

The Sovereignty of God

Part 4: In Salvation

Human Inability

As we examine these matters in the Bible, we will use relevant biblical terms as much as possible. The Bible is very clear about defining its terms. When we use **biblical terms** and their biblical definitions, we have God's true Word on the subjects we're studying. It helps us avoid man made labels that confuse the issues and it defines terms with biblical words that come out of the biblical context which hold their truest meaning.

TULIP is not the best: In seeking to use biblical terms to describe the issue at hand, we quickly discover that the acronym, ***TULIP***, is inadequate. The following terms describe much more accurately what the Bible teaches about the Five Points under discussion.

- Natural Ability or Natural Inability
- Prescient²⁴ Election or Sovereign Election
- Universal Redemption or Particular Redemption/Definite Atonement
- Human Resistance or Effectual Calling
- Falling from Grace or Eternal Security

The chart below clarifies these contrasting terms.

²⁴ having foreknowledge or foresight

Five Important Biblical Doctrines Related to Predestination in Salvation			
Semi-Pelagian		Augustinian	
<u>Synergistic</u> Salvation is accomplished as man and God cooperate. Divine Grace and the human will work together for salvation to happen.		<u>Monergistic</u> Salvation is wholly the work of the Holy Spirit in regeneration. Mankind possesses no inclination toward the Gospel in his natural state and needs Divine Grace to be enabled to believe.	
Man is naturally able to understand and believe the Gospel apart from Divine enablement.	Natural Ability	Natural Inability	Man is naturally unable to understand and believe the Gospel apart from Divine enablement.
The condition for salvation is faith which man exercises of his own ability. God chooses those who choose Him.	Prescient Election	Sovereign Election	The condition for salvation is the Sovereign electing will of God alone.
Christ's redeeming work made it possible for everyone to be saved but did not actually secure the salvation of anyone.	Universal Redemption	Particular Redemption	Christ did in fact secure the salvation of His Church individually and definitely.
Man's will is free and he can successfully resist the Spirit's call.	Human Resistance	Effectual Calling	The calling of God to the elect does effect salvation infallibly.
Because faith is the necessary condition for Salvation, it can be lost when man discontinues his faith.	Falling from Grace	Eternal Security	The nature of saving faith is eternal and cannot be reversed.

Question #116: Carefully consider the two immediately preceding charts. Then explain in your own words why the terms used in the chart immediately above are preferable.

Let us now look to the Bible for divine insight on these issues.

What Does the Bible Say About Human Inability?

The Bible clearly affirms *“there is no one who does good, not even one”* (Psalm 14:3). Jesus said, *“No one is good except God alone”* (Mark 10:18). We know from observation that people persistently sin against God from earliest childhood through old age. And the Word of God confirms this observation again and again. Psalm 51:5 says people are steeped in sin from birth. Romans 3:23 and 5:12 affirm that human beings in their natural state are sinners who fall far short of God’s required standard. Humanity fell into sin and darkness when Adam and Eve ate the forbidden fruit and transgressed God’s clear commandment (Original Sin). Their rebellion corrupted their entire being, body and soul (mind, will, emotions); and this corruption was passed to all their descendants (Romans 5:12). In fulfillment of God’s Word, Adam and Eve died, both

spiritually and physically (the aging process began). Unfettered communion was broken between man and God; we no longer *naturally* understand the things of God nor do we desire to do so. Humanity is accurately described in Scripture as “*dead in . . . trespasses and sins*” and in need of new life (Ephesians 2:1-5, Colosians 2:13). *The biblical truth is, mankind neither pleases God nor seeks after God. In our natural state, we do not possess the ability to savingly understand the things of God (that is the spiritual matters of the kingdom of God relating to man’s need to be saved and God’s provision to save Him).*

Natural Human Inability

What Does the Bible Say?

Dead in trespasses and sins – Eph 2:3, Col 2:13

Hostile to God – Rom 8:7

Cannot submit to God’s Law – Rom 8:7

Cannot Please God – Rom 8:8

Cannot understand the things of God - 1 Cor 2:14, Rom 3:11

Cannot accept the Holy Spirit – John 14:17

Cannot see the Kingdom of God – John 3:3

Cannot hear the Words of Christ – John 8:43

Cannot see the Light of the Gospel (Blinded minds) – 2 Cor 4:4

Thinks the Gospel foolishness – 1 Cor 1:18

Does not seek for God – Rom 3:11

Does not fear God – Rom 3:18

Heart is deceitful and desperately wicked – Jer 17:9

Without God given faith our deeds are sinful – Rom 14:23

Question #117: Examine the chart above very closely. Read the referenced Scriptures and pay close attention to the biblical words used to describe the condition of unredeemed people. Then write a *concise* description of natural human inability to respond to God in saving faith. _____

Unable to see, hear, or understand

The Bible speaks of humanity’s fallen nature by using words like *cannot*. It is not that we *will not* but that we *cannot* understand the Gospel without the work of divine grace. The Bible plainly declares that *fallen humanity has a natural inability to see, hear, or understand, the things of God*. Jesus makes it clear that mankind has an INABILITY TO SEE the Kingdom apart from regeneration.

John 3:3: Jesus answered and said to him, “Truly, truly, I say to you, **unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.**”

The Apostle Paul affirms the same truth.

