

*If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed* (John 8:36).

One of the many prerogatives Kings exercise is freeing prisoners from their incarceration.

President Obama exercised this right before he left office:

"Today, President Obama granted clemency to 231 deserving individuals — the most individual acts of clemency granted in a single day by any president in this nation's history. With today's 153 commutations, the President has now commuted the sentences of 1,176 individuals, including 395 life sentences. The President also granted pardons to 78 individuals, bringing his total number of pardons to 148. Today's acts of clemency — and the mercy the President has shown his 1,324 clemency recipients — exemplify his belief that America is a nation of second chances."

According to the article, Obama selected these prisoners because in his view they were 'deserving.'

As King, Jesus exercises His sovereign right to set the captives free from bondage to sin and Satan.

He's been doing this since the creation of man.

Similar to Obama, King Jesus does not set all men free.

However, unlike Obama, King Jesus does not select men who are 'deserving.'

This crucial difference cannot be emphasized too strongly.

To misunderstand the difference between deserving and undeserving is to misunderstand the difference between God's free grace versus man's merit.

In studying the remarks of those in this Forum who oppose the notion that God elects certain sinners without consideration of anything meritorious or favorable in them, they all insist man's faith is the motivating factor in God's electing them and ultimately regenerating them.

In their view man's faith merits election and regeneration.

Thus, in essence, the central point of contention between the two groups revolves around the question of man deserving, meriting grace versus man undeserving, not meriting the grace he receives.

In this writer's view, in no uncertain terms the latter is the biblical way.

The Apostle Paul constantly brings this truth to the forefront of his epistles.

He personally experienced the undeserving, unmerited saving grace of the Lord Jesus Christ.

This did not occur while in deep prayer, asking God to reveal the truth.

Nor did it occur while studying the Pentateuch.

It was through the direct revelation of Jesus Christ, who called him and gave him his marching orders, though Paul was intent on killing Christians.

Christ's intention overrode Paul's intention.

Abraham was not looking for the true God when the Lord called him, giving him his marching orders.

Neither were the Apostles, who were quite busy attempting to eke out a living.

Neither was Adam looking for God after partaking of the forbidden fruit.

It is God who does the seeking.

*For the Son of man came to seek and to save that which was lost* (Luke 19:10).

Though many today have heard the Gospel, not all have been given ears to hear with a heart to believe.

*He that is of God heareth God's words: ye therefore hear them not, because ye are not of God* (John 8:47).

Those who hear are 'of God,' meaning they were elected by God as His own, before they were born.

At the appropriate time, place and circumstance, God reveals His eternal purpose for them that are 'of God.'

In the Old Testament it was not uncommon for God to speak either directly to 'His own,' or through His prophets who heard directly from God.

Today we have God's whole counsel and Word which He commands us to hear and believe.

Today the Lord sends out His Word by many ways and means.

But unless the Spirit executes the miraculous work of creation by giving ears to hear with hearts to believe, the Word is either of no effect or of temporary value (cf. Parable of the Soils).

*For our Gospel came not unto you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance* (1 Thess. 1:5).