Chosen by God, Called to Believe

Guest: Scott Roberts

SATURDAY, November 14, 2026 at 8am CT

Host: David Wheaton 0:07
How to reconcile God's sovereign election of believers with man's responsibility to believe. That is the topic we'll discuss today right here on TheChristianWorldview Radio program, where the mission is to sharpen the biblical worldview of Christians and to proclaim the good news of Jesus Christ. I'm David Wheaton, the host, and our website is TheChristianWorldview.org. It's an age-old debate, and people on all sides get heated up over it. The issue contains two truths revealed in the Bible. The first truth is this, before time, God in His mercy and grace has chosen and determined those whom He will save through the gospel of Jesus Christ. Truth number two, man is responsible for receiving or rejecting the gospel of Christ. Scripture teaches both, sometimes side by side.

Consider John chapter 1, verses 12 and 13. Verse 12 says, as many as received Him, Christ, to them He gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in His name. There's man's responsibility. The very next verse, verse 13, who were born, these new believers, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God. There's God's sovereignty. Now, while God's thoughts are higher than our thoughts, He put these parallel truths in Scripture to better understand salvation and to give Him glory. Helping us better understand these truths of scripture is our guest, Scott Roberts. Scott is an elder and pastor at Bayfair Baptist Church in Ontario, Canada, and the author of the men's ministry book, Warrior Disciple, along with New in Christ, a simple guide for new Christians. Scott recently wrote a column entitled Election and Predestination. Did God choose us or did we choose Him? That brings clarity to this important and often discussed issue. Let's get straight to the first segment of the interview with Scott Roberts.

Scott, thank you for coming on TheChristianWorldview Radio program for the first time. Before we get into the topic of God's sovereign election, tell us about your background, how God brought you to saving faith in Christ, and what you do now.

Guest: Scott Roberts 2:44
Well, thanks again for having me, David. It's a pleasure to be on your show today. Way back when I was like 14, 15 years old. So I was living with my mom, my stepdad, way out in the country, and we were moving into a new house. I stayed the week with one of my older sisters, who at the time was already married and had a few kids of her own. So I attended her church and I kind of knew the gospel. I knew phrases like, Jesus died for my sins. But I think that's where I just really heard and understood that. And God just opened my eyes spiritually to where I was able to think, okay, maybe this has something after all. I remember being in my sister's house, sleeping on the couch, a nd just in my own way, I don't remember my exact words, but I was just kind of thinking, okay, God, I'm yours now. I want to follow you. So we moved into the new house, and since we're way out in the country, this was close to the St. Louis, Missouri metro area. We were only able to pick up one TV channel, and that was Channel 24 in St. Louis, which happened to be an all-Christian TV

network. It was fantastic. So until my stepdad was able to put a big antenna on the top of the house, I would just inundated all His Christian programming. Well, since I was a brand new Christian, I just soaked all of this in kids programming, preachers, apologetics, through the John Ankerberg show. I took in all of this and I just ate it up. I loved it. Of course, I properly learned what the gospel was. Of course, we can see the basis of it in 1 Corinthians 15, verses 3 and 4. Jesus died for our sins, He was buried, He rose from the dead, and those who trust in Him for eternal life and they repent and believe in Him will be saved. So that's how we came to know Christ.

Host: David Wheaton 4:43
Always so encouraging to hear how God brings someone to saving faith. Thank you for sharing that, Scott. Now let's get into our topic today.

You've written an article on your website called Election and Predestination. Did God choose us or did we choose Him? And I when I read this article, I thought it was very well written and clear. In that article, you say few biblical doctrines create as much confusion, debate, and sometimes even fear as election and predestination. Christians hear words like Calvinism, Arminianism, and I'm going to add another one, provisionism, sovereignty, topics like free will, election, foreknowledge, and it can quickly feel as though we have wandered into a seminary classroom instead of simply reading our Bibles. That's why we want to keep it simple and clear today. But election did not begin with John Calvin. Predestination was not invented by Augustine. These are Bible words you write. You go on to say Paul writes that God, quoting here from scripture in Ephesians 1, chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, and that He, quote, predestined us for adoption to Himself as sons through Jesus Christ. First Peter 1, Peter calls Christians, quote, elect. Jesus speaks about those whom the Father has given Him in John 6.

