

WHOSOEVER Will May Come!

Evangelical Christians, who hold that This is the ONLY Day of Salvation, often Refer to a Passage in John 7 and another in the benediction of Revelation 22 to allege that Anyone who wishes May Come to the LORD!

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Despite what is an apparent contradiction by Jesus' own words, believers nevertheless disregard what they wish and apply what they prefer to the words of the New Testament. It's made explicitly clear that being 'called' in the present age is strictly by Divine prerogative. As Jesus stated so plainly in John 6:44, only one chapter earlier, "**No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day.**" Yet, He proclaimed something which appears to be quite different just a few verses (but an entire season) later, in John 7:36-37.

What has been overlooked is what could be referred to as the 'temporal context'. Words taken out of their true and full context are the bane of any theological perspective. No less so with these!

From Holyday to Holyday

Remarkable in its uniqueness is the temporal framework for the Gospel of John. Written much later than the three synoptic gospels, the Apostle John saw need to weave into his narrative an underlying framework not found in any other book. John's Gospel is written largely around the context of Biblical Holyday seasons within Jesus' ministry. With only one minor exception (a brief incident at a traditional observance, the 'Feast of Dedication' (John 10:22)), John skips from Holyday season to Holyday season.¹ This is not without significance!

What we need to be aware of is that this Holyday setting lends significance to the statements made. Many notable statements, such as the one given above, are amplified when considered in the time-context in which it is set. No less so the passages referred to in the sub-title of this article. "*In the*

*last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, **If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink.** He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of **living water.**" (John 7:36-37) and "...the Spirit and the bride say, **Come.** And let him that heareth say, **Come.** And let him that is athirst come. And **whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely.**" (Rev. 22:17). Both of these relate to the same general time-setting: the Millennial and post-Millennial period in which the second resurrection is provided major venue.*

What is usually overlooked as non-relevant is the simple fact that both of these later declarations are made in the context of a **specific** Biblical Holyday: that of the "*Last Great Day*", something plainly obvious in John's Gospel. (Keep in mind, the same person also inscribed the Book of Revelation not long after.) As Biblical (Gods') Holydays aren't a factor in main stream Christian Theology, few see any significance even when such association is evident!

In fact, there's much to be realized when considering these potent statements in their proper relevant time-frames. Not the least of which is the actual **absence of contradiction** between John 6:44 (reinforced by verse 39 and 65 of the same chapter) and John 7:38. Both are equally true, but certain conditions apply in the different dispensations of the Spirit of God to humankind. It's the lack of awareness of that '**prophetic outline**' (the '*shadow of things to come*' as Paul referred to them in Colossians 2:16) that's largely missing from 'traditional fundamentalist' theologies, accounting for a general lack of awareness of **Gods' overall plan** for offering an opportunity for salvation to all who have ever lived.

The 'contradiction' referred to above: the stated restricted access into the fellowship of Faith

¹ An excellent reference work which documents this fact is "*The Harmony of the Gospels*" by Fred R. Coulter, York Publishing, Box 1038, Hollister, CA, ISBN: 0-967549-1-1

through the receipt of Gods' Spirit, being limited to only those whom the Father specifically calls (in John 6) contrasts dramatically with Jesus' open exclamation that whoever desires to access the out-pouring of that Spirit **may do so** (in John 7). The difference is in the question of WHEN these statements apply. The John 6 statement that, "**No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him:**" was given in the context of the Spring Holydays, which illustrate the first Spiritual harvest. (Passover: (the cross) through Pentecost: (the Feast of Firstfruits)) This is further clarified by Jesus' statements that **it isn't intended** that the general population, even those religiously inclined, be 'given' the ability to discern the spiritual implications of what He was presenting. Only those few **given** to see would see. This was not a new idea, as the explanations offered by Christ Himself were re-quotes of Old Testament prophecies!

