

The background of the image shows ancient Roman ruins. A large, circular stone structure, possibly a well or a niche, is the central focus. To the right, a cross-shaped structure is visible, partially obscured by a semi-transparent overlay. The entire scene is bathed in a warm, golden light, suggesting a sunset or sunrise. The word "ROMANS" is superimposed in a large, black, serif font across the center of the image.

ROMANS

Another Transition/Hingepoint ... (Romans 9-11)

- 1. Romans 1-3: God's glory – Everyone falls short and lives in sin.**
 - doctrine of *Total Depravity*.
- 2. Romans 6-8: God's love - In Christ God declares us righteous and is preparing us for heaven, even through suffering.**
 - doctrines of *Justification & Sanctification*.
- 3. Romans 9-11: God's sovereignty and my responsibility.**
 - doctrines of *Election* & *Free will*.

Last Week: Suffering Confidently: (Romans 8:28-39)

In Jesus, I can suffer confidently because:

1. I know how my story ends (v.v. 28-30)

28 And we know that God causes everything to work together for the good of those who love God and are called according to his purpose for them.

29 For God knew his people in advance,

- *and he **predetermined** them to become like his Son, so that his Son would be the firstborn among many brothers and sisters.*
 - *30 and having predetermined them, he **called** them to come to him.*
 - *and having called them, he also **justified** them.*
 - *and having justified them, he also **glorified** them.*

This Week: Election - Has God chosen me, or do I choose Him?

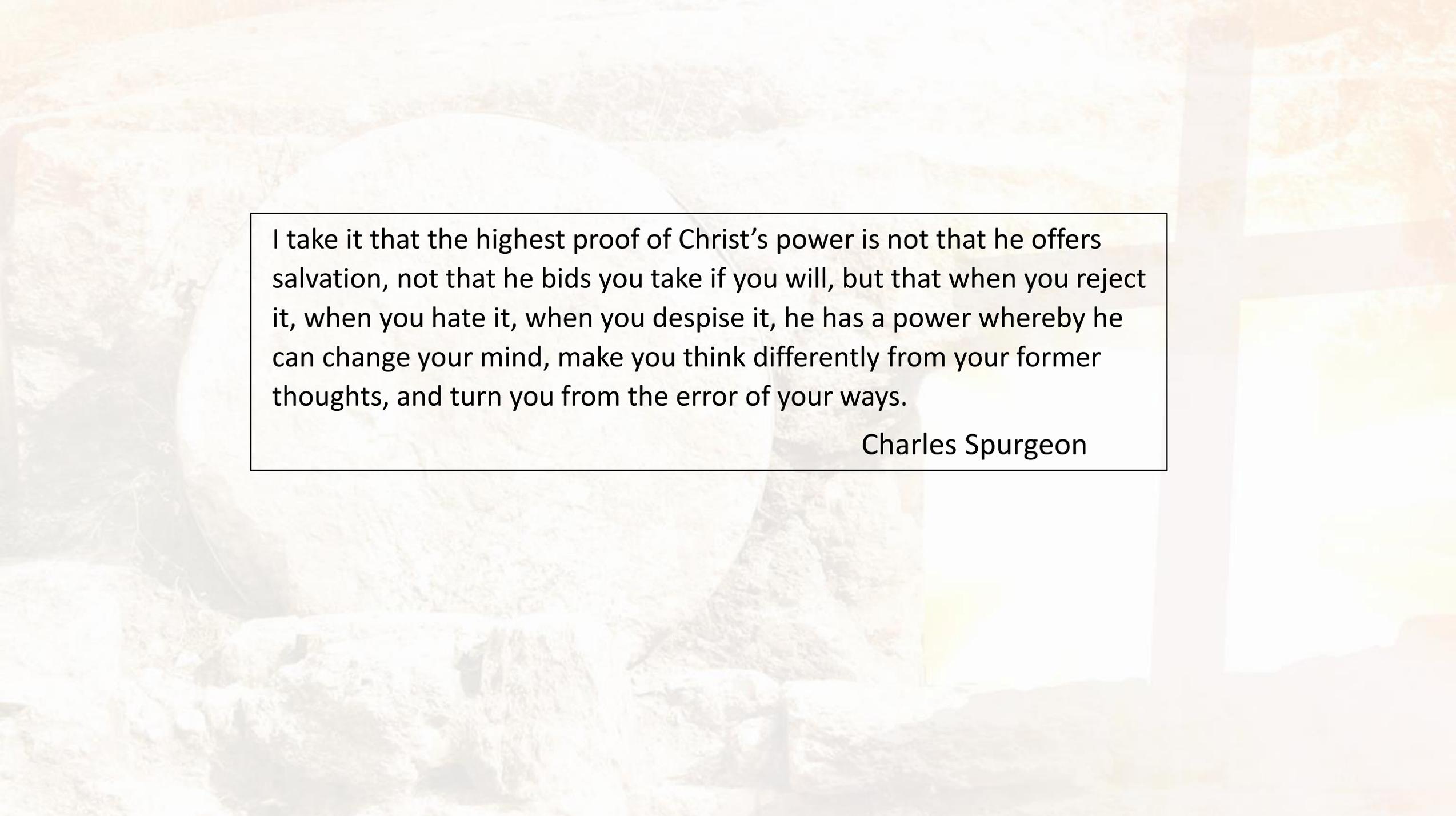
- Has God predetermined who He will save ... electing them to respond to Him, while leaving others to reject Him and perish without Christ?
- Am I free to choose God or reject Him ... is it really my decision, or has He placed even the desire within me to know Him or to reject Him?