We'll get into some of these passages today. Romans 8 tells us that those whom God foreknew, He also predestined, called, justified, and glorified. So you say, concluding this opening part of your article, we cannot simply avoid the subject because it is difficult. The question is what scripture means when it speaks this way. I completely agree with your concluding sentence here that we should not avoid this subject because it's difficult or debatable. So that's my question for you. Why is this doctrine of election important to understand it, even if trying to reconcile the truths of God's sovereign election with the sinner's responsibility to repent and believe, maybe not possible for our finite minds to fully grasp?

Guest: Scott Roberts 7:08
The terms election and predestination are all over the scripture. Their doctrines, even when times we don't see them in scripture, are in there very, very clearly. that God chooses certain individuals. You look in the Old Testament all throughout history, of the Hebrews and the nation of Israel, choosing the apostles, over and over and over, we just see this repeated pattern of God choosing people. And not once does somebody choose God. That's kind of interesting to think about. But the thing is, election is very, very important. Why? Well, the thing is, God has revealed it in scripture. And the thing is, whenever we talk about something in scripture, we have a responsibility to understand it as faithfully as we can. Now, people hear the Word election, their minds automatically think of John Calvin in the 1500s. Well, the thing is it wasn't invented by him. As I said, it's in the Bible. God talks about the elect. And it certainly wasn't developed all throughout

church history by saints like Augustine or anyone else. Let's go to scripture. Now, Paul tells us in Ephesians 1:4 that God chose us in Christ before the foundation of the world. Romans 8, 29 and 30 speaks of those whom God foreknew that He predestined them, call them, justify them, and glorify them as well. And John 6: 37, Jesus Himself speaks of those whom the Father has given Him. Now, the thing is, these are biblical truths. And the thing is, we shouldn't avoid them just because they're difficult or controversial.

Now, if God thought that they were important enough to reveal, then we should consider them important enough to study and to just be honest with ourselves and think, what does scripture as a whole talk about this topic? Now, at the same time, scripture teaches that human beings are responsible for their choices. God commands everyone to repent and believe the gospel. So the thing is, we see God's sovereignty and human responsibility operating together throughout scripture. We see people making real choices. They're making bad choices and sinful choices. But God uses those for His sovereign divine plan. You could look at Joseph's brothers towards the end of Genesis. Now they intended evil against Him, but God intended that same event for selling Joseph off for slavery for His good, according to Genesis 50: 20. At the crucifixion. Wicked men willingly put Jesus to death. But in Acts 2: 23, it says that Christ was delivered up according to God's definite plan and foreknowledge. So the men who crucified Christ, they were genuinely responsible for their actions.

But at the same time, those actions fulfill God's sovereign purpose for salvation. So the Bible affirms both truths without explaining every detail of how they harmonize together. For me, the key is recognizing our inability to fully comprehend something and realize that just because we can't comprehend it fully, it doesn't mean it's contradictory. The thing is, we are finite creatures with small little pea-sized brains in the grand scheme of things. In discussing theology like this, we're trying to understand the grand, huge workings of an infinite God. Now, Deuteronomy 29, it says that the secret things belong to the Lord, but the things revealed belong to us. So we should study what God has actually revealed and believe what He has said, and then resist the temptation to take scripture and reshape it somehow to make it fit neatly into our limited understanding of things.

Guest: Scott Roberts 11:08
So election should ultimately give us a greater confidence in God and His saving purposes and have greater humility before Him.

Host: David Wheaton 11:17
Well said Scott Roberts is our guest today. Okay, reading on in your column, you say, Suppose two people hear exactly the same gospel message, or sitting at the same event, and the gospel is being preached from the front. They hear that God is holy, that they are sinners, that Christ died for sinners and rose from the dead, and that everyone who repents and believes in Him will be saved. One person sitting there believes, the other rejects Christ. You ask the question, why? So then you give the Arminian answer, generally places the final difference in the individual's response. So the Arminian would say, God gives grace to be able to understand. Christ is offered to both people there, and each person ultimately has the final ability to accept or reject Christ. God, in His infinite knowledge and foresight, knows beforehand which one of them will believe, and on the basis of that foreknown faith that God knew, and by that faith, God quote, elects them then. Then you contrast it to the other main view, the Calvinistic or Reformed answer as to why one was saved and one

wasn't, it goes deeper. It asks why the first person wanted Christ when the second person did not. Was the believer actually spiritually wiser or more intelligent or something? More humble, more receptive? Did he make better use of grace? Was there something within him that caused him to choose correctly? Scripture gives a very different explanation. God had mercy upon Him, the one who repented and believed. Then you quote Romans 9, verse 16. So then it depends not on human will or exertion, but on God who has mercy. You say that one sentence, God who has mercy, takes us directly into the heart of biblical election. So salvation, don't let me put words in your mouth here, is a matter of God having mercy on some. He doesn't have to save anyone, but in His goodness and grace, He actually chooses to save some because of His mercy. Your response to that.