Lest They Understand

Not only was it '**not** given' for them to understand, but Jesus went to great lengths to avoid saying too much too explicitly to the general public, as their time was not yet! Matthew 13 explains, "*And the disciples came, and said unto him, Why speakest thou unto them in **parables**? 11: He answered and said unto them, Because it is given unto you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, **but to them it is not given.** 12: For whosoever hath, to him shall be given, and he shall have more abundance: but whosoever hath not, from him shall be taken away even that he hath. 13: Therefore speak I to them in parables: because they seeing see not; and hearing they hear not, neither do they understand. 14: And in them is fulfilled the prophecy of Esaias, which saith, By hearing ye shall hear, and shall not understand; and seeing ye shall see, and shall not perceive: 15: For this people's heart is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes they have closed; **lest at any time they should** see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and should **understand with their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them.**" Mark chapter 4 repeats the exclusion: "And he said unto them, Unto you it is given to know the mystery of the kingdom of God: but unto them that are without, all these things are done in parables: 12: That seeing they may see, and not perceive; and hearing they may hear, and*

not understand; **lest** at any time they should be converted, and their sins should be forgiven them...33: And with many such parables spake he the word unto them, as they were able to hear it. 34: But without a parable spake he not unto them: and when they were alone, he expounded all things to his disciples." The parable form of presentation was intended specifically to limit how much the general public would understand, as it wasn't God's intention to call but a few at that time! Even Luke 8:10 has: "And he said, Unto you it is given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of God: but to others in parables; that seeing they might not see, and hearing they might **not understand.**" It is NOT God's intent to call all people at this point in time. Understanding, (particularly that level of understanding possible only with the receipt of Gods' Spirit) was specifically limited to just those whom the Father intended be called in the 'early harvest'.

The Apostle Paul was not unaware of this situation. He also explained, not only that the majority would not understand in this age, but that certain religious peoples (who we might consider the prime candidates for being brought into the Truth) were specifically **blinded** until a later era, not with intent to exclude them from (eventual) salvation, but to **defer** their 'opportunity period' into an era in which the greatest overall number could and would respond. Romans 11:7, "What then? Israel hath not obtained that which he seeketh for; but the election hath obtained it, and **the rest were blinded** 8: (According as it is written, **God** hath given them the spirit of slumber, eyes that they should not see, and ears that they should not hear;) unto this day. 9: And David saith, Let their table be made a snare, and a trap, and a stumbling block, and a recompence unto them: 10: **Let their eyes be darkened, that they may not see,** and bow down their back always. 11: I say then, Have they stumbled that they should fall? God forbid: but rather through their fall salvation is come unto the Gentiles, for to provoke them to jealousy....25: For I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery, lest ye should be wise in your own conceits; that **blindness** in part is happened to Israel, until the fullness of the Gentiles be come in... 32: For **God hath concluded them all in unbelief,** that he might have mercy upon all." Though from this we can see that God has imposed a blindness

upon the majority, even including religious peoples, He does so with intent to create an environment amenable to the salvation of a far greater number! Paul refers to an element called “*the election*” (in other places, ‘*the ecclesia*’: called-out ones), and shows that Israel’s blindness opens opportunity for ‘select’ Gentiles, who’s successful conversions will prompt Israel to ‘jealousy’ and spur a greater effort, once their day comes!

That creates the logical conclusion that there will be a **later opportunity period** for those whom God has specifically decided to defer calling for the present. Of course, most of these who are and were blinded have gone to their graves still in that condition, which brings us to a second conclusion: That there is to be a resurrection of great numbers of as-yet unconverted people specifically for that purpose, which is spoken of in places such as Ezekiel 37 and Revelation 20.

So why would Jesus say on the one hand, that **no man can come** unless drawn of and by the Father, and only a few months later declare what amounts to a wide open ‘**whosoever will**’ may come? There’s a fundamental difference between the two statements, that on the one hand, any real response is God inspired, and the other, where each individual is self-motivated to respond. The answer is found in context of the particular Holyday seasons in which each statement was made. When we understand the essence of the general picture provided by the ‘early and latter rains’, the two general harvest periods, ² illustrated in greater detail in the two major Biblical Holyday seasons, and with the resurrections associated with them, then the *apparent* contradiction makes perfect sense. In the latter season, God is calling all to repentance. In another time related announcement (that period just after Christ’s Second Coming), the admonition is made for all men to worship God (as they never had!) “*And I saw another angel fly in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people, Saying with a loud voice, **Fear God, and give glory to him; for the hour of his judgment is come: and worship him that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters.*** (Rev. 14:6-7)

² Articles: “*The Early and Latter Rains*” and “*The Harvests of the World*” explain this subject more fully.

When we analyze **where** this statement is made in relative time context, we find that it is at the time when Satan is banished to a place of restraint for 1000 years (during the Millennial Age). This begins the age of evaluative judgment for those **not** called previously. If this were a sentencing event, why the admonishment to ‘worship Him’, when it would be too late for that?