2 Corinthians 4:3-4: ³And even if **our gospel is veiled**, it is veiled to those who are perishing, ⁴in whose case the god of this world has **blinded the minds of the unbelieving**, that they might not **see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ**, who is the image of God.

By saying “our gospel is veiled . . . to those who are perishing,” the Bible affirms that the unsaved are **unable to see** the gospel. Veils distort or obstruct our vision and keep us from seeing clearly. This evil work of veiling the gospel is attributed to Satan (the god of this world): “. . . the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelieving, that they might not see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ.” The gospel is veiled to unbelievers because Satan has **blinded their minds**. Blinding the mind is a biblical idiom describing an inability to understand. The “**light of the gospel of the glory of Christ**” is incomprehensible to unbelievers because they cannot grasp who He is and why they need Him. Apart from God’s enabling grace, the beautiful treasure of Christ, and all that He is and the essential truths about Him, are not seen and understood in their heart and mind.

Likewise, in the passage below, Jesus makes it clear that fallen humanity has an **INABILITY TO HEAR** God’s Word.

John 8:43: Why do you not understand what I am saying? It is because **you cannot hear My word.**

Jesus said, “**you cannot hear My word**,” to ungodly Pharisees who claimed that Jesus’ witness of Himself was not true (John 8:13). He affirmed that they could not understand the truth of His words because they were not of God but of their father, the devil (v. 44). The word “**cannot**” speaks of their inability. They “**do not understand**” because they “**cannot hear**.” And they “**cannot hear**” because they are not of God, but of the devil. This is a consistent theme in the teaching of Jesus. In the following passage, He tells His disciples that the reason they understand “the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven” and others do not is that they have been given understanding by God whereas others have not.

Matthew 13:10-13: ¹⁰And the disciples came and said to Him, “Why do You speak to them in parables?” ¹¹And He answered and said to them, “**To you it has been granted to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it has not been granted.**” ¹²For whoever has, to him shall more be given, and he shall have an abundance; but whoever does not have, even what he has shall be taken away from him. ¹³Therefore I speak to them in parables; **because while seeing they do not see, and while hearing they do not hear, nor do they understand.**”

In the passage below, Paul also affirms that unredeemed people cannot understand the things of God because they have an **INABILITY TO UNDERSTAND**.

1 Corinthians 2:14: But a **natural man does not accept the things of the Spirit of God**; for they are foolishness to him, and **he cannot understand them**, because they are spiritually appraised.

Paul, writing inspired Scripture, explains that “a natural man does not accept the things of the Spirit of God; for they are foolishness to him.” The “natural man” Paul refers to is a person who is unredeemed and does not have the Holy Spirit living within him (this is in contrast to the spiritual

man who has the Spirit, after regeneration, v-12, v-16). Such a person does not understand spiritual truth. All thoughts of God, sin, being saved, and reconciliation with God seem foolish to him so he will not accept nor understand that they are true. His thinking is so corrupted, “he **cannot** understand” God’s truth. The word “**cannot**” speaks of man’s ability, not his willingness, although because he is **unable** to understand he is therefore also unwilling, as it states, he “**does not accept.**” Spiritual truth must be “**spiritually appraised.**” The natural man “**does not accept**” spiritual truth because he has no natural ability to “**understand**” spiritual things. This is because he does not have the Spirit (given at regeneration) by which he can “**appraise**” spiritual things. Only those indwelt by God’s Spirit can “**appraise**” spiritual things.

Question #118: Explain in your own words the **significance** of the Bible’s teaching that fallen people **cannot** accept the Gospel by an act of their own will. In other words, what does this clear biblical teaching reveal about the desperate state of unredeemed people? _____

Mankind is in rebellion against God and enslaved to sin

The **Bible plainly declares** that mankind is naturally in a state of rebellion against God.

Romans 3:9-12, 18: ⁹What then? Are we better than they? Not at all; for we have already charged that both Jews and Greeks are all under sin; ¹⁰as it is written, “**There is none righteous, not even one;** ¹¹**There is none who understands, There is none who seeks for God;** ¹²All have turned aside, together they have become useless; **There is none who does good, There is not even one.** . . . ¹⁸**There is no fear of God before their eyes.**”

Here Paul describes mankind in relation to God. There are **none** righteous, **none** who understand, and **none** who seek for God. **All** have turned aside. There are **none** who do good, and **none** who fear God. We know these are not general statements about most people, because Paul twice uses the phrase “**not even one.**” In doing so, he emphasizes the **universality** of mankind’s rebellion against God’s sovereign authority, his doing of good before God, and his seeking and understanding of God.

Later in Romans, Paul affirms the thoroughness of mankind’s bent toward evil. He affirms that unregenerate people have neither desire nor ability to submit to God. Their minds are set on the flesh and they are by nature hostile toward God.

Romans 8:5-8: ⁵For **those who are according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh,** but those who are according to the Spirit, the things of the Spirit. ⁶For **the mind set on the flesh is death, but the mind set on the Spirit is life and peace,** ⁷because **the mind set on the flesh is hostile toward God; for it does not subject itself to the law of God, for it is not even able to do so;** ⁸and **those who are in the flesh cannot please God.**

Paul says the natural state of all men is “according to the flesh” and that they naturally “set their minds on the things of the flesh.” Given man’s sinful nature, it makes sense that “the mind set on the flesh is hostile toward God; for it does not subject itself to the law of God, for it is not even

able to do so.” People who live *in the flesh* are ruled by their sinful nature. Their fallen minds are “*hostile toward God.*” They do not “*subject*” *themselves “to the Law of God”* because they are “*not even able to do so.*” Note well that Paul is describing *inability* here, not unwillingness. He is not saying they simply *don’t desire* to obey God; he is saying they *cannot* obey God—and that *the reason* they cannot obey God is that they are *in the flesh*.