Guest: Scott Roberts 13:34
The Word that you said a while ago when you were quoting the blog article that I wrote, it's the why behind it. I just want to stress right now that virtually all Calvinists and virtually all provisionists and Arminians, we believe in the gospel of Jesus Christ. Think of that as the what that God is a holy God. We have sinned against Him, therefore separating us from a place of relationship with Him, and we fully deserve His wrath. And it's because of the love and mercy of God that He sent His Son Jesus to die for our sins, who was buried and He wrote from the dead, to pay that penalty of sin that we deserve. We agree on the biblical gospel. So we can't look across the aisle and think, oh, they're nothing but heretics. We have to be fair and we have to be honest with one another in doing that. What we may disagree with is the why behind it. We have to take a good, honest look and see what God says about us in the Bible.

There's a concept that we bandy about called total depravity. And there's also something called total inability. They're very similar. All of us as humans, by default, we have that sin nature. We are born with it. And because of that, we do not have the ability to choose God. Now, what we from the Reform camp or the Calvinistic camp, we call that a place of spiritual death. We are spiritually dead. Now, Ephesians 2: 1, the apostle Paul says that we are dead in our trespasses and sins. So that is our spiritual inability to bring ourselves to God apart from His grace. Now, Paul obviously wasn't saying that unbelievers are physically dead, or that they can't think, reason for themselves, make decisions, or perform actions. The thing is, unbelievers, they make meaningful choices every day. But the issue is that our fallen nature affects our desires, our very affections, our wills so profoundly that if we are left to ourselves, we will never willingly come to Christ in genuine repentance and saving faith. Very important passage in Romans chapter 3, could be the most important chapter in all the Bible. That explains it all.

But early on, Romans 3: 10 - 18 talks about the nature of man. And it says specifically in verse 11 that no one seeks for God. And that kind of is amplified and echoed by Jesus when He said in John 6.44 that no one could come to Him unless the Father draws him. Now, notice that Jesus says can, speaking of ability, rather than simply will come to Me. Think of a lion and a plate of grass. Now, the thing is a lion, he's physically capable of walking over and eating this grass off of this plate. He's able to do that thing. No one's chained him down, no one's caged him up, no one is preventing him from physically going there and doing so. But the thing is, put a big old steak there, a big old chunk of meat beside that grass. And the lion will choose the meat because that is what corresponds with his nature. He is a meat eater. So, in a similar way, fallen human beings can make voluntary choices according to their desires, but the desires are always corrupted by sin.

Now, Jesus says in John 3: 19 that people love darkness rather than light because their works are evil. So that is the problem. So the thing is the natural person, he doesn't love the true God and he doesn't desire to submit to Him at all. First Corinthians 2:14 says that the natural person does not accept the things of the Spirit of God. And the thing is, he can't understand them spiritually.

Host: David Wheaton 17:43
Our guest today is pastor and author Scott Roberts. He wrote a column on the election in predestination, our topic today that we have linked at TheChristianWorldview.org The column will also be published in the spring issue of TheChristianWorldview Journal. We'll take a short break and then I'll ask Scott to explain the Arminian view of conversion and much more. I'm David Wheaton. You are listening to TheChristianWorldview Radio program.

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Host: David Wheaton 20:17
Welcome back to TheChristianWorldview. I'm David Wheaton. Be sure to visit TheChristianWorldview.org where you can sign up for our weekly email, TheChristianWorldview Journal print publication, order resources for adults and children, and support the ministry. Our topic today is how to reconcile God's sovereign election of believers with man's responsibility to believe. Our guest is Scott Roberts, pastor, author, and columnist. Scott, you explained how the reformed or Calvinistic interpretation of Scripture is that God's effectual grace enlivens a dead sinner, and then the sinner believes. Could you draw the distinction with the Arminian view?

