

CrossRoads Baptist Church
September 19, 2007 6:30 p.m.
II Peter 3:9
Will of God Series #2

The Will of God is For All to be Saved

One of the raging debates in Southern Baptist life, if not a broader evangelical scope, is the debate over the election of man. Distinctly called Calvinism verses Arminians, this debate can become very sticky and complicated to even the most serious Bible student. While it is not my intention to display, as if I even knew what all to put on the table, all the tenets and debates of each view; however it is my goal tonight to try to bring light to question; “Is it God’s will for everyone to be saved?”

The purpose of Peter’s writing here:

1. To assure the saints that God’s judgment will come though seemingly delayed;

The verse before us is in the context of Peter writing in the mid-60s to a group of persecuted Christians who were being warned about the heresies being taught by false teachers and assuring them that the second coming of Jesus is sure.

Peter reminds them God has judged in the past fallen angels (3:4); the old world (3:5) and Sodom and Gomorrah (3:6,9). He will judge the sins of this present age and he will save those who are righteous like he did with Noah and Lot. But the question is why is this judgment lingering in our day when our day is like Noah’s and Lot’s?

So Peter tells them that God is not slow or tardy; his delay is not due to his unwillingness to perform. God’s timetable is not ours. He does not count time as we do. He stands outside of and above time. The delay of God (as we view it as a delay) is not an indication that He has forgotten His promises or that He is unfaithful in His promises. He is not slack.

2. That His delay is so more would repent. Thus, verse 9.

In reference to this verse, let me make these six statements:

1. It is not man’s will to be saved.

Romans 3: 11 “There is none who understands; there is none who seeks after God.”

Isaiah 53: 6 “All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned, every one, to his own way”

John 1: 13 “who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.”

Man cannot save himself.

2. It does not mean that everyone will be saved.

Some have taken this verse to mean that everyone will be saved because it is God’s will for that to happen and no man can stop the will of God.

Psalm 33:11 “The counsel of the Lord stands forever;..”

Isaiah 14:27 “The Lord God Almighty has purposed; who can turn him back?”

The belief that all will be saved is called universalism.

William Barclay believes this:

“Ever and again there shines in Scripture the glint of the larger hope. We are not forbidden to believe that somehow and some time the God Who loves the world will bring the whole world to Himself.”

While it is true that nothing will stop the will of God; the verse here does not refer to the will of God in that way. The word in verse 9 is *boulomai*, not *thelo*.

Boulomai expresses also the inward predisposition and bent from which active volition proceeds; hence it is never used of evil people.

Boulomai denotes the unconscious willing or an inner decision or thinking while *thelo* indicates conscious willing and denotes a more active resolution urging on to action.

Boulomai has reference to God's disposition or His nature rather than to a specific act or plan.

This word is used 26 times in the New Testament and is translated with Joseph in Matthew 1:19 that “he minded to put her away privately.”

Jesus used it in the garden’s prayer, “If you are willing, remove this cup from me.”

Centurion in Acts 27:43 was “willing to save Paul.”

3. It is true that God wants and has done everything necessary for everyone to be saved.

God has done everything necessary through the work and person of Jesus Christ for anyone to be saved. The cross is sufficient.

I Timothy 2:4 “God wants all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.”

Ezekiel 18:23 “Have I any pleasure in the death of the wicked, says the Lord God, and not rather that they should turn from his ways and live?”

God is a just God and while he takes no joy in the death of the wicked; their death still shows forth the glory of God.

God is no less glorified whether a person is saved or lost.

John Calvin comments on “Not willing that any should perish” writing that “So wonderful is His love towards mankind, that He would have them all to be saved, and is of His own self prepared to bestow salvation on the lost.”

4. But for a man to be saved he must respond to the call of God.

There are two parallel tracks on which the locomotive of salvation must successfully run: the call of God and the response of man.

The will of man was not created to oppose Christ, but to glorify Christ. God is still glorified even in human choices.

He does not coerce the human will to make decisions; but in all decisions made by a free man, God is glorified.

Some argue that if Christ died for everyone and everyone is not saved, then the death of Christ is wasted. But let me remind you that it is not just the death of Christ that saves; it’s the death of Christ applied that saves.

In the Passover, it was not just the blood of the lamb slain that saved the first born in every house; but it was the blood of the lamb who had been slain and whose blood had been applied to the door post that saved the first born.

I believe in the foreknowledge of God that he knows all who will be saved; but that does not mean they are saved. A person is only saved when the blood of the slain Lamb is applied to their life.

5. All who respond with pure faith will be saved.

Acts 2:21 “And it shall come to pass that whoever calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved.”

Acts 10:43 “...through His name, whoever believes in Him will receive remission of sins.”

Romans 10:13 “Whosoever calls upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.”

Revelation 22:17 “And the Spirit and the bride say, “Come!” And let him who hears say, “Come!” And let him who thirsts come. And whoever desires, let him take the water of life freely.

6. Since we don't know who will respond, we need to share with all the gospel.

Mark 16:15 “Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature.”

We have no way of knowing who the elect of God are. Until a person is born again, the elect and the non-elect look, talk, smell and act the same. But we are to share the gospel with everyone so that all may be saved.

We are not obedient and pleasing to our Lord if we don't seek to preach it to every creature on this planet.