The Bible consistently declares that mankind is *enslaved to sin*. God declares through the prophet Jeremiah that the fallen human “heart is more deceitful than all else and is desperately sick” (17:9). In other words, unredeemed people are *bound to sin* and naturally prone to evil *because* they are in the flesh. *The following passages reveal that unredeemed people are not free to obey God.* Rather they are in “*bondage to sin*” and thus *unable* to obey God with right motives. **Man’s will is not free** to obey God, but rather in bondage to sin.

John 8:34: Jesus answered them, “Truly, truly, I say to you, **everyone who commits sin is the slave of sin.**”

Romans 6:5-7: ⁵For if we have become united with Him in the likeness of His death, certainly we shall be also in the likeness of His resurrection, ⁶knowing this, that our old self was crucified with Him, **that our body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves to sin;** ⁷for he who has died is freed from sin.

Romans 7:14: For we know that the Law is spiritual; but I am of flesh, **sold into bondage to sin.**

Titus 3:3-7: ³For we also once were foolish ourselves, **disobedient, deceived, enslaved to various lusts and pleasures,** spending our life in malice and envy, hateful, hating one another. ⁴But when the kindness of God our Savior and His love for mankind appeared, ⁵He saved us, not on the basis of deeds which we have done in righteousness, but according to His mercy, **by the washing of regeneration and renewing by the Holy Spirit,** ⁶whom He poured out upon us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior, ⁷that being justified by His grace we might be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life.

This idea is further clarified in passages that state *no one who is unregenerate (and therefore a slave of sin) does good (by God’s standard)*. Only those who have been cleansed by the regenerating power of the Holy Spirit are *able* to please God in any sense.

Romans 3:12: All have turned aside, together they have become useless; **There is none who does good, There is not even one.**

Isaiah 64:6: For all of us have become like one who is unclean, And **all our righteous deeds are like a filthy garment;** And all of us wither like a leaf, And our iniquities, like the wind, take us away.

Romans 14:23: **... and whatever is not from faith is sin.**

The Bible clearly affirms that the natural person, apart from the regeneration of the Holy Spirit (being born again), abides in a state of sin and rebellion in relation to God and is therefore *by nature, an object of God’s wrath*.

Ephesians 2:3: Among them we too all formerly lived in the lusts of our flesh, indulging the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and **were by nature children of wrath,** even as the rest.

Consider the following chart in light of the biblical truths we have just studied.

Semi-Pelagian		Augustinian	
Man is naturally able to understand and believe the Gospel apart from Divine enablement.	Natural Ability	Natural Inability	Man is naturally unable to understand and believe the Gospel apart from Divine enablement.

Question #119: Does Scripture support the idea that man is “naturally able” to understand and believe the Gospel apart from divine enablement?_____List specific statements from Scripture to support your answer._____

The fact is that divine enablement given by God’s grace is *necessary* to understand and believe the Gospel. This divine enablement is called *regeneration*. We will discuss regeneration at length below.

The following statements reflect the biblical basis of the Augustinian view of Salvation.

Westminster Confession of Faith - Of Free Will

3. Man, by his Fall into a state of sin, hath wholly lost all ability of will to any spiritual good accompanying salvation; so as a natural man, being altogether averse from that good, and dead in sin, is not able, by his own strength, to convert himself, or to prepare himself thereunto.

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Therefore all men are conceived in sin, and are by nature children of wrath, incapable of saving good, prone to evil, dead in sin, and in bondage thereto; and without the regenerating grace of the Holy Spirit, they are neither able nor willing to return to God, to reform the depravity of their nature, or to dispose themselves to reformation

Not sick, but dead

The Bible plainly declares that unredeemed sinners are thoroughly corrupt in their whole being. It describes unredeemed humanity as not good, unable to do good, hating God’s truth, drinking in sin like water, defiled in both conscience and mind, and unable to please God or submit to the law of God.

Romans 7:18: For I know **that nothing good dwells in me, that is, in my flesh**; for the wishing is present in me, but the doing of the good is not.

Isaiah 64:6: For all of us have become like one who is unclean, And **all our righteous deeds are like a filthy garment**; And all of us wither like a leaf, And our iniquities, like the wind, take us away.

Job 15:14-16: ¹⁴What is man, that he should be pure, Or he who is born of a woman, that he should be righteous? ¹⁵Behold, He puts no trust in His holy ones, And the heavens are not pure in His sight; ¹⁶**How much less one who is detestable and corrupt, Man, who drinks iniquity like water!**

John 3:19-20: ¹⁹And this is the judgment, that the light is come into the world, and **men loved the darkness rather than the light; for their deeds were evil.** ²⁰**For everyone who does evil hates the light,** and does not come to the light, lest his deeds should be exposed.