Guest: Scott Roberts 21:01
Typically affirm the seriousness of humanity's fallenness, but they teach something called provenient grace, restoring the sinner's ability to freely respond to that grace. So John Wesley kind of described provenient grace like this that imagine there's a house, and that is salvation. So God puts His grace beforehand, kind of like a front porch that we as sinners are able to step on and be able to come to that door of salvation. And not until you open that door of salvation are you saved. But the thing is, Arminians kind of interpret God's prevenient grace as something that enables us to come to God, but in doing so, we have the ability to reject God. But the thing is, what the Bible sees elsewhere, like Jesus says, those who come to Me, I will not lose. No one can grasp them out of My hand.

So the God-given ability that they kind of push with prevenient grace really doesn't work because once we are up to that point, according to the Bible, we are Christ. We are His. When we go back to talking about being spiritually dead, Ephesians 2 and verses 4 and 5, it says God made us alive together in Christ, even when we are dead in our trespasses. That fully belongs to God. We just weren't merely needing a little kind of pushy short kick. We were dead, just like being born again. We need that spiritual rebirth. We need to be made alive in Christ, as it says in John chapter 3. I think of Lazarus in John chapter 11. Now, Lazarus did not cooperate in his resurrection at all. Jesus called him the man who had been totally dead to come out. And because of the full power of God working in him, he was able to be alive and walk again. So I believe that that in a physical format just shows a powerful illustration of God's effectual call on salvation. Because God gives people spiritual life and the sinner corresponds with genuine faith and repentance. So when God makes

people alive in Christ, our inclination is no longer to make a choice and not choose God, but our inclination is to choose Christ at that point.

Host: David Wheaton 23:40
So God regenerates the unbeliever, and at that moment the nature and that will of that person is changed so that they now have the capacity and will believe and repent and believe in the gospel. Is that accurate to say? Yes. Okay. There's a chart online that shows a comparison of the views of different some of the things you just brought up between Calvinism, Arminianism, and Provisionism. And provisionism came out, it was more of a recent invention, as far as I understand, by Leighton Flowers, a professor at Trinity Seminary. He's really well known for that particular view, kind of similar to Arminianism, but different. What you were just talking about on total depravity of manner, sometimes it's called the total inability. We're not as totally depraved as we could be. We're not murdering people every day.

But you're saying we're totally unable to be able to respond to the gospel unless God regenerates, makes alive our hearts to be able to see and believe, as you mentioned with Lazarus there. He was dead in the tomb. The Calvinistic view is that man is spiritually unable to believe without God's effectual grace. That's what you just described. The Arminians say man is spiritually unable to believe without provenient grace, which you describe as kind of like an invitation, kind of come near the door of salvation. God gives some grace there. Whereas the provisionist, as far as I understand, there is not grace. There's no necessity of God's grace. It says here in this chart that man is sinful, they agree with that, but remains able to respond to God's gracious revelation. So God is gracious just by revealing Himself and revealing the gospel, and it's up to the sinner to respond to that. So there are key distinctions here and important ones to understand what Scripture actually teaches.

Scott Roberts with us today here on The Christian Worldview. Scott, let's get into the issue of another biblical term called foreknowledge. And in 1 Peter chapter 1, it says Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ to those who reside as aliens scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithnea, who are chosen, there's the elect Word, according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, by the sanctifying work of the Spirit, to obey Jesus Christ and be sprinkled in His blood. Matthew 7. Not everyone who says to me, Lord, Lord, will enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of my Father who is in heaven will enter. Many will say to Me in that day, Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name? And in your name cast out demons, and in your name perform many miracles, and then Jesus says He will declare to them, I never knew you, this idea of I never knew you relationally, personally, that you're one of my own. Amos 3, you mentioned this passage in your article, when God tells Israel, You only, you Israel, have I known of all the families of the earth. Known is a relational nearness He's talking about there. John 10, I am the good shepherd. I know My own, and My own know Me. And then getting to though the really the foundational passages in Romans chapter 8, where you call the golden chain of redemption, as it's often called. For those whom God foreknew, He also predestined to become conform to the image of His Son, so that He would be the firstborn among many brethren. As far as I understand, that's referring to our sanctification. God foreknows believers, He predestines them to be conform to the image of His Son in sanctification. Now go to verse 30 of chapter 8, and then it says this, and these whom He predestined, He also called. There's election, and these whom He called, He also justified, and these whom He justified, He also glorified. Notice carefully what Paul says you write. He does not say the

faith which God foreknew, like God foreknew who would have faith. He does not say that God looked into the future, discovered which people would choose Jesus, and then predestined those people because of the choice He had seen them make. No, it's God determined beforehand that He would set His relational and saving love on certain people, not because of our merit or that we were better than anyone else, but because of God's gracious choice and mercy. Could you, Scott, explain more about foreknowledge? Because that Word gets reimagined a lot. And it's not simply about God knowing the future, but about setting His saving mercy and love on those He's going to save.