... does God determine my fate, or do I?

³⁵ Jesus declared, "I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never go hungry, and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty ...

*⁴⁴ **"No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws them, and I will raise them up at the last day.***

John 6



I take it that the highest proof of Christ's power is not that he offers salvation, not that he bids you take if you will, but that when you reject it, when you hate it, when you despise it, he has a power whereby he can change your mind, make you think differently from your former thoughts, and turn you from the error of your ways.

Charles Spurgeon

A. Our Culture ... what does it teach about *Election* and *Free will*?

- Humanist view of *Free will* is widely held and even worshipped in modern & post-modern culture (including many churches).
 - defn. – the ability to make choices spontaneously and free from any predetermination, prejudice, inclination or disposition ... *“I am the Master of my fate.”*
 - everyone equally can choose good or evil, to serve God or self.

Note: This is not a biblical understanding. Nowhere in the Bible is it taught that people are free from any predetermination, prejudice or disposition ... rather the opposite.

B. The Bible ... what does it say?

1. The Bible clearly teaches that God is sovereign.

- He is all-powerful, all-seeing and all-knowing.
- He is completely free and unrestrained from anyone or anything. Nothing stops what He decides.

All the inhabitants of the earth are accounted as nothing, and he does according to his will among the host of heaven & among the inhabitants of the earth; and none can stay his hand or say to him, "What have you done?"

Daniel 4:35

I form light and create darkness, I make well-being and create calamity, I am the LORD, who does all these things.

Isaiah 45:7

Remember the former things of old; for I am God, and there is no other; I am God, and there is none like me, declaring the end from the beginning and from ancient times things not yet done, saying, 'My counsel shall stand, and I will accomplish all my purpose'.

Isaiah 46:9-10

For in him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things have been created through him and for him. He is before all things, and in him all things hold together.

Colossians 1:16-17

Then I saw a great white throne and him who was seated on it. From his presence earth and sky fled away, and no place was found for them.

Revelation 20:11

What does the Bible teach:

2. The Bible clearly teaches that God extends His love and His favour to those He chooses.

*² My heart is filled with bitter sorrow and unending grief ³ for my people, my Jewish brothers and sisters. I would be willing to be forever cursed—cut off from Christ!—if that would save them. ⁴ **They are the people of Israel, chosen to be God's adopted children. God revealed his glory to them. He made covenants with them and gave them his law. He gave them the privilege of worshiping him and receiving his wonderful promises.** ⁵ Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob are their ancestors ...*

Romans 9

What does the Bible teach:

2. The Bible clearly teaches that God extends His love and His favour to those He chooses.
 - God chose Abraham from among all people.
 - God chose Isaac over Ishmael.
 - God chose Jacob over Esau.

*¹⁰ ...When Isaac married Rebekah, she gave birth to twins. ¹¹ But before they were born, before they had done anything good or bad, she received a message from God. **(which shows that God chooses people according to his own purposes; ¹² he calls people, but not according to their good or bad works.)** She was told, “Your older son will serve your younger son.”
¹³ In the words of the Scriptures, “I loved Jacob, but I rejected Esau.”*

Romans 9

14 Are we saying then that God is unfair? Of course not! *15 For God said to Moses, “I will show mercy to anyone I choose, and I will show compassion to anyone I choose.”*

16 It is God who decides to show mercy. We can neither choose it nor work for it.

17 For the Scriptures say that God told Pharaoh, “I have appointed you for the very purpose of displaying my power in you & to spread my fame throughout the earth.” ***18 So you see, God chooses to show mercy to some and he chooses to harden the hearts of others so they refuse to listen.***

Romans 9

19 Well then, you might say, “Why does God blame people for not responding? Haven’t they simply done what he makes them do?”