Titus 1:15: To the pure, all things are pure; but to **those who are defiled and unbelieving, nothing is pure, but both their mind and their conscience are defiled.**

Romans 8:6-8: ⁶For the mind set on the flesh is death, but the mind set on the Spirit is life and peace, ⁷because **the mind set on the flesh is hostile toward God; for it does not subject itself to the law of God, for it is not even able to do so;** ⁸**and those who are in the flesh cannot please God.**

Question #120: Based on the verses referenced above, write a brief character sketch of a fallen sinner. _____

Sin has thoroughly corrupted the nature of mankind. It has not simply inflicted serious wounds; it has killed our ability to respond to God. **The Bible plainly declares** that, apart from a divine working of new life, we are **dead in transgressions and sins** and wholly insensitive to spiritual things.

Colossians 2:13-14: ¹³And when **you were dead in your transgressions** and the uncircumcision of your flesh, He made you alive together with Him, having forgiven us all our transgressions, ¹⁴having canceled out the certificate of debt consisting of decrees against us and which was hostile to us; and He has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross.

Ephesians 2:1-2: ¹And **you were dead in your trespasses and sins**, ²in which you formerly walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, of the spirit that is now working in the sons of disobedience.

All Christian believers **were dead in trespasses and sins** before God gave them new life. The Lord Jesus Himself frequently refers to unbelievers as “dead” and in desperate need of regeneration. Without regeneration **no one can see the kingdom of God** and come to faith in Jesus Christ (John 3:3-6, 6:65). The just consequence of Adam’s original sin was the spiritual death of all his descendants (Romans 5:12-19). All human beings are physically born **spiritually dead** and thus live **in bondage to trespass and sin**. In that condition, they are unable to hear, understand, and respond to the things of God and His kingdom (1 Corinthians 2:14; Romans 8:5-8). The Bible speaks clearly and definitively on human depravity, i.e., natural inability to respond rightly to God.

Romans 5:12-19: ¹²Therefore, just as through **one man sin entered into the world, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men**, because all sinned—. . . ¹⁷For if **by the transgression of the one, death reigned through the one**, much more those who receive the abundance of grace and the gift of righteousness will reign in life through the One, Jesus Christ. ¹⁸So then as **through one transgression there resulted condemnation to all men**, even so through one act of righteousness there resulted justification of life to all men. ¹⁹For as **through one man’s disobedience the many were made sinners**, even so through the obedience of the One the many will be made righteous.

John 5:21-24: ²¹For just as the Father raises the dead and gives them life, even so **the Son**

also gives life to whom He wishes. ²²For not even the Father judges anyone, but He has given all judgment to the Son, ²³in order that all may honor the Son, even as they honor the Father. He who does not honor the Son does not honor the Father who sent Him. ²⁴Truly, truly, I say to you, he who hears My word, and believes Him who sent Me, has eternal life, and does not come into judgment, but **has passed out of death into life.**

Matthew 8:22: But Jesus said to him, “Follow Me; and **allow the dead to bury their own dead.**”

Luke 15:22-24, 32: ²²But the father said to his slaves, “Quickly bring out the best robe and put it on him, and put a ring on his hand and sandals on his feet; ²³and bring the fattened calf, kill it, and us eat and be merry; ²⁴for **this son of mine was dead, and has come to life again;** he was lost and has been found.” And they began to be merry. . . . ³²“But we had to be merry and rejoice, for **this brother of yours was dead and has begun to live,** and was lost and has been found.”

1 John 3:14: We know that we have **passed out of death into life,** because we love the brethren. He who does not love abides in death.

Consider how well this image of physical death corresponds to our sinful state apart from regeneration by the Holy Spirit. Dead people cannot see, hear, move, talk, think, understand, or respond to any kind of stimulus in any way. They are wholly unresponsive and unable to change.

John 11:43-44: ⁴³And when He had said these things, **He cried out with a loud voice, “Lazarus, come forth.”** ⁴⁴**He who had died came forth,** bound hand and foot with wrappings; and his face was wrapped around with a cloth. Jesus said to them, “Unbind him, and let him go.”

Romans 5:6: For **while we were still helpless,** at the right time Christ died for the ungodly.

Jeremiah 13:23: **Can the Ethiopian change his skin Or the leopard his spots?** Then you also can do good Who are accustomed to doing evil.

Consider the statement by **Albert Barnes** concerning man’s dead condition: “A *corpse is insensible. It sees not, and hears not, and feels not. The sound of music, and the voice of friendship and of alarm, do not arouse it. The rose and the lily breath forth their fragrance around it, but the corpse perceives it not. The world is busy and active around it, but it is unconscious of it all. It sees no beauty in the landscape; hears not the voice of a friend; looks not upon the glorious sun and stars; and is unaffected by the running stream and the rolling ocean. So with the sinner in regard to the spiritual and eternal world, he sees no beauty in religion; he hears not the call of God; he is unaffected by the dying love of the Saviour; and he has no interest in eternal realities. In all these he feels no more concern, and sees no more beauty, than a dead man does in the world around him. Such is, in fact, the condition of a sinful world. There is, indeed, life and energy and motion. There are vast plans and projects, and the world is intensely active. But, in regard to religion, all is dead. The sinner sees no beauty there; and no human power can arouse him to act for God, any more than human power can rouse the sleeping dead, or open the sightless eye-balls on the light of day. The same power is needed in the conversion of a sinner which is needed in raising the dead; and one and the other alike demonstrate the omnipotence of him who can do it.*”²⁵

Question #121: In your own words, describe the meaning and consequences of being dead in

²⁵ (from Barnes' Notes on Eph 2:1, Electronic Database Copyright © 1997, 2003, 2005, 2006 by Biblesoft, Inc.)

trespasses and sins. _____

Plainly stated, mankind is dead and in need of new life. Correcting our sinful state requires resurrection from the dead, something only God can do. The Bible plainly declares that salvation is the *monergistic* work of God,²⁶ by which He infuses spiritual life into the spiritually dead. The theological term for this is regeneration.