Guest: Scott Roberts 28:27
You provided a very excellent summary of that. It's a very important Word foreknowledge that we have to pay attention to, which whether in the Old Testament, the Hebrew Word is Yada, when we have in the New Testament, the Greek Word is proginosko, and it means to know. It doesn't mean to see something. So you gave a few examples from the article that I wrote. I'll just kind of dig in a little bit more, like I always talk about Amos 3:2. God does say to Israel, You only have I known of all the families of the earth. Now, obviously, God knew of all of the civilizations, all the kingdoms, all the nations around the world, Egypt, Babylon, Assyria, the people in America for that matter. God knows of all these people, knows them individually, knows their hearts, their minds, their past, present and future. But why does God say that He knows Israel like this? Only you have I known.

So you take this as to mean a special, intimate knowledge of that they know of Him and He knows of them. You could say, like in Jeremiah 1:5, where God tells Jeremiah, before I formed you in the womb, I knew you, that God had a deep personal, intimate relationship with him. Same thing with the New Testament. When all the peoples will stand before Christ on judgment day, He talks about it in Matthew chapter 7, and they kind of protest, Lord, Lord, you know, haven't we cast out demons in your name and done many miracles in your name? So obviously Christ knows them and what they have done. But as you had already said, that He will say to them, I never knew you. It's that personal relationship level. Well, it's the same thing in this regard, too, that God will have a foreknowledge, a foreknowing of these people, knowing that He will be in a saving relationship with them. When you go back to Romans chapter 8, it says, For those whom He foreknew, He also predestined.

So He knew who He was going to be in an intimate relationship with Him, who He was going to choose, and He predestined them. That golden chain from justification, sanctification, and glorification. And that God will see anyone He saves through all of those steps in the salvation process. But it's not just a foreseeing things like God will look in a crystal ball and just think, okay, who's going to choose Me? Oh, I see a David. Yes, He's going to choose Me here in 19 blah, blah, blah. And I think, okay, yeah, I guess he'll be one of my people. No, He already foreknew them. He knew them beforehand. And that's something that should blow us away. Before we were in the womb, God knew us and had that intimate relationship with us, whether or not we knew it before the moment of conversion or not. So to me, that's just like spectacular. It's awesome to think about that. God would do that.

Host: David Wheaton 31:52

It is awesome to think about that. And no believer should be upset at God or think He's unjust. That the really the answer is why would He choose anyone? Why would He even choose me? He didn't have to choose anyone. He would have been totally just for every sinner in the world to be judged and go to hell for eternity for violating, for rebelling, for treason against Him. But in His goodness and grace, He chooses some to be saved. And that's something to marvel at. And actually, the apostle Paul in Romans 9 anticipates the questions that are going to come from what you just explained, Scott.

Paul quotes God by saying, I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I have compassion. Paul concludes in verse 16, so then it depends not on human will or exertion, in other words, that's not how we're saved, but it depends on God who has mercy. And then immediately you write, Paul anticipates an objection. Well, wait a second here, quoting Romans 9: 19, why does God still find fault? For who can resist His will? If it's all up to God, then we can't be personal responsible for not choosing Him, because He had to choose me, and if He didn't choose me, I can't be saved. Basically, man saying, Well, you're not fair, God. Here's how God answers the question. He doesn't even really answer the question. He says, Who are you, O man, to answer back to God? He then uses the biblical picture of a potter having authority over His clay. In other words, who are we to tell God how He should operate and who He should save and who He should pass over?

These truths that we've been discussing of God's sovereign elections according to His gracious foreknowledge and choice for His purposes, for His glory. And yet at the same time, the Bible says all over the place, there's a command to repent and believe in the gospel. For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life. God is declaring to men that all people everywhere should repent. For whoever will call on the name of the Lord will be saved. Romans 10 13. There's verses like that all over scripture putting the responsibility on man that we're responsible for our choice, but then you think, well, wait now, did we have a choice?

