

Systematic Theology, Lesson 24: Soteriology: The Doctrine of Salvation, Part 2

1. Review

- a. The word “salvation” is a broad word encompassing many other words (e.g., election, regeneration, conversion, etc.). These other words can be put into an order.
 - b. *Ordo Solutis*: the order of salvation
 - i. Election
 - ii. Calling
 - iii. Regeneration
 - iv. Repentance
 - v. Faith
 - vi. Justification
 - vii. Adoption
 - viii. Sanctification
 - ix. Perseverance
 - x. Glorification
 - c. Union with Christ
 - i. Union with Christ is the _____ organizing theme of salvation.
 - ii. All of salvation, from eternity past to eternity future, is done in union with Christ, even election.
 - iii. Thus, salvation is not fundamentally a process but a Person.
- ### 2. Election
- a. Terminology

- i. “Sovereignty” encompasses two doctrines: God’s “decree” and “providence.” A subset of God’s “decree” is “predestination.” And “predestination” encompasses two related parts: “election” and “reprobation.”
- ii. The Scriptures speak of “election” in more than one sense:
 - 1. The election of Israel (**Deut 4:37; 7:6-8; 10:15; Hos 13:5**).
 - 2. The election of people for office or special service (**Ex 3; Deut 18:5; 1 Sam 10:24; Ps 78:70; Jer 1:5; John 6:70; Acts 9:15**).
 - 3. The election of individuals to receive eternal salvation. To this topic we now turn . . .

b. Defining election

- i. Before the foundation of the world God chose a certain number of sinful individuals for complete salvation based solely on his sovereign grace.
- ii. The definition has five essential parts:
 - 1. Timing: “Before the foundation of the world . . .”
 - 2. Cause: “. . . God chose . . .”
 - 3. Recipients: “. . . a certain number of sinful individuals . . .”
 - 4. Goal: “. . . for complete salvation . . .”
 - 5. Basis: “. . . based solely on his sovereign grace.”

c. Scriptural evidence

- i. Timing: before _____
 - 1. **Eph 1:4:** just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we would be holy and blameless before Him.
 - 2. **2 Thess 2:13:** But we should always give thanks to God for you, brethren beloved by the Lord, because God has chosen you from the beginning for salvation through sanctification by the Spirit and faith in the truth.

ii. Cause: God chose

1. **1 Cor 1:26-29:** For consider your calling, brethren, that there were not many wise according to the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble; but God has chosen the foolish things of the world to shame the wise, and God has chosen the weak things of the world to shame the things which are strong, and the base things of the world and the despised God has chosen, the things that are not, so that He may nullify the things that are, so that no man may boast before God.
2. **1 Thess 1:4:** knowing, brethren beloved by God, His choice of you;
3. **Jas 2:5:** Listen, my beloved brethren: did not God choose the poor of this world *to be* rich in faith and heirs of the kingdom which He promised to those who love Him?

iii. Recipients: sinful individuals

1. **John 6:37:** All that the Father gives Me will come to Me, and the one who comes to Me I will certainly not cast out.
2. **John 10:29:** My Father, who has given them to Me, is greater than all; and no one is able to snatch *them* out of the Father's hand.
3. **John 17:6:** I have manifested your name to the people whom you gave me out of the world. Yours they were, and you gave them to me, and they have kept your word (cf. 17:2, 11, 24).
4. **Rom 8:29:** For those whom He foreknew, He also predestined *to become* conformed to the image of His Son, so that He would be the firstborn among many brethren.

iv. Goal: complete _____

1. **Rom 8:30:** and these whom He predestined, He also called; and these whom He called, He also justified; and these whom He justified, He also glorified.
2. **Eph 1:5-6, 7a:** just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we would be holy and blameless before Him. In love He predestined us to adoption as sons through Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the kind intention of His will, . . . In Him we

have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of His grace.