Ephesians 2:4-6: ⁴But God, being rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, ⁵even **when we were dead in our transgressions, made us alive together with Christ** (by grace you have been saved), ⁶and raised us up with Him, and seated us with Him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus,

John 5:21: For **just as the Father raises the dead and gives them life, even so the Son also gives life to whom He wishes.**

Note how the Bible attributes salvation *wholly to the work of God* by affirming the inability of fallen sinners to come to Christ apart from divine grace. Note well from these verses that no one can be saved apart from God's saving work of *regeneration*.

John 6:44, 65: ⁴⁴**No one can come to Me, unless the Father who sent Me draws him;** and I will raise him up on the last day. . . . ⁶⁵And He was saying, "For this reason I have said to you, **that no one can come to Me, unless it has been granted him from the Father.**"

Matthew 19:23-26: ²³And Jesus said to His disciples, "Truly I say to you, it is hard for a rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven. ²⁴And again I say to you, **it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God.**" ²⁵And when the disciples heard this, they were very astonished and said, "Then who can be saved?" ²⁶And looking upon them Jesus said to them, **"With men this is impossible, but with God all things are possible."**

Titus 3:4-7: ⁴But when the kindness of God our Savior and His love for mankind appeared, ⁵He saved us, **not on the basis of deeds which we have done in righteousness, but according to His mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewing by the Holy Spirit,** ⁶whom He poured out upon us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior, ⁷that being justified by His grace we might be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life.

Note also how the Bible attributes salvation *wholly to the work of God* by affirming God's divine enablement to be a *monergistic* work.

Deuteronomy 30:6: Moreover **the LORD your God will circumcise your heart** and the heart of your descendants, to love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul, in order that you may live.

Ezekiel 36:26-27: ²⁶Moreover, **I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you;** and **I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh.**

²⁷And **I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes,** and you will be careful to observe My ordinances.

²⁶ *Monergism* holds that the "grace of God is the only efficient cause in beginning and effecting conversion." It is the opposite of *synergism*, which affirms "the doctrine of divine and human cooperation in conversion." (*The Evangelical Dictionary of Salvation*, Walter A. Elwell, editor. 729, 1063)

1 Peter 1:3: ³Blessed be **the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ**, who according to His great mercy **has caused us to be born again** to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead,

Matthew 11:27: **All things have been handed over to Me by My Father**; and no one knows the Son, except the Father; **nor does anyone know the Father, except the Son, and anyone to whom the Son wills to reveal Him.**

John 3:27: John answered and said, **“A man can receive nothing, unless it has been given him from heaven.”**

Question #122: In your own words, describe what the Bible teaches about: (1) man’s inability;
(2) God’s monergistic work of conversion. _____

The Sovereignty of God

Part 4: In Salvation

Regeneration

What does the Bible say?

The word **regeneration**, as used in Scripture, refers to new creation. The root of the word is **generate** or **genesis**, which means “beginning” or “to create”; the prefix **re** means “again.” Paul speaks of regeneration when he writes to the Christians in Corinth:

2 Corinthians 5:17: Therefore if any man is in Christ, **he is a new creature**; the old things passed away; behold, **new things have come**.

Those who have been born again by the Holy Spirit are **new creations** of God. They have been **recreated** by the supernatural creative power of God. Paul affirms that the effective change agent of saving faith is not human work, but the creative power of God.

Galatians 6:15: For neither is circumcision anything, nor uncircumcision, but a **new creation**. Salvation is undeniably **supernatural**. It is God’s work; it transcends all human abilities; and it blesses mankind with innumerable benefits. Let us now consider the following **definition** of **regeneration**:

A sovereign act of God, performed by the Holy Spirit, in which the sinner is given the capacities needed to understand, believe, and enter the Kingdom of God by God given faith and is granted eternal life. His/her mind and will are **divinely enabled** to comprehend sin and righteousness and judgment. His/her spirit is resurrected from its natural dead state, restoring communion with God who is Spirit. It is a fundamental change in the nature of mankind having the very nature and eternal life of God implanted into the human soul. At this time the Holy Spirit enters into the being of mankind performing this transformation eternally.

Question #123: From the definition above, list a few phrases that stick out to you. _____

Question #124: If you are a Christian, what clear evidence of regeneration do you see in your own life? _____

The nature of regeneration is clearly revealed in the Bible. As we survey the following biblical texts, consider how they all point to the supernatural and sovereign work of God in salvation.

Regeneration is the *act of God*:

1 Peter 1:3: ³Blessed be the **God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ**, who according to His great mercy **has caused us to be born again** to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead,

1 Peter 1:22-23: ²²Since you have in obedience to the truth purified your souls for a sincere love of the brethren, fervently love one another from the heart, ²³for you **have been born again** not of seed which is perishable but imperishable, that is, **through the living and abiding word of God**.