Host: David Wheaton 34:23
So how do you reconcile these parallel truths? Or the Bible teaches them both God's election and man's responsibility to believe, and that there are consequences of not believing. How do we reconcile those or or live with that tension? Scott.

Guest: Scott Roberts 34:41
There will always be that tension. As I alluded to earlier, our little pea-sized brains can't really fully comprehend all of this. Illustration that John MacArthur once gave to reconcile and put all this together. He asked the crowd who wrote the book of Romans? The Apostle Paul, that's the right answer. You think God, the Holy Spirit inspired it. That is also an accurate answer. You can kind of go like to a third step and say Tertius, the actual scribe who wrote it down. But the whole point was thinking about Paul and God both somehow cooperating and writing the book of Romans. And the same thing with the rest of the scripture. But we really can't comprehend how all that fits in together. Well, the same thing here. It's that how does all of that work? That people have responsibility, but still God chooses people. Well, going back to Romans 9, as you quoted quite a bit right there, God has mercy on whom He has mercy, and He has wrath on whom He has wrath. The sinful, fallen nature of us, we like to hit back at God and ask questions. Well I don't like this. I don't

understand it. This doesn't seem fair. And in all fairness to Armenians and pre-visionists, even as Calvinists, we kind of think this way. It's like, God, what why is this? Why did you make some of us?

As it says in Romans 9, vessels of wrath, and others vessels of mercy. But the thing is, all of this is above our pay grade. It's way beyond our comprehension. And the verse that you quoted, God says, Who are you to talk to Me that way? God is the potter, we are the pottery. He is the creator, we are just a creation. So in order to display the full weight of the glory of God and glory of just everything that is about God, His holiness, His perfection, His righteousness, His wrath, His justice. So His love, His mercy, and His grace, all of that. He chose to have it shine through in a way that He structured history around this. In the grand scheme of things, when we are in eternity future, we can look back in hindsight and think, wow, God, even though I did not deserve it, He showed His wrath on the cross, putting His wrath on the Lord Jesus Christ for the sins that we deserve punishment, and He gave us mercy because He did not give us the punishment that we deserved.

Host: David Wheaton 37:32
We also know the attributes, the character of God, that God is perfectly just, He's perfectly good. So we don't need to worry about someone standing before God on judgment day and God not being able to defend Himself because He was somehow unjust. He somehow had a bad system that, oh, it didn't work out the right way because you did something wrong. No, we know that He is perfect in His judgment, His justice, His mercy, His goodness. And even though we can't maybe understand how these two parallel tracks fit together of God's sovereign election and man's responsibility, scripture teaches them both. And when an unbeliever hears the gospel, his responsibility or her responsibility is to repent of their sin and believe it. We don't know who God has elected. We're just called to preach the gospel, and then the sinner who hears it is just called to believe.

This doctrine of God's sovereign election of sinners to be saved, and yet man's responsibility and the fact that we have difficulty reconciling those two things together, we get all tied up in knots over this one. But if you think about it, other really key doctrines of scripture, let's say the doctrine of the Trinity. How can God be one God, but He's in three persons? Try to put those two things together, but scripture teaches both. It doesn't use the Word Trinity, I know, but the Trinity is presented all over scripture: God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. How do you reconcile those two things? Or another key doctrine of Scripture. How is Jesus Christ truly God when He came to earth and yet truly man? Go ahead and try to put those two seemingly contradictory things together. No one can explain exactly how that played out, or even the doctrine of sanctification, becoming more like Christ.

Scripture in one sense says, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling, the very next verses, for it is God who works in you both to will and to work for His good pleasure. You mentioned the example of Scripture. Who wrote Scripture? Was it God or man? Almost every key core doctrine of Scripture has a tension that our finite minds, I don't think, can fully resolve. But that being said, it's good, I think, as we're doing today, to dig further into. We want to get closer and closer to understanding the mind of God. So if you can give more glory and praise to Him and understand Him better and praise His attributes and His goodness and all these various things. Now, let's bring this down to a concrete example in Scripture, Scott, with the salvation of the Apostle Paul. Scott will explain the details of Paul's conversion after this break, which will help us better

understand God's sovereign election and man's responsibility. Final segment coming up. I'm David Wheaton, and you are listening to TheChristianWorldview Radio program.

