, by nature the children of wrath, without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, without God in the world, and afar off (Rom 5:10; 1Cor 15:22; Eph 2:1-13; Col 1:21). God so loved the world he gave His only-begotten Son to be the propitiation for the sins of the whole world (Jn 3:16; 1Jn 2:2; Heb 2:9). God offers salvation to all people, commanding them to repent toward God and believe on the Lord Jesus Christ (Matt 28:19-20; Mk 16:16; Acts 17:30; 20:21). God holds sinners responsible for having faith in Christ, since faith is the only acceptable response to His grace (Rom 4:16). God does not believe for sinners. God does not force faith or the desire for faith upon sinners against their wills (Gen 4:6,7; Joshua 24:15; 1Kings 18:21; Eze 18:20-32; Matt 11:20; 23:37; Luke 7:30; 12:48; Acts 7:51; 17:30; Rev 22:17). God calls sinners to believe and is angry with them and condemns them for their lack of repentance and faith (Matt 11:20-22; Mk 11:22; 16:16; Jn 3:16, 18, 36; Jn 4:4-29; 16:9; Rom 1:18-2:8; 3:3-18; 9:30-33; 1Pet 4:17-18; 2Thes 1:4-9; 2:9-12; Heb 2:1-4; 3:7-13; 10:22-31). God desires for all people to believe and be saved (Isa 5:1-4; Eze 18:32; 33:11; Jn 3:16; 2Pet 3:9; 1Tim 2:4).