James 1:18: **In the exercise of His will He brought us forth by the word of truth**, so that we might be, as it were, the first fruits among His creatures.

Ezekiel 11:19-20: ¹⁹And **I shall give them one heart, and shall put a new spirit within them**. And **I shall take the heart of stone out of their flesh and give them a heart of flesh**, ²⁰that they may walk in My statutes and keep My ordinances, and do them. Then they will be My people, and I shall be their God.

Question #125: In your own words and based on the above passages, describe the way God acts to regenerate sinners. _____

Regeneration changes the *mind and will*:

Ezekiel 36:26-27: ²⁶Moreover, **I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you**; and I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. ²⁷And **I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes**, and **you will be careful to observe** My ordinances.

1 John 3:9: No **one who is born of God practices sin**, because His seed abides in him; and **he cannot sin, because he is born of God**.²⁷

1 John 5:18-20: ¹⁸We know that **no one who is born of God sins**; but He who was born of God keeps him and the evil one does not touch him. ¹⁹We know that we are of God, and the whole world lies in the power of the evil one. ²⁰And we know that the Son of God has come, and **has given us understanding, in order that we might know Him who is true**, and we are in Him who is true, in His Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God and eternal life.

1 John 5:4: For **whatever is born of God overcomes the world**; and this is the victory that has overcome the world—our faith.

1 Corinthians 2:12-16: ¹²Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but **the Spirit who is from God, that we might know the things freely given to us by God**, ¹³which things we also speak, not in words taught by human wisdom, but in those **taught by the Spirit**, combining spiritual thoughts with spiritual words. ¹⁴But a natural man does not accept the things of the Spirit of God; for **they are foolishness to him, and he cannot understand them**, because they are spiritually appraised. ¹⁵But he who is spiritual appraises all things, yet he himself is appraised by no man. ¹⁶For who has known the mind of the Lord, that he should instruct Him? **But we have the mind of Christ**.

²⁷ Note that John is discussing the *practice of sin* in 1 John 3:9 and 5:18, i.e., sin as characteristic of one's life style. He is not saying that Christians do not sin at all.

Question #126: From the above passages, list several examples of clear evidence (substantial enough to hold up in court!) that a sinner has been regenerated. _____

Regeneration quickens dead spirits with *eternal life* and creates a new self in the *likeness of God*:

Colossians 2:13-14: ¹³And when **you were dead in your transgressions and the uncircumcision of your flesh, He made you alive together with Him**, having forgiven us all our transgressions, ¹⁴having canceled out the certificate of debt consisting of decrees against us and which was hostile to us; and He has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross.

Ephesians 2:4-10: ⁴But God, being rich in mercy, because of His great love with which he loved us, ⁵**even when we were dead in our transgressions, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved),** ⁶and **raised us up with Him**, and seated us with Him in the heavenly places, in Christ Jesus, ⁷in order that in the ages to come He might show the surpassing riches of His grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. ⁸For by grace you have been saved through faith; **and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God;** ⁹not as a result of works, that no one should boast. ¹⁰**For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works**, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.

Ephesians 4:20-24: ²⁰But you did not learn Christ in this way, ²¹if indeed you have heard Him and have been taught in Him, just as truth is in Jesus, ²²that, in reference to your former manner of life, you **lay aside the old self**, which is being corrupted in accordance with the lusts of deceit, ²³and that you **be renewed in the spirit of your mind,** ²⁴and **put on the new self, which in the likeness of God has been created in righteousness and holiness of the truth.**

John 5:24: Truly, truly, I say to you, he who **hears My word, and believes Him who sent Me, has eternal life**, and does not come into judgment, but has passed out of death into life.

John 6:39-40: ³⁹And this is the will of Him who sent Me, that of all that He has given Me **I lose nothing, but raise it up on the last day.** ⁴⁰For this is the will of My Father, that everyone who beholds the Son and believes in Him, **may have eternal life; and I Myself will raise him up on the last day.**

Question #127: From the above passages, explain *how* regeneration creates a new self in the likeness of God. _____

Question #128: From the above passages, describe specific ways in which the new self differs from the old self. _____

Regeneration is the very essence of salvation itself. It is the *saving act* of salvation, performed by God, whereby salvation is applied to the elect in time and space. It is the point in time when the called of God are supernaturally transformed by God. The Bible actually describes salvation as “*the washing of regeneration.*”

Titus 3:4-7: ⁴But when the kindness of God our Savior and His love for mankind appeared, ⁵**He saved us**, not on the basis of deeds which we have done in righteousness, but according to His mercy, **by the washing of regeneration and renewing by the Holy Spirit**, ⁶whom He poured out upon us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior, that being justified by His grace we might be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life.

For this very reason Jesus stressed the fact that *sinner must be born again to enter the kingdom of God*. The Bible plainly declares that no can *see or enter* the kingdom of God apart from the supernatural creative power of God in regeneration.