Now is the Time!

This is the age in which salvation is opened to all living. “*And I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, **Now is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of his Christ: for the accuser of our brethren is cast down, which accused them before our God day and night.***” (Rev. 12:10) With Satan cut off from influencing society, a greater number will be able to avail themselves of their opportunity, with a much greater success rate than would occur had they been called in the spiritual environment of this evil age! The focus in this is more on how many would not lose out on salvation if called then, as opposed to how many might lose it if they were to have their opportunity now!

The statement to the effect that ‘anyone’ with a desire to access Gods’ Holy Spirit (that ‘living water’) may **freely** do so is perfectly appropriate in the context of the Millennial Age and the second resurrection era just after it. Especially as it involves those who may have heard, but who weren’t able to really understand due to the blinded condition assigned them by God in the age in which they first lived. In the second resurrection period, the books are opened, (then making perfect sense to them) and their response evaluated pursuant to their names being added to the Book of Life. “*And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and **the books were opened:** and another book was opened, which is **the book of life:** and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works.*” (Revelation 20:12) We see from verse 15 of this same chapter that the purpose of the Book of Life being opened is for the addition of new names into it. It would be pointless to look into the Book of Life at the very end to see whose names are in it if no new names had been added since all whose names were in it previously were made spirit beings at the first resurrection!

The statement that no man can come except the Father draw him is perfectly appropriate in the context of the pre-Millennial Age in which God is preparing the Bride of Christ, a relatively small *chosen* contingent, who will be the ruling class, administering the Kingdom of God with and under Christ from that time forward. *“And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years.”* (Revelation 20:4)

The other Gospels didn't present these restricted / unrestricted statements. Though we do find some apparent event correlation in places such as Mark 6:45-50 & Matthew 14:22-27 with John 6:14-21, the latter part of John chapter 6 through chapter 10 appears stand-alone in content. John (writing much later than they) apparently saw need to infill what the others' narratives hadn't presented.

So, when we see those occasional places which **seem** to indicate that the choice to respond to a call to repentance rests entirely with the individual, we need to remain aware that in this present dispensation, it is God that grants the repentance which is prerequisite to any acceptable response. It is God the Father who places the desire within a person to respond and repent in the first place. The time when anyone may respond at will is during that period of time when all are called, and that time is indicated as being during the Millennial Age and the second resurrection period beyond that.

What we need to be clear about is the fact that those called in this age are pre-designated by the Father's specific choice. To repent is not entirely our own desire or accomplishment. It isn't something that we can brag about! Romans 2:4 has, *“...despisest thou the riches of his goodness and forbearance and longsuffering; not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance?”* Romans 8:29-30 makes clear who designates each Saint for conversion now. *“For whom he did foreknow, he also did **predestinate** to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren. Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom*

he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified.” We tend to focus on the mis-conceived traditional teaching of what 'predestination' is, while failing to consider who makes this all-important selection.

In John 6:37 Jesus acknowledges where His followers come from. It's the Father who designates who they are to be! *“**All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out.**”* At the end of His Earthly ministry, He reaffirms the same, *“As thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as **thou hast given him.**”* (John 17:2) Continuing His acknowledgement of the fact, in verses 6 to 12, He says, *“I have manifested thy name unto **the men which thou gavest me out of the world: thine they were, and thou gavest them me; and they have kept thy word.** ... 8: For I have given unto them the words which thou gavest me; and they have received them, and have known surely that I came out from thee, and they have believed that thou didst send me. 9: I pray for them: I pray not for the world, but for **them which thou hast given me; for they are thine.** 10: And all mine are thine, and thine are mine; and I am glorified in them. 11:...Holy Father, keep through thine own name those whom **thou hast given me, that they may be one, as we are.** 12: While I was with them in the world, I kept them in thy name: those that **thou gavest me I have kept, and none of them is lost, but the son of perdition; that the scripture might be fulfilled.”***

Though this age isn't yet the era of 'whosoever will', that day is coming in which **all** will be called! That day will see massive numbers respond. You would think those who are upset to find that this **isn't** that day they've been proclaiming should draw comfort in knowing their calling is direct and specific! Anyone having a genuine thirst for the water of life can appreciate that they have been personally given it by God the Father. **Ω**

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