20 No, don’t say that. Who are you, a mere human being, to argue with God? Should the thing that was created say to the one who created it, “Why have you made me like this?” ***21 When a potter makes jars out of clay, does he not have a right to use the same lump of clay to make one jar for decoration and another to throw garbage into?*** ***22 In the same way, even though God has the right to show his anger and his power, he is very patient with those on whom his anger falls, who are destined for destruction.*** ***23 He does this to make the riches of his glory shine even brighter on those to whom he shows mercy, who were prepared in advance for glory.***

Romans 9

What does the Bible teach:

3. The Bible clearly teaches that God calls people and sends them to bear witness of Him to the world.
- by declaring God's love and His grace to everyone.
 - by submitting their lives, their wills and their futures to Him.

¹¹ As Scripture says, "Anyone who believes in him will never be put to shame ... everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved."

¹⁴ How, then, can they call on the one they have not believed in? And how can they believe in the one of whom they have not heard? And how can they hear without someone preaching to them? ¹⁵ And how can anyone preach unless they are sent? As it is written: "How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news!"

Romans 10

16 You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you so that you might go and bear fruit—fruit that will last—and so that whatever you ask in my name the Father will give you.

John 15

11 Since, then, we know what it is to fear the Lord, we try to persuade others. What we are is plain to God, and I hope it is also plain to your conscience...

14 For Christ's love compels us, because we are convinced that one died for all, and therefore all died. 15 And he died for all, that those who live should no longer live for themselves but for him who died for them and was raised again...

2 Corinthians 5

What does the Bible teach:

4. The Bible clearly teaches that everyone is fully capable of knowing God, and personally responsible for choosing Him or rejecting Him.

¹⁹ Everyone knows the truth about God because he has made it obvious to them. ²⁰ For ever since the world was created, people have seen the earth and sky. Through everything God made, they can clearly see his invisible qualities—his eternal power and divine nature. So they have no excuse for not knowing God.

Romans 1

*⁹ If you declare with your mouth, “Jesus is Lord,” and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. ¹⁰ For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you profess your faith and are saved. ¹¹ **As Scripture says, “Anyone who believes in him will never be put to shame.” ¹² For there is no difference between Jew and Gentile—the same Lord is Lord of all and richly blesses all who call on him, ¹³ for, “Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.”***

Romans 10

What does the Bible teach:

5. The Bible clearly teaches that God loves everyone equally, and forgives anyone who comes to Him through Christ.

*¹⁶ For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. ¹⁷ **For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him.** ¹⁸ Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe stands condemned already because they have not believed in the name of God's one and only Son.*

John 3

What does the Bible teach:

6. The Bible clearly teaches that we do not know who God has elected to respond to His love, but He does.

44 As Peter was preaching to them about Jesus, the Holy Spirit fell upon all who were listening to the message. 45 The Jewish believers who came with Peter were amazed that the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out on the Gentiles, too. 46 For they heard them speaking in other tongues and praising God ...

11 18*When the rest of the church leaders heard Peter's explanation of what had happened, they stopped objecting and began praising God. The said, "We can see that God has also given the Gentiles the privilege of repenting of their sins and receiving eternal life."*

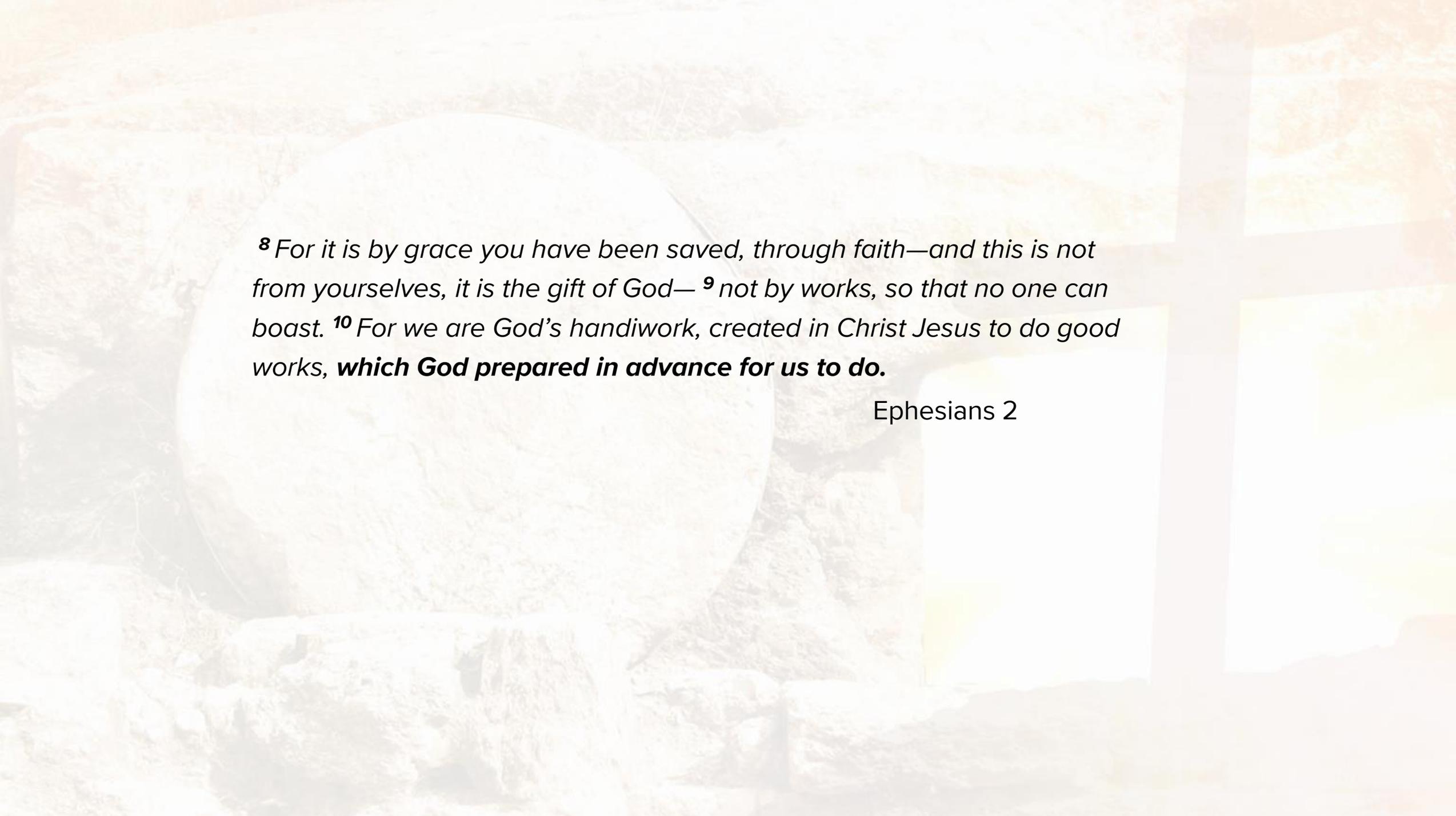
Acts 10 & 11

What does the Bible teach:

7. The Bible clearly teaches faith in Christ alone saves people – making them righteous before God, filling them with the Holy Spirit and empowering them to demonstrate transformed lives.

³ All of us at one time gratified the cravings of our flesh and followed its desires & thoughts. Like everyone, we were by nature deserving of wrath. ⁴ But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, ⁵ made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions—it is by grace you have been saved. ⁶ And God raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus, ⁷ in order that in the coming ages he might show the incomparable riches of his grace, expressed in his kindness to us in Christ Jesus.

Ephesians 2



*⁸For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—⁹not by works, so that no one can boast. ¹⁰For we are God’s handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, **which God prepared in advance for us to do.***

Ephesians 2

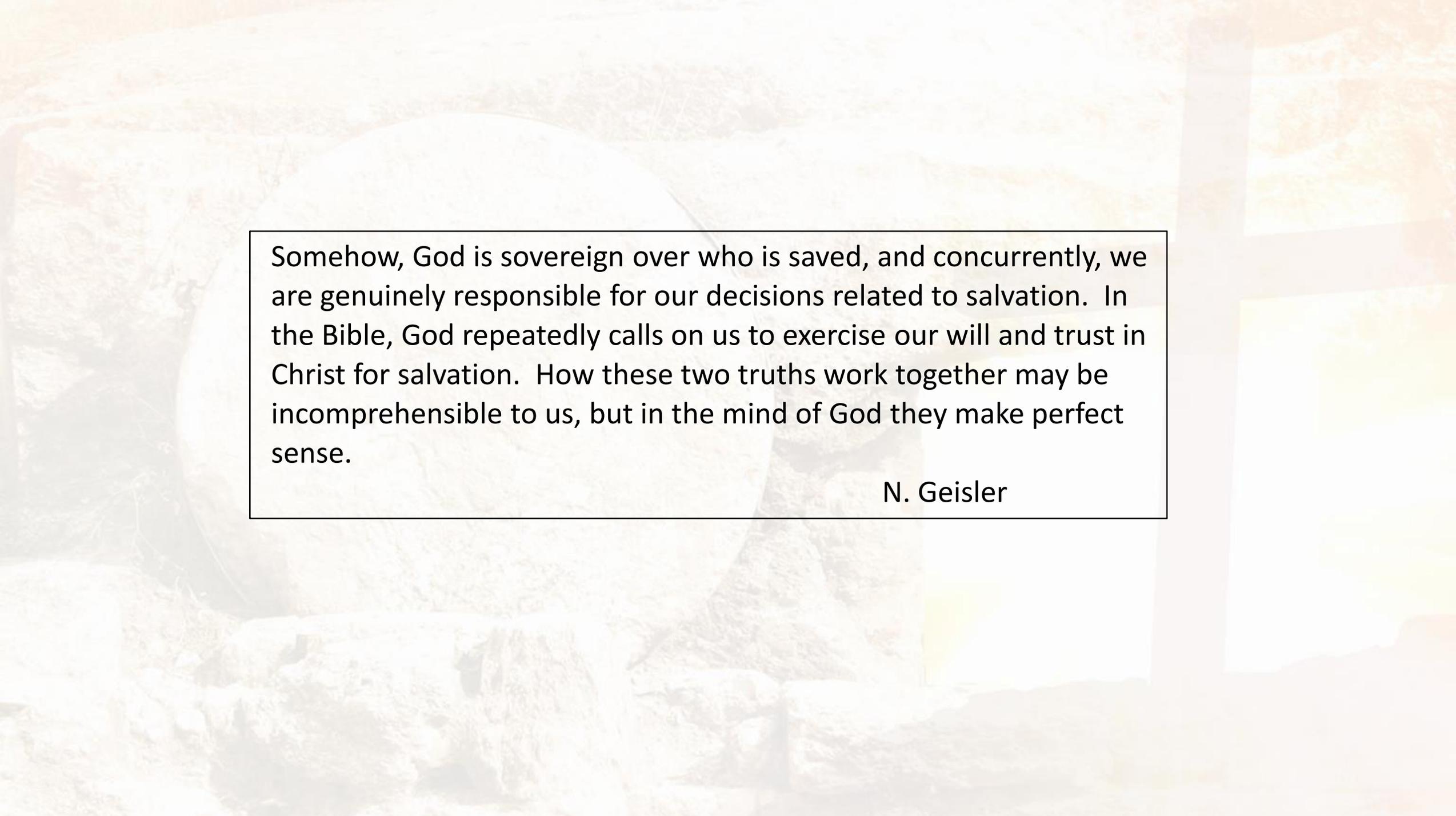
Where we find ourselves:

1. God is Sovereign, and unrestrained by anything or anyone.
 - to say otherwise contradicts clear biblical teaching.
 - if He is not, it elevates the creature to the status of the Creator.
2. Humans are free, but not completely so.
 - we are constrained in our choices by our desire to sin.
 - we are constrained in our choices by God's plans.
3. Humans are fully responsible for all the choices we make.
 - all choices are free acts for which we are responsible.
 - we sin because we want to.
 - God works through our choices, not around them or in spite of them.

Where we find ourselves:

4. God does not elect some people for heaven and other people for hell ... but everything that happens is under His direction.
 - people who choose Christ do so because God has opened their hearts ... and people who reject Christ do so because they have closed their hearts.
 - ... only God can save me through Jesus Christ.
 - ... only I can reject Him by my will.

5. The Bible does not fully reconcile God's *sovereignty* and my *responsibility*.
 - this, too, is an example of His greatness and my limitations.



Somehow, God is sovereign over who is saved, and concurrently, we are genuinely responsible for our decisions related to salvation. In the Bible, God repeatedly calls on us to exercise our will and trust in Christ for salvation. How these two truths work together may be incomprehensible to us, but in the mind of God they make perfect sense.

N. Geisler

⁶ Seek the LORD while he may be found; call on him while he is near.

*⁷ Let the wicked forsake their ways and the unrighteous their thoughts.
Let them turn to the LORD, and he will have mercy on them, and to
our God, for he will freely pardon.*

*⁸ “For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my
ways,” declares the LORD. ⁹ “As the heavens are higher than the
earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts
than your thoughts.*

*¹⁰ As the rain and the snow come down from heaven and do not return
to it without watering the earth and making it bud and flourish, so
that it yields seed for the sower and bread for the eater,*

*¹¹ so is my word that goes out from my mouth: It will not return to me
empty, but will accomplish what I desire & achieve the purpose
for which I sent it.*

Isaiah 55