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Host: David Wheaton 42:35

Welcome back to The Christian Worldview. I'm David Wheaton. Be sure to visit TheChristianWorldview.org where you can sign up for our weekly email, TheChristianWorldview Journal print publication, order resources for adults and children, and support the ministry. Our topic today is how to reconcile God's sovereign election of believers with man's responsibility to believe. And our guest is Scott Roberts, pastor, author, and columnist.

Let's bring this down to a concrete example in Scripture, Scott, with the salvation of the Apostle Paul. Here, Paul, he's a religious man, a Jew. He's trained from the best rabbi of that time. He doesn't believe in Christ in any way. As a matter of fact, he not only does not believe that Christ is the Messiah, he's out persecuting, even holding the robes of those who were stoning Stephen. And then he gets letters from Jerusalem to go to Damascus, to travel to Damascus on the road, to go and persecute Christians there. He's on his way to do ill and evil in Damascus. And then as we all know the story from the book of Acts, that on the road to Damascus, light comes from heaven, Christ appears to him, and he is born again. Amazingly, how would you explain the conversion of the Apostle Paul as helping us understand God's election and yet man's responsibility.

Guest: Scott Roberts 44:05

I think just a great illustration of how this works before his conversion. Paul was not searching for Jesus. He wasn't trying to weigh, well, you know what, maybe He is the Christ. Uh huh, maybe what these disciples are saying is true. No. he was out there. He was advocating for the imprisonment, the persecution and murder of believers. He was as hard set against the early Christians as could be. And then of course as he was going to Damascus, it took Jesus entering into his life sovereignly stopping him, blinding him and saying, hey, you're going to be my disciple now. And it completely changed the direction of his life.

So it wasn't Paul's wishes. It was completely Christ working in his heart, regenerating him, putting his life in a completely different direction. And he says in Galatians chapter 1: 15-16 that God had set him apart before he was born. So God already had His plan for the Apostle Paul. He called him by His grace and that He was pleased to reveal His Son to him. So that is a remarkable description of His divine initiative. It takes God reaching down and converting him to be able to do this. Still at the same time Paul throughout his letters he talks about the responsibility of man to be able to do it. He talks about faith and repentance and a belief and not only that but post-conversion things like obedience. And of course we as Christians believe that if we are genuinely say that we'll produce those good works will be the fruit of good works which will bring obedience in our hearts that we still have that responsibility. So throughout all of Paul's letters we see that tension being played out.

Host: David Wheaton 46:10

I have many more questions I wanted to get to, you talked about how understanding and believing God's sovereign election should actually increase our desire for evangelism and lead to greater worship because

that's a common thing people will say well if it's up to God then why do you have to go out and evangelize? Well you can have the confidence that you just need to speak and the results are up to God.

So I won't ask you that question there, but I want to close by reading the last paragraph or so of your columns I thought it was very good to summarize things well. He said election was never intended to produce proud people who enjoy winning theological arguments. Instead understanding and believing this should produce humbled Christians why are you saved if you're a believer ultimately you cannot point to your intelligence, your wisdom, your great humility, your good judgment, or superior spiritual instincts. You were dead and God made you alive. You were blind and God gave you sight. You were running from Him and He brought you home. And I think if as an aside personal comment here if that's so I see my own life I was going the wrong way I was blind I was going where I wanted to go was not going God's way but it was but God intervened to stop and to show me His grace and mercy and give me the faith to believe the gospel you go on to say in your column the doctrine of election if properly understood is deeply comforting your salvation began in the heart of God before you were born.

The Father chose a people, the Son came to redeem those people, believers. The Spirit, Holy Spirit gives them life and brings them to faith those whom God foreknew He predestined those He predestined He called and those He called He justified and those He justified He glorified. Ask who takes the initiative in salvation, ask who raises the spiritually dead, ask who opens hearts, ask who grants repentance and faith, ask who draws sinners to Christ, ask who chose His people before the foundation of the world then read the answer scripture gives again and again and you quote Jonah 2: 9 salvation belongs to the Lord Yahweh this is the heart of the doctrine of election and it gives every ounce of glory for our salvation to the God who saves. Scott, what would be your final exhortation for both Christians listening and those let's say aren't believers listening today as to what they should do with this conversation.