John 3:3-7: ³Jesus answered and said to him, “Truly, truly, I say to you, **unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.**” ⁴Nicodemus said to Him, “How can a man be born when he is old? He cannot enter a second time into his mother’s womb and be born, can he?” ⁵Jesus answered, “Truly, truly, I say to you, **unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.**” ⁶That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. ⁷Do not marvel that I said to you, **‘You must be born again.’**”

Here Jesus Christ, God Himself in the flesh, reveals to Nicodemus the exclusiveness of the kingdom of God. He says *unless* one is born again, he *cannot* see the kingdom of God. The word “*cannot*” speaks of human inability, not mere unwillingness. Fallen sinners are *unable* to see the kingdom of God until and unless they experience the supernatural creative power of God in the new birth. Those who are dead in trespasses and sins have no ability to see, hear or understand the Gospel (1 Corinthians 2:10-14; 2 Corinthians 4:3-4; John 8:42-47; Matthew 13:10-13; Romans 3:9-12, 18, 6:16, 7:14). Only those who have been regenerated are *able* to see, hear and understand who God is, their great need for salvation because of sin and long to repent of it, and that Christ is the divine provision to cancel sin and its terrible consequence of death. These are the *only ones* who are able to enter the kingdom of God. Jesus emphasized the *necessity of the new birth* in salvation by affirming three times, “You *must* be born again” (John 3:3, 5, 7).

Question #129: Read each of the Scripture passages listed in parentheses in the above paragraph. Based on these passages, explain in your own words explain *why* regeneration is *necessary* for salvation. _____

The analogy of birth and new life

Consider the analogy of birth which Jesus uses. People have no more choice in their natural birth than they do in their spiritual birth. We did not choose to become physically alive through the process of physical birth; we were born as the result of the decisions and actions of others. The same is true of our spiritual birth. We were born again by **God's** sovereign decision and action. This took place before we had any capacity to see, hear, or understand the Gospel; it took place when we were **dead in sin**. Our ability to believe the Gospel and receive Christ as Savior was granted to us by the sovereign choice and quickening power of God.

John 1:12-13: ¹²But as many as received Him, to them **He gave** the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in His name, ¹³**who were born** not of blood, **nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.**

John 6:44: **No one can come to Me, unless the Father who sent Me draws him;** and I will raise him up on the last day.

Romans 9:16: So then it **does not depend on the man who wills** or the man who runs, **but on God who has mercy.**

Matthew 11:27: All things have been handed over to Me by My Father; and no one knows the Son, except the Father; **nor does anyone know the Father, except the Son, and anyone to whom the Son wills to reveal Him.**

Just as Lazarus had no ability to raise himself from the dead, neither was he able to resist the powerful call of Jesus Christ, God in the flesh, to be resurrected (John 11:43-44). Similarly, the nation of Israel will be corporately raised from its spiritual death and brought into the glorious kingdom of God in the day of their restoration.

John 11:43-44: ⁴³And when He had said these things, **He cried out with a loud voice, "Lazarus, come forth."** ⁴⁴**He who had died came forth,** bound hand and foot with wrappings; and his face was wrapped around with a cloth. Jesus said to them, "Unbind him, and let him go."

Ezekiel 37:11-14: ¹¹Then He said to me, "Son of man, these bones are the whole house of Israel; behold, they say, 'Our bones are dried up, and our hope has perished. **We are completely cut off.**'" ¹²Therefore prophesy, and say to them, 'Thus says the Lord GOD, "Behold, **I will open your graves and cause you to come up out of your graves, My people;** and I will bring you into the land of Israel. ¹³Then you will know that I am the LORD, when I have opened your graves and caused you to come up out of your graves, My people. ¹⁴**And I will put My Spirit within you, and you will come to life,** and I will place you on your own land. Then you will know that I, the LORD, have spoken and done it,'" declares the LORD."

Do babies resist being born? Do the dead resist the free gift of life? Do they even have the ability to do so? Of course not! No one resists the regenerating work of God because the work itself overcomes any possible resistance. When fallen human nature is regenerated, people are given both: 1) clear understanding of their great need for salvation; and 2) deep desire to be saved by God's power and free grace.

Luke 18:13-14: ¹³But the tax-gatherer, standing some distance away, was even unwilling to lift up his eyes to heaven, but was beating his breast, saying, **"God be merciful to me, the sinner!"** ¹⁴**I tell you, this man went down to his house justified** rather than the other; for everyone who exalts himself shall be humbled, but he who humbles himself shall be exalted.

Acts 2:37-39: ³⁷Now when they heard this, **they were pierced to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, "Brethren, what shall we do?"** ³⁸And Peter said to

them, **“Repent**, and let each of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. ³⁹For the promise is for you and your children, and for all who are far off, **as many as the Lord our God shall call to Himself.**

Acts 10:43-45: ⁴³“Of Him all the prophets bear witness that through His name **everyone who believes in Him receives forgiveness of sins.**” ⁴⁴While Peter was still speaking these words, **the Holy Spirit fell upon all those who were listening to the message.** ⁴⁵And all the circumcised believers who had come with Peter were amazed, because the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out upon the Gentiles also.

Acts 13:48: And when the Gentiles heard this, they began rejoicing and glorifying the word of the Lord; and **as many as had been appointed to eternal life believed.**

2 Corinthians 7:9-10: ⁹I now rejoice, not that you were made sorrowful, but that **you were made sorrowful to the point of repentance;** for you were made sorrowful **according to the will of God,** in order that you might not suffer loss in anything through us. ¹⁰**For the sorrow that is according to the will of God produces a repentance without regret, leading to salvation;** but the sorrow of the world produces death.

Question #130: According to the above passages, what is the necessary result of regeneration?

Question #131: How does understanding the regenerating power of God encourage you to actively evangelize those who are lost?_____

Regeneration is an invisible work that becomes increasingly evident over time

Regeneration occurs at the exact moment in time when the secret power of God implants new life in a person who is spiritually dead. At that moment the person is born again (regenerated). Regeneration is an instantaneous event that produces evident growth in Christlikeness (sanctification). However, it is not always possible to pinpoint the precise moment regeneration occurred. This should not trouble us as long as clear evidence of regeneration is present.

John 3:8: The wind blows where it wishes and **you hear the sound of it, but do not know where it comes from and where it is going;** so is everyone who is born of the Spirit.

Wayne Grudem explains in chapter 34 of his *Systematic Theology*:

Exactly what happens in regeneration is mysterious to us. We know that somehow we who were spiritually dead (Eph. 2:1) have been made alive to God and in a very real sense we have been “born again” (John 3:3, 7; Eph. 2:5; Col. 2:13). But we don’t understand how this happens or what exactly God does to us to give us this new spiritual life. . . .

Because regeneration is a work of God within us in which he gives us new life it is right to conclude that it is an instantaneous event. It happens only once. At one moment we are spiritually dead, and then at the next moment we have new spiritual

life from God. Nevertheless, we do not always know exactly when this instantaneous change occurs. Especially for children growing up in a Christian home, or for people who attend an evangelical church or Bible study over a period of time and grow gradually in their understanding of the gospel, there may not be a dramatic crisis with a radical change of behavior from “hardened sinner” to “holy saint,” but there will be an instantaneous change nonetheless, when God through the Holy Spirit, in an unseen, invisible way, awakens spiritual life within. The change will become evident over time in patterns of behavior and desires that are pleasing to God.

In other cases (in fact, probably most cases when adults become Christians) regeneration takes place at a clearly recognizable time at which the person realizes that previously he or she was separated from God and spiritually dead, but immediately afterward there was clearly new spiritual life within. The results can usually be seen at once—a heartfelt trusting in Christ for salvation, an assurance of sins forgiven, a desire to read the Bible and pray (and a sense that these are meaningful spiritual activities), a delight in worship, a desire for Christian fellowship, a sincere desire to be obedient to God’s Word in Scripture, and a desire to tell others about Christ. People may say something like this: “I don’t know exactly what happened, but before that moment I did not trust in Christ for salvation. I was still wondering and questioning in my mind. But after that moment I realized that I did trust in Christ and he was my Savior. Something happened in my heart.” Yet even in these cases we are not quite sure exactly what has happened in our hearts. It is just as Jesus said with respect to the wind—we hear its sound and we see the result, but we cannot actually see the wind itself. So it is with the working of the Holy Spirit in our hearts.²⁸

Question #132: How can we know whether someone has been regenerated by God?_____

Regeneration precedes faith

The Bible clearly teaches that regeneration *precedes* faith in Christ, even though many people mistakenly believe just the opposite. **Grudem** goes on to explain:

The idea that regeneration comes before saving faith is not always understood by evangelicals today. Sometimes people will even say something like, “If you believe in Christ as your Savior, then (after you believe) you will be born again.” But Scripture itself never says anything like that. This new birth is viewed by Scripture as something that God does within us in order to enable us to believe.

²⁸ Wayne Grudem, *Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Biblical Doctrine* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan, 1994), 701-2.

The reason that evangelicals often think that regeneration comes after saving faith is that they see the results (love for God and his Word, and turning from sin) after people come to faith, and they think that regeneration must therefore have come after saving faith. Yet here we must decide on the basis of what Scripture tells us, because regeneration itself is not something we see or know about directly.²⁹

It seemed as if we heard the Gospel and then believed because we were unaware that only those who have been born again will believe. Belief in Jesus Christ requires God's gift of faith and the Holy Spirit's work of regeneration. The new birth is not something we do, but something God does. We discover this great truth after we examine Holy Scripture and understand the process of salvation. Jesus made this very clear:

John 6:63-65: ⁶³ "It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh profits nothing; the words that I have spoken to you are spirit and are life. ⁶⁴But there are some of you who do not believe." For Jesus knew from the beginning who they were who did not believe, and who it was that would betray Him. ⁶⁵And He was saying, "For this reason I have said to you, that no one can come to Me, unless it has been granted him from the Father."

Here Jesus explains that "some of you do not believe" because "no one can come to Me, unless it has been granted him from the Father." The Bible also plainly declares that those who believe do so because of God's enablement.

Matthew 13:11: And He answered and said to them, "To you it has been granted to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it has not been granted."

Philippians 1:29-30: ²⁹For to you it has been granted for Christ's sake, not only to believe in Him, but also to suffer for His sake, ³⁰experiencing the same conflict which you saw in me, and now hear to be in me.

Acts 16:14: And a certain woman named Lydia, from the city of Thyatira, a seller of purple fabrics, a worshiper of God, was listening; and the Lord opened her heart to respond to the things spoken by Paul.

Question #133: In your own words, explain what the Bible teaches about the relationship between the new birth and believing in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior. _____

²⁹ Grudem, 703

The Sovereignty of God

Part 4: In Salvation

Sovereign Election

What does the Bible say?

The Bible plainly declares that God chooses who will be saved. The word *election* refers to God's determination, before He created the world, of who will be saved. This truth is taