TELLING THE GOOD NEWS · STUDY NOTES

Study 4: God's sovereignty and our responsibility

For personal study or groups

Your name

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How to use these notes. Watch each part's video on biblehelp.net, or read the text below. Look up each passage in your own Bible and write the answer on the lines. The verses are printed at the back if you need them. At the end there are questions to think about on your own or to discuss in a group.

PART 1

Salvation belongs to the Lord

God plans it, wins it, and brings it home (Jonah 2:9; John 6:35–45; Acts 16:13–15)

The Bible teaches that God is sovereign. He rules over all things, and in salvation He chooses whom He will save. Many Christians ask: if that is true, why should we tell anyone? This study shows that the Bible gives the opposite answer. God's sovereignty is not a reason to keep quiet. It is the reason we can speak with confidence.

1. "Salvation is from the LORD!" (Jonah 2:9). Jonah had run from God and could not save himself. When God saves someone, there is no one else to thank. And God did not save Jonah to keep him quiet: He sent him to Nineveh with "the message that I give you", and "the Ninevites believed God" (Jonah 3:1–5). Salvation was from the Lord in Nineveh too, but it came through a man proclaiming God's message.

1 **Read Jonah 2:9**

What did Jonah learn inside the fish, and what did God send him to do next?

See also: Jonah 3:1–5.

2. The bread of life (John 6:35–37). The crowds wanted bread for their stomachs; Jesus offered Himself for their souls. Bread was the most ordinary food there was: Jesus is not an extra for religious people, but what every person needs in order to live before God. Coming to Him and believing in Him are the same thing, and the one who trusts Him will never hunger: the deepest hunger of the soul is met in Him, for ever. He is not one loaf on a shelf among many. He is the only bread that gives eternal life.

2 **Read John 6:35–37**

What does Jesus promise to the one who comes to Him?

3. Two truths in one verse (6:37). "Everyone the Father gives Me will come to Me": God's purpose. His people are the Father's gift to the Son (John 17:6, 24), and the Son will not lose a gift from His Father. "The one who comes to Me I will never drive away": God's promise. Not the one who comes with a clean record or a strong faith, but simply the one who comes. We need both. Asked to reconcile them, Spurgeon said, "I never reconcile friends", and "Here are two jewels, let us wear them both."

4. None lost (6:38–40). The Father's will is that the Son "shall lose none of those He has given" Him. Four times in this chapter Jesus says, "I will raise him up at the last day." And in the same breath: "everyone who looks to the Son and believes in Him shall have eternal life." To look to the Son recalls the bronze snake in the wilderness (Numbers 21:8–9; John 3:14–15): they did not cure themselves; they only had to look. The choosing is God's. The looking and believing are ours.

3 **Read John 6:38–40**

How sure is the salvation of those the Father has given to the Son?

See also: Numbers 21:8–9; John 3:14–15.

5. "Unless the Father… draws him" (6:41–44). The crowd grumbled, as Israel once grumbled before the manna came (Exodus 16:2). Because they thought they knew all about Jesus, they could not see who He was. "No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him." The word is strong: it is used for hauling a heavy net to shore (John 21:6). But the Father does not drag anyone against their will; He changes the will, so that they come gladly (Psalm 110:3). The door is not shut by God. The problem is that, left to ourselves, we will not come: the heart is "deceitful above all things" (Jeremiah 17:9), and minds are blinded (2 Corinthians 4:4). So no one who becomes a Christian can take the credit.

4 **Read John 6:41–44**

Why can no one come to Christ unless the Father draws him?

See also: Jeremiah 17:9; 2 Corinthians 4:4.

6. Drawn by being taught (6:45). The Father draws people by teaching them: "They will all be taught by God" (Isaiah 54:13). He teaches through His word: "faith comes by hearing" (Romans 10:17). When God's word is read, explained and told, the Father is speaking, and through it He draws people to His Son. This is where our part comes in. God's drawing does not make our speaking unnecessary: it is through our speaking that He draws people.

5 **Read John 6:45**

How does the Father draw people to Christ?

7. Born of the Spirit (John 3:7–8). Nicodemus was a respected teacher of the Scriptures. He did not need to be improved; he needed a new beginning (Ezekiel 36:26). We cannot see or control the wind, but we see what it does. So with the new birth: a person who was not interested in God begins to listen, to grieve over sin, and to trust in Christ.

6 **Read John 3:7–8**

What does the wind teach us about the new birth?

8. The Lord opened her heart (Acts 16:13–14). The Spirit had stopped Paul preaching in Asia and led him to Europe (16:6–10). He expected a man of Macedonia, and found a few women praying by a river. Lydia came from Thyatira, in the very province where Paul had been stopped: God brought a woman from Asia to Paul. She was a worshipper of God, and still needed the Lord to open her heart. Being religious is not the same as being born again. Several women heard the same message; one believed, not because she was cleverer, but because "the Lord

opened her heart to respond to Paul's message." God did not open her heart without the message, and the message did not open her heart without God.

7 **Read Acts 16:13–14**

What did Paul do, and what did the Lord do?

9. What this means for us. Because salvation belongs to the Lord:

- **evangelism is never a lost cause.** No heart is too hard for God to open.
- **it is never automatic.** So we explain the gospel as clearly as we can, and pray earnestly.
- **we never water down the message.** When many turned away, Jesus did not lower His claims (John 6:66–68).
- **if you are a Christian, thank God.** You did not believe because you were wiser or better. The Lord opened your heart.

10. The change shows (16:15). Lydia was baptised and opened her home. Later in the same city a hard Roman jailer asked, "What must I do to be saved?" (16:30–31). A quiet businesswoman and a man who kept a prison: no one is too religious to need Christ, and no one is too far away for Him to reach.

8 **Read Acts 16:15**

How did Lydia's opened heart show itself?

PART 2

"I have many people in this city"

God's choosing works through our speaking (Acts 18:1–17; 13:44–49)

Some draw the wrong conclusion: "If God will certainly save His people, it does not matter whether I speak." The Bible draws the opposite conclusion, in two cities: Corinth and Antioch.

1. Corinth (Acts 18:1–4). A rich port, famous for its immorality: many would have said the gospel was least likely to take root there. Paul made tents to pay his way: ordinary work and faithful

witness went together. God gave him Aquila and Priscilla, driven from Rome, who became his "fellow workers in Christ Jesus" (Romans 16:3–4) and explained the way of God to a gifted preacher (Acts 18:26). And Paul "reasoned… trying to persuade". He believed God chooses whom He will save, and that made him more earnest, not less.

9 **Read Acts 18:1–4**

How did Paul spend his time in Corinth, and what was he trying to do in the synagogue?

2. "I am innocent of it" (18:5–6). Gifts from Macedonia let Paul give himself fully to the word (2 Corinthians 11:9), testifying that Jesus is the Christ, the promised King. When they opposed him, he shook out his garments (Luke 9:5): a solemn sign that the responsibility now lay with them. Yet he never stopped loving his own people (Romans 10:1; Acts 18:19).

10 **Read Acts 18:5–6**

What did Paul mean when he said, "I am innocent of it"?

3. The watchman (Ezekiel 33:7–9). A watchman cannot make the city wake up, but he must blow the trumpet. If he keeps quiet, he is guilty; if he warns and they take no notice, the guilt is theirs. Paul was innocent, not because everyone believed, but because he had declared "the whole will of God" (Acts 20:26–27).

11 **Read Ezekiel 33:7–9**

When is the watchman guilty, and when is he not?

See also: Acts 20:26–27.

4. Our part and theirs. This guards us from two mistakes. The first is silence. The second is false guilt. If you have proclaimed the gospel clearly and faithfully to a friend who still does not

believe, you have done your part. Keep praying and loving them. But being concerned is not the same as being guilty. The response is theirs, and the power to change hearts is God's.

5. Next door (18:7–8). Paul went next door, and the synagogue leader Crispus believed with his household (1 Corinthians 1:14), and "many of the Corinthians who heard the message believed". They heard, and then they believed. That order matters.

12 **Read Acts 18:7–8**

Who believed, and what came before their believing?

6. "Keep on speaking" (18:9–11). Even Paul was afraid: "I came to you in weakness and fear, and with much trembling" (1 Corinthians 2:3). The Lord did not promise he would never feel fear; He told him what to do with it. Three commands say one thing: "keep on speaking; do not be silent." And three reasons: His presence ("I am with you"), His protection ("no one will lay a hand on you"), and His purpose ("I have many people in this city").

13 **Read Acts 18:9–11**

What three reasons does the Lord give Paul for keeping on speaking?

7. "Many people in this city". They were not yet believers, and some were still living as Corinth was famous for. But God already called them "My people". Years later Paul wrote to them: "And that is what some of you were. But you were washed..." (1 Corinthians 6:11). And God brought them through Paul's speaking. Paul did not reason, "God has many people here, so He will save them without me", but "so I must stay and tell them." As Spurgeon put it: "If there are so many fish to be taken in the net, I will go and catch some of them!"

8. God kept His promise (18:12–17). An attack came, and before Paul could speak, the governor threw the case out. Gallio cared nothing for the gospel, yet God used his decision to protect His servant. God kept His promise of protection, so Paul could be sure He would keep His other promise too.

14 **Read Acts 18:12–17**

How did God keep His promise that no one would harm Paul?

9. Antioch (Acts 13:44–49). Nearly the whole city came to hear. Some were jealous and contradicted Paul; they did "not consider" themselves "worthy of eternal life": the fault was theirs. The word went "to you first" because God had made His promises to Israel. Others "rejoiced and glorified the word of the Lord, and all who were appointed for eternal life believed." Paul quoted words spoken to the Servant, Christ Himself (Isaiah 49:6), and applied them to His messengers: Christ's light reaches people through us.

15 **Read Acts 13:44–46**

Why did Paul and Barnabas turn to the Gentiles?

16 **Read Acts 13:47–49**

Who believed, and what happened next?

10. God's chain. God appoints; the word is spoken; people hear; they believe (Acts 13:48; Romans 10:14). God has chosen the end, the salvation of His people, and the means, the speaking of His word. We are one of the links in His chain. When God plans to save someone, He also plans that someone will tell them.

11. For the sake of the elect (2 Timothy 2:10). From prison Paul wrote: "I endure all things for the sake of the elect." He was chained, but "the word of God cannot be chained" (2:9). For Paul, God's choosing was never a reason to rest. It was the reason he could endure anything.

17 **Read 2 Timothy 2:10**

Why did Paul endure so much?

12. Two lines side by side. God's sovereignty: "I have many people in this city"; "all who were appointed for eternal life believed." Our responsibility: "keep on speaking; do not be silent"; "trying to persuade". We may not be able to explain fully how they fit together, but the Bible teaches both, often in the same chapter, and we hold on to both. Christ is with us still (Matthew 28:20), and He still has His people in our town. We do not know who they are; the person who seems furthest from God may be one of them. So we tell everyone.

PART 3

Offered freely to all

The free invitation (Isaiah 55; Matthew 11:25–30; Revelation 22:17)

When we speak to someone about Christ, do we say, "Perhaps you are chosen, perhaps not"? The Bible tells us to offer Christ freely to everyone.

1. "Come, buy, and eat!" (Isaiah 55:1–3). God calls out like a stallholder in a busy market, but at His stall the price is nothing. He offers not the bare minimum but a feast: wine for joy, milk for nourishment. The invitation is to "all you who are thirsty": the thirst in every heart is, in the end, a thirst for God (Psalm 63:1; John 4:13–14). Good gifts, made the most important thing, cannot satisfy. It is free because Someone else paid: the Servant "pierced for our transgressions" (Isaiah 53:5). We come with empty hands. We receive it by listening ("incline your ear"), so the invitation must be heard before it can be accepted. And the promise to David is fulfilled in the risen Son of David (Acts 13:34).

18 **Read Isaiah 55:1–3**

Who is invited, what does it cost, and how is it received?

See also: Isaiah 53:5; John 4:13–14.

2. Seek the Lord while He may be found (55:6–7). The door is open now, but not for ever (Luke 13:25; 2 Corinthians 6:2). The invitation goes even to "the wicked man". But it is a call to turn, from our ways and our thoughts. Like a satnav repeating "Turn around when possible", God keeps calling us back. And "He will freely pardon": on the scales, our sins are heavy, but His pardon is far heavier.

19 **Read Isaiah 55:6–7**

What must the wicked man do, and what will God do?

3. His thoughts are higher (55:8–9). We think some people are too bad to be forgiven. God's mercy is as high above ours as the heavens are above the earth. So we must never choose who should hear the gospel: the colleague who mocks us, the neighbour who is hard to like, the person who has hurt us.