Guest: Scott Roberts 48:45
God's election should bring us to a place of greater worship. That it's not in our slick abilities to talk or evangelize or to say I was able to lead 39 people to the Lord in my entire life. Well no it's all God working through us. He chooses to use us, but it's His work and that should give us a greater sense of worship and awe and respect of Him. For unbelievers I would just invite you to just see what scripture says that in Romans 3:23 it says all have sinned fall short of the glory of God and that Romans 6:23 says for the wages of sin is death but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

We deserve death but the thing is since we have been loved by God that we have a way of being reconciled to God, forgiven by God and that is through faith in Jesus Christ. It's because of what Jesus has done for us He lived that sinless life that we could not live. He died , paying the punishment for our sins and He rose from the dead for our justification to show that He has power over death. So I would invite any nonbelievers out there to put your faith in Jesus and not your own self, not your own good works. We do not make it into heaven by the good that we do because we do no good. All have sinned and sinful people cannot be in the presence of God. But God is able to forgive us of our sins by having faith in Jesus Christ. So whenever you're listening to this I would just invite you cry out to Jesus just admit that you're a sinner ask Him for forgiveness and turn away from belief in yourself and turn to Him for eternal life.

Host: David Wheaton 50:42
So well summarized thank you for ending on that powerful reminder of what the gospel is and we pray that many listening today would come to repent of their sin and place their faith for forgiveness and eternal life and who Jesus Christ is and what He did for us on the cross. Scott, thank you for coming on the program today. We just wish all of God's best and grace to you and your ministry.

Guest: Scott Roberts 51:05
Thank you so much, David. It's been a pleasure God bless you as well.

Host: David Wheaton 51:09
Again Scott Roberts has been our guest today. You can find links to Him at our website TheChristian Worldview.org. If you missed any of the program you can hear a replay at our website or contact your local radio station to see if they air the program at other times you can also open the podcast app on your phone and search for the Christian worldview with my name David Wheaton to subscribe to the program for free. As Scott said even though we will never fully understand on this side of heaven how God's sovereignty perfectly intertwines with man's responsibility to believe we hope today's program helped clarify these rich truths of scripture God has chosen those He will save by His mercy and grace and man is still called to believe in the gospel and will be held accountable for rejecting it.

After being inspired to write about these truths in the book of Romans Paul concludes with this wonderment and praise in Romans 11 starting in verse 33 O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God how unsearchable are His judgments and unfathomable His ways for who has known the mind of the Lord or who became His counselor or who has first given to Him that it might be paid back to Him again? For from Him and through Him and to Him are all things. To Him be the glory forever Amen .

Thank you for joining us today on the Christian worldview and for your support of this nonprofit radio ministry. Until next time think biblically live accordingly and stand firm the mission of the Christian worldview is to sharpen the biblical worldview of Christians and to proclaim the good news of Jesus Christ. We hope today's broadcast encouraged you toward that end.

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Quarterly Print Publication - *The Christian Worldview Journal*

The winter issue of TheChristianWorldview Journal features a compelling article by Michael Clary about how pastors should be informing congregants about issues in the public square. And Todd Friel writes about pursuing all of life to the glory of God. There is also a devotional for your family to do on Thanksgiving and Christmas.

The Christian Worldview Journal is a print and digital publication designed to sharpen your biblical worldview on current events and issues of the faith. There is also a resource catalog for adults and children that make for meaningful Christmas gifts. The journal is sent to Christian Worldview Partners as a thank you for their support. Plus, we are offering the winter issue complimentary to first-time requests. To become a Christian Worldview partner or request your free issue, go to TheChristianWorldview.org or call 888-646-2233 or write to P.O.Box 401 Excelsior, Minnesota 55331.

Recommended Resource - Manger in Danger

We didn't want our kids doing all these secular games like Elf on the Shelf. We really wanted to put Christ front and center at Christmas, and they actually engineered a wooden manger that's small enough to hide. And then I wrote a family devotional with 25 devotions for every day in December leading up to Christmas, including Christmas Day, that you can do in about seven minutes. And the devotions are just loaded with the deity of Christ and the gospel.

That was Pastor Grant Castleberry describing Manger in Danger, a 25-day devotional for families with children ages four through twelve. The devotional begins December 1st, and you can receive it for a donation of $30 or more to TheChristianWorldview. To order, go to TheChristianWorldview.org or call 888-646-2233 or write to P.O.Box 401 Excelsior, Minnesota 55331.