

## THE REASONS FOR EVANGELISTIC PRAYER-Part 1

### Consistent with God's Desire

God's *desire* for the world's salvation is different from His eternal saving *purpose*. We can understand this to some degree from a human perspective; after all, our purposes frequently differ from our desires. We may *desire*, for example, to spend a day at leisure, yet a higher *purpose* compels us to go to work instead. Similarly, God's saving purposes transcend His desires. (There *is* a crucial difference, of course: We might be compelled by circumstances beyond our control to choose what we do not desire. But God's choices are determined by nothing other than His own sovereign, eternal purpose.)

God genuinely “**desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.**” Yet, in “**the eternal purpose which He carried out in Christ Jesus our Lord**” ([Ephesians 3:11](#)), He chose only the elect “**out of the world**” ([John 17:6](#)) and passed over the rest, leaving them to the damning consequences of their sin (cf. [Romans 1:18–32](#)). The culpability for their damnation rests entirely on them because of their sin and rejection of God. God is not to blame for their unbelief.

Since “**God desires all men to be saved,**” we are not required to ascertain that a person is elect before praying for that person's salvation. God alone knows who all the elect are ([2 Timothy 2:19](#)). We may pray “**on behalf of all men**” with full assurance that such prayers are “**good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior.**” After all, “**the Lord is gracious and merciful; slow to anger and great in loving-kindness. The Lord is good to all, and His mercies are over all His works**” ([Psalm 145:8–9](#)).

The Lord eagerly accepts prayer for the lost because it is consistent with His desire for their salvation. Such prayer is also consistent with His nature as Savior. His saving character is manifested through His Son, Jesus Christ ([1 Timothy 2:5–6](#)). God is the “**Savior of all men**” in a temporal sense, but “**especially of believers**” in an eternal sense ([1 Timothy 4:10](#)).

When God “**desires all men to be saved,**” He is being consistent with who He is. In [Isaiah 45:22](#), God said, “**Turn to Me, and be saved, all the ends of the earth.**” [Isaiah 55:1](#) invites “**every one who thirsts**” to “**come to the waters**” of salvation. Again, in [Ezekiel 18:23, 32](#), God states very clearly that He does not desire that the wicked should perish, but that they would sincerely repent (cf. [Ezekiel 33:11](#)). In the New Testament, Peter writes, “**The Lord is not slow about His promise, as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing for any to perish but for all to come to repentance**” ([2 Peter 3:9](#)).