20 **Read Isaiah 55:8–9**

How are God's thoughts different from ours? How does that help us believe His free pardon?

4. His word will not return empty (55:10–11). In the same chapter as the free invitation is God's sovereignty. Rain always does its work, and so does His word. This keeps us from pride (it is His word that works, not our cleverness) and from despair (His word never misses His purpose). So we do not change the message to make it work.

21 **Read Isaiah 55:10–11**

What does God promise about His word? Why does this keep us from being proud when people believe, and from giving up when they do not?

5. Jesus thanks the Father for His choosing (Matthew 11:25–27). After the towns of Galilee refused to repent (11:20–24), Jesus prays and gives thanks: the Father has hidden these things

"from the wise and learned" (those wise in their own eyes) and revealed them "to little children" (those who know they have nothing). No one knows the Father except "those to whom the Son chooses to reveal Him." And "all things have been entrusted to Me": the One who holds all things says next, "Come to Me."

22 **Read Matthew 11:25–27**

To whom has the Father revealed these things, and to whom were they hidden?

6. "Come to Me" (11:28–30). Without a pause, Jesus invites "all you who are weary and burdened": weighed down by rules they could never keep (Matthew 23:4), and by guilt, fear and a life without God. In one breath, the Father's choosing; in the next, an invitation to everyone. If Jesus held these truths together, so can we. One preacher put it as if Jesus were saying: "Let no views of predestination ever keep you back from proclaiming fully My Gospel to every creature."

- **Come to a Person,** not a place, a ceremony or a set of beliefs.
- **Come as you are.** The weary do not first make themselves strong.
- **Take His yoke.** Trust Him and follow Him: He saves us not in our sins, but from them. The rest Jeremiah's hearers refused (Jeremiah 6:16) is offered again in Him.
- **He is "gentle and humble in heart".** No one who comes to Him will be crushed.

23 **Read Matthew 11:28–30**

Whom does Jesus invite, and what does He promise?

7. The last invitation in the Bible (Revelation 22:17). The invitation of Isaiah 55 is still there: "let the one who is thirsty come… drink freely" (John 7:37; Revelation 21:6). The Spirit says "Come!", the church says "Come!", and "let the one who hears say, 'Come!'" That is you and me.

24 **Read Revelation 22:17**

Who says "Come!", and who is invited?

Pointing the way to the well

A thirsty traveller in a hot, dry country does not know where to find water, and a small child takes him by the hand and leads him to a well. The child did not dig the well; she only had to know where it was. We do not have to invent salvation, only to proclaim it, and point people to Christ. Even a new Christian can do that.

8. How we speak to unbelievers. We never say, "First find out whether you are chosen." No one can look into God's secret plans, and He has not asked us to. We say, "Come to Christ." God "commands all people everywhere to repent" (Acts 17:30), and His commandment is "that we should believe in the name of His Son" (1 John 3:23). And to someone who says, "I want to come, but what if I am not chosen?": no one who truly wants Christ is turned away. That very desire is a sign that God is at work (John 6:37).

9. Study 4 in summary. Salvation belongs to the Lord (John 6; Acts 16). He has many people, gathered through our speaking (Acts 18; Acts 13). So we offer Christ freely to all (Isaiah 55; Matthew 11; Revelation 22). God's sovereignty does not silence us. It gives us confidence. We speak, and we leave the results with Him.

THINK IT THROUGH

Questions for reflection and discussion

1. Does the truth that God chooses make you more confident in speaking about Christ, or less? Why?

2. Is there a friend you have spoken to many times and feel guilty about, or someone you have never spoken to at all? Pray about both.

3. Is there anyone you have quietly decided is "too far gone"? What does Isaiah 55 say about that? And how would you answer a friend who says, "What if I am not chosen?"

HIDE IT IN YOUR HEART

Memory verse for study 4

Learn this verse by heart this week. Cut out the card and keep it where you will see it.

TELLING THE GOOD NEWS · STUDY 4 · MEMORY VERSE

“Everyone the Father gives Me will come to Me, and the one who comes to Me I will never drive away.”

John 6:37

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“I have hidden Your word in my heart that I might not sin against You.” (Psalm 119:11, BSB)

AT THE BACK

The Bible passages (BSB)

1 **Jonah 2:9** *But I, with the voice of thanksgiving, will sacrifice to You. I will fulfill what I have vowed. Salvation is from the LORD!"*

2 **John 6:35–37** *35Jesus answered, "I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to Me will never hunger, and whoever believes in Me will never thirst. 36But as I stated, you have seen Me and still you do not believe. 37Everyone the Father gives Me will come to Me, and the one who comes to Me I will never drive away.*

3 **John 6:38–40** *38For I have come down from heaven, not to do My own will, but to do the will of Him who sent Me. 39And this is the will of Him who sent Me, that I shall lose none of those He has given Me, but raise them up at the last day. 40For it is My Father's will that everyone who looks to the Son and believes in Him shall have eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day."*

4 **John 6:41–44** *41At this, the Jews began to grumble about Jesus because He had said, "I am the bread that came down from heaven." 42They were asking, "Is this not Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know? How then can He say, 'I have come down from heaven'?" 43"Stop grumbling among yourselves," Jesus replied. 44"No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him, and I will raise him up at the last day.*

5 **John 6:45a** *It is written in the Prophets: 'And they will all be taught by God.' Everyone who has heard the Father and learned from Him comes to Me—…*

6 **John 3:7–8** *7Do not be amazed that I said, 'You must be born again.' 8The wind blows where it wishes. You hear its sound, but you do not know where it comes from or where it is going. So it is with everyone born of the Spirit."*

7 **Acts 16:13–14** *13On the Sabbath we went outside the city gate along the river, where it was customary to find a place of prayer. After sitting down, we spoke to the women who had gathered there. 14Among those listening was a woman named Lydia, a dealer in purple cloth from the city of Thyatira, who was a worshiper of God. The Lord opened her heart to respond to Paul's message.*

8 **Acts 16:15** *And when she and her household had been baptized, she urged us, "If you consider me a believer in the Lord, come and stay at my house." And she persuaded us.*

9 **Acts 18:1–4** *1After this, Paul left Athens and went to Corinth. 2There he found a Jew named Aquila, a native of Pontus, who had recently come from Italy with his wife Priscilla because Claudius had ordered all the Jews to leave Rome. Paul went to visit them, 3and he stayed and worked with them because they were tentmakers by trade, just as he was. 4Every Sabbath he reasoned in the synagogue, trying to persuade Jews and Greeks alike.*

10 **Acts 18:5–6** *5And when Silas and Timothy came down from Macedonia, Paul devoted himself fully to the word, testifying to the Jews that Jesus is the Christ. 6But when they opposed and insulted him, he shook out his garments and told them, "Your blood be on your own heads! I am innocent of it. From now on I will go to the Gentiles."*

11 **Ezekiel 33:7–9** *7As for you, O son of man, I have made you a watchman for the house of Israel; so hear the word from My mouth and give them the warning from Me. 8If I say to the wicked, 'O wicked man, you will surely die,' but you do not speak out to dissuade him from his way, then that wicked man will die in his iniquity, yet I will hold you accountable for his blood. 9But if you warn the wicked man to turn from his way, and he does not turn from it, he will die in his iniquity, but you will have saved your life.*

12 **Acts 18:7–8** *7So Paul left the synagogue and went next door to the house of Titus Justus, a worshiper of God. 8Crispus, the synagogue leader, and his whole household believed in the Lord. And many of the Corinthians who heard the message believed and were baptized.*

13 **Acts 18:9–11** *9One night the Lord spoke to Paul in a vision: "Do not be afraid; keep on speaking; do not be silent. 10For I am with you and no one will lay a hand on you, because I have many people in this city." 11So Paul stayed for a year and a half, teaching the word of God among the Corinthians.*

14 **Acts 18:12–17** *12While Gallio was proconsul of Achaia, the Jews coordinated an attack on Paul and brought him before the judgment seat. 13"This man is persuading the people to worship God in ways contrary to the law," they said. 14But just as Paul was about to speak, Gallio told the Jews, "If this matter involved a wrongdoing or vicious crime, O Jews, it would be reasonable for me to hear your complaint. 15But since it is a dispute about words and names and your own law, settle it yourselves. I refuse to be a judge of such things." 16And he drove them away from the judgment seat. 17At this, the crowd seized Sosthenes the synagogue leader and beat him in front of the judgment seat. But none of this was of concern to Gallio.*

15 **Acts 13:44–46** *44On the following Sabbath, nearly the whole city gathered to hear the word of the Lord. 45But when the Jews saw the crowds, they were filled with jealousy, and they blasphemously contradicted what Paul was saying. 46Then Paul and Barnabas answered them boldly: "It was necessary to speak the word of God to you first. But since you reject it and do not consider yourselves worthy of eternal life, we now turn to the Gentiles.*

16 **Acts 13:47–49** *47For this is what the Lord has commanded us: 'I have made you a light for the Gentiles, to bring salvation to the ends of the earth.'" 48When the Gentiles heard this, they rejoiced and glorified the word of the Lord, and all who were appointed for eternal life believed. 49And the word of the Lord spread throughout that region.*

17 **2 Timothy 2:10** *For this reason I endure all things for the sake of the elect, so that they too may obtain the salvation that is in Christ Jesus, with eternal glory.*

18 **Isaiah 55:1–3** *1"Come, all you who are thirsty, come to the waters; and you without money, come, buy, and eat! Come, buy wine and milk without money and without cost! 2Why spend money on that which is not bread, and your labor on that which does not satisfy? Listen carefully to Me, and eat what is good, and your soul will delight in the richest of foods. 3Incline your ear and come to Me; listen, so that your soul may live. I will make with you an everlasting covenant—My loving devotion promised to David.*

19 **Isaiah 55:6–7** *6Seek the LORD while He may be found; call on Him while He is near. 7Let the wicked man forsake his way and the unrighteous man his thoughts; let him return to the LORD, that He may have compassion, and to our God, for He will freely pardon.*

20 **Isaiah 55:8–9** *8"For My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways My ways," declares the LORD. 9"For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so My ways are higher than your ways and My thoughts than your thoughts.*

21 **Isaiah 55:10–11** *10For just as rain and snow fall from heaven and do not return without watering the earth, making it bud and sprout, and providing seed to sow and food to eat, 11so My word that proceeds from My mouth will not return to Me empty, but it will accomplish what I please, and it will prosper where I send it.*

22 **Matthew 11:25–27** *25At that time Jesus declared, "I praise You, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because You have hidden these things from the wise and learned, and revealed them to little children. 26Yes, Father, for this was well-pleasing in Your sight. 27All things have been entrusted to Me by My Father. No one knows the Son except the Father, and no one knows the Father except the Son and those to whom the Son chooses to reveal Him.*

23 **Matthew 11:28–30** *28Come to Me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. 29Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. 30For My yoke is easy and My burden is light."*

24 **Revelation 22:17** *The Spirit and the bride say, "Come!" Let the one who hears say, "Come!" And let the one who is thirsty come, and the one who desires the water of life drink freely.*

Scripture: Berean Standard Bible (BSB), public domain. Quotations keep its American spelling. Like many English Bibles, it often says 'man', 'he' or 'brothers' where it means people in general, men and women alike.

FOR GROUP LEADERS

Study 4: God's sovereignty and our responsibility

> **Memory verse:** “Everyone the Father gives Me will come to Me, and the one who comes to Me I will never drive away.” (John 6:37). Say it together at the end, and ask who can say it without looking.

Aims

- See from Jonah 2:9, John 6 and Acts 16 that salvation belongs to the Lord from beginning to end: no one comes to Christ unless the Father draws him, and He draws people through His word.
- See from Acts 18 and Acts 13 that God's choosing is not a reason to keep quiet but the reason to keep on speaking: He has many people, and He gathers them through the speaking of His word.
- See from Isaiah 55, Matthew 11:25–30 and Revelation 22:17 that we offer Christ freely to everyone, as Jesus did, and leave the results with God.

Suggested timing (about 110 minutes)

- **5 min** Welcome and short prayer.
- **35 min** Part 1 video (18 min); Jonah 2:9; John 6:35–37, 38–40, 41–44, 45; John 3:7–8; Acts 16:13–14, 15.
- **35 min** Part 2 video (19 min); Acts 18:1–4, 5–6; Ezekiel 33:7–9; Acts 18:7–8, 9–11, 12–17; Acts 13:44–46, 47–49; 2 Timothy 2:10.
- **30 min** Part 3 video (16 min); Isaiah 55:1–3, 6–7, 8–9, 10–11; Matthew 11:25–27, 28–30; Revelation 22:17.
- **5 min** Reflection questions. Close in prayer for the people on your lists.

This is the longest study in the course. For most groups, take one part each week.

Tips

- Some in the group may be new to the teaching that God chooses whom He will save, and some may find it hard. Keep to what the passages say, and keep the study's aim in view: not to settle every question, but to see that God's sovereignty is an encouragement to evangelism, not an obstacle.
- Hold the two truths together, as the Bible does: God's choosing (John 6:37a; Acts 13:48; 18:10) and the free offer to all (John 6:37b; Isaiah 55:1; Matthew 11:28). If the discussion leans to one side, read the other verse aloud.
- If someone asks how the two fit together, it is fine to say that we may not be able to explain it fully. The Bible teaches both, often in the same chapter, and so do we.
- On John 6:44, make sure the group sees that the problem is not that God shuts anyone out. The door is open; the problem is that, left to ourselves, we will not come.
- The "chain" in part 2 (God appoints, the word is spoken, people hear, they believe) is a help for remembering that God's choosing works through means. It is worth drawing on a whiteboard.
- On Acts 18:6 and Ezekiel 33, watch for the person who carries false guilt over a friend who has not believed. Being concerned is not the same as being guilty. Equally, gently challenge those who have never spoken at all.
- On "What if I am not chosen?" (part 3), give the group words they can use: no one who truly wants Christ is turned away (John 6:37), and that very desire is a sign that God is at work. We never tell anyone to look into God's secret plans; we tell them to look to Christ.

Answers to watch for

- **Jonah 2:9:** that salvation is from the Lord; God then sent him to Nineveh to proclaim His message, and the Ninevites believed.
- **John 6:35–37:** he will never hunger or thirst, and Jesus will never drive him away.
- **John 6:38–40:** completely sure: the Son will lose none of them, and will raise them up at the last day.
- **John 6:41–44:** not because God shuts the door, but because our hearts are unwilling and blinded; the Father must draw us, changing our will.
- **John 6:45:** by teaching them through His word; when the word is read, explained and told, the Father is speaking.
- **John 3:7–8:** we cannot see or control the Spirit, but we can see what He does in a changed life.
- **Acts 16:13–14:** Paul sat down and spoke; the Lord opened Lydia's heart to respond. Both were needed.
- **Acts 16:15:** she was baptised and opened her home to the messengers.
- **Acts 18:1–4:** he worked as a tentmaker and reasoned in the synagogue every Sabbath, trying to persuade Jews and Greeks.
- **Acts 18:5–6:** he had given them the message; what they did with it was now their responsibility.
- **Ezekiel 33:7–9:** guilty if he keeps quiet; not guilty if he warns and they take no notice.
- **Acts 18:7–8:** Crispus, the synagogue leader, with his household, and many Corinthians; they heard the message first.
- **Acts 18:9–11:** His presence, His protection and His purpose: "I have many people in this city."
- **Acts 18:12–17:** the governor threw the case out before Paul could speak; God used a man who cared nothing for the gospel.
- **Acts 13:44–46:** the Jews rejected the word and did not consider themselves worthy of eternal life.
- **Acts 13:47–49:** all who were appointed for eternal life believed; the word of the Lord spread through the region.
- **2 Timothy 2:10:** for the sake of the elect, so that they would hear and be saved.
- **Isaiah 55:1–3:** all who are thirsty; it costs nothing, because the Servant paid; it is received by listening and coming.
- **Isaiah 55:6–7:** forsake his way and his thoughts, and return to the Lord; God will have compassion and freely pardon.
- **Isaiah 55:8–9:** we think some people are too bad to forgive; God's mercy is far higher than ours.
- **Isaiah 55:10–11:** it is God's word that works, not our cleverness; and it never fails to do what He sends it to do.
- **Matthew 11:25–27:** revealed to little children, those who know they have nothing; hidden from those wise in their own eyes.
- **Matthew 11:28–30:** all who are weary and burdened; He promises rest for their souls.
- **Revelation 22:17:** the Spirit, the bride, and everyone who hears; the one who is thirsty, to drink freely.