v. Basis: grace _____

1. **Rom 9:11, 16:** for though *the twins* were not yet born and had not done anything good or bad, so that God's purpose according to His choice would stand, not because of works but because of Him who calls. . . . So then it [election] does not depend on the man who wills or the man who runs, but on God who has mercy.
2. **Eph 1:5, 11:** He predestined us to adoption as sons through Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the kind intention of His will, . . . also we have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to His purpose who works all things after the counsel of His will.
3. **2 Tim 1:9:** who has saved us and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace which was granted us in Christ Jesus from all eternity.

d. Doctrinal formulation

- i. This view of election is sometimes called “unconditional election” meaning that election is not based on any conditions of man, but it is based on God’s sovereign grace alone.

ii. **GCBC Statement of Faith:**

(Paragraph 1): We teach that election is the act of God by which, before the foundation of the world, He chose in Christ those whom He graciously regenerates, saves, and sanctifies.

(Paragraph 3): We teach that the unmerited favor that God grants to totally depraved sinners is not related to any initiative of their own part nor to God's anticipation of what they might do by their own will, but is solely of His sovereign grace and mercy.

e. Common objections

- i. Prayer: If unconditional election is true, how can I pray for a person’s salvation if God already determined it beforehand?

1. Prayer and election are perfectly compatible because not only did God ordain the election of certain people, he ordained the prayers for the salvation of those certain people.
 2. God is not bound by time as we are; God simply is. Thus, when we think about unconditional election before the foundation of the world, our minds, since they are bound by time, go back in time as far as we can imagine. But God is not bound by time. Therefore, I can pray that a person is one of God's elect because I am praying to God who is not bound by time. My prayers today in 2016 can influence, because God has ordained them to, the outcome of God's eternal choice of individuals.
- ii. Justice: If unconditional election is true, God is not fair.
1. God, not us, determines what is fair (**Rom 9:20**).
 2. In human terms, if God was completely "fair" no one would be saved. God does not _____ salvation to anyone; he is not obligated to show mercy. But God does show mercy to some (**Rom 9:14-18**).
- iii. Evangelism: If unconditional election is true, God's elect will be saved whether they hear and believe the gospel or not.
1. The Bible is clear that unbelievers must hear and believe the gospel in order to be saved (**Rom 10:14, 17**).
 2. Therefore, God's means of saving his elect is through evangelism. In other words, God has decreed election and he has decreed the means of election, namely, evangelism (see below for more on evangelism).
 3. **GCBC doctrinal statement:** (Paragraph 3) We teach that sovereign election does not contradict or negate the responsibility of man to repent and trust Christ as Savior and Lord. Nevertheless, since sovereign grace includes the means of receiving the gift of salvation as well as the gift itself, sovereign election will result in what God determines. All whom the Father calls to Himself will come in faith and all who come in faith the Father will receive.
- iv. Foreknowledge: Unconditional election is not true because God elects people based on his foreknowledge of man's faith.

1. Commonly the appeal is made to **Rom 8:29**: “For those whom He foreknew, He also predestined *to become* conformed to the image of His Son, so that He would be the firstborn among many brethren.”
2. Three observations:
 - a. The meaning of the word “foreknowledge” in this text here means to “fore-love.”
 - b. God foreknows people, not facts about them. “For those whom He foreknew.”
 - c. Scripture never speaks of man’s faith as the basis for God’s choosing. On the contrary, it speaks of God’s sovereign grace alone as the basis for God’s choosing (see above).
3. Conclusion: election is not based on God’s foreknowledge of man’s faith (i.e., “conditional election”) but based on God’s sovereign grace alone.

f. Practical implications

i. Election _____ believers.

1. **Rom 8:28-29**: And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to *His* purpose. For those whom He foreknew, He also predestined *to become* conformed to the image of His Son, so that He would be the firstborn among many brethren.
2. **2 Thess 2:13, 16-17**: But we should always give thanks to God for you, brethren beloved by the Lord, because God has chosen you from the beginning for salvation through sanctification by the Spirit and faith in the truth. . . . Now may our Lord Jesus Christ Himself and God our Father, who has loved us and given us eternal comfort and good hope by grace, comfort and strengthen your hearts in every good work and word.

ii. Election produces humility.

1. **Rom 11:18-20**: do not be arrogant toward the branches; but if you are arrogant, *remember that* it is not you who supports the root,

but the root *supports* you. You will say then, “Branches were broken off so that I might be grafted in.” Quite right, they were broken off for their unbelief, but you stand by your faith. Do not be conceited, but fear.

2. **Col 3:12:** So, as those who have been chosen of God, holy and beloved, put on a heart of compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience;

iii. Election _____ evangelism.

1. **2 Tim 2:10:** For this reason I endure all things for the sake of those who are chosen, so that they also may obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus *and* with *it* eternal glory.
2. **Acts 18:9-10:** And the Lord said to Paul in the night by a vision, “Do not be afraid *any longer*, but go on speaking and do not be silent; for I am with you, and no man will attack you in order to harm you, for I have many people in this city.”

iv. Election elicits praise.

1. **Eph 1:5-6, 12:** He predestined us to adoption as sons through Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the kind intention of His will, to the praise of the glory of His grace, which He freely bestowed on us in the Beloved. . . . to the end that we who were the first to hope in Christ would be to the praise of His glory.
2. **1 Thess 1:2, 4:** We give thanks to God always for all of you, making mention of you in our prayers; . . . knowing, brethren beloved by God, His choice of you;

3. Reprobation

- a. If God chooses some, then it logical follows that he does not chose some. This is the doctrine of reprobation.
- b. Defining reprobation
 - i. Before the foundation of the world God passes over a certain number of sinful individuals for salvation to the manifestation of his justice.
 - ii. Notice that God “passes over a certain number of sinful individuals.”

1. God did not say to individuals: "heaven . . . heaven . . . hell . . . hell . . . heaven . . ." (This is sometimes called "positive-positive double predestination.")
2. God did say to some individuals, in view of their sinfulness: "heaven . . . heaven . . . heaven . . . heaven . . ." (This is sometimes called "positive-negative double predestination.")

c. Scriptural evidence

- i. **Rom 9:13, 17-22:** Just as it is written, "JACOB I LOVED, BUT ESAU I HATED." . . . For the Scripture says to Pharaoh, "FOR THIS VERY PURPOSE I RAISED YOU UP, TO DEMONSTRATE MY POWER IN YOU, AND THAT MY NAME MIGHT BE PROCLAIMED THROUGHOUT THE WHOLE EARTH." So then He has mercy on whom He desires, and He hardens whom He desires. You will say to me then, "Why does He still find fault? For who resists His will?" On the contrary, who are you, O man, who answers back to God? The thing molded will not say to the molder, "Why did you make me like this," will it? Or does not the potter have a right over the clay, to make from the same lump one vessel for honorable use and another for common use? What if God, although willing to demonstrate His wrath and to make His power known, endured with much patience vessels of wrath prepared for destruction?
- ii. **1 Pet 2:8:** and, "A STONE OF STUMBLING AND A ROCK OF OFFENSE"; for they stumble because they are disobedient to the word, and to this doom they were also appointed.
- iii. **Jude 4:** For certain persons have crept in unnoticed, those who were long beforehand marked out for this condemnation, ungodly persons who turn the grace of our God into licentiousness and deny our only Master and Lord, Jesus Christ.

d. Our response

- i. _____: **Rom 9:1-3:** I am telling the truth in Christ, I am not lying, my conscience testifies with me in the Holy Spirit, that I have great sorrow and unceasing grief in my heart. For I could wish that I myself were accursed, *separated* from Christ for the sake of my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh.
- ii. Humility: **Rom 9:20:** On the contrary, who are you, O man, who answers back to God? The thing molded will not say to the molder, "Why did you make me like this," will it?

iii. Praise: **Rom 11:33-36:** Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments and unfathomable His ways! For WHO HAS KNOWN THE MIND OF THE LORD, OR WHO BECAME HIS COUNSELOR? Or WHO HAS FIRST GIVEN TO HIM THAT IT MIGHT BE PAID BACK TO HIM AGAIN? For from Him and through Him and to Him are all things. To Him *be* the glory forever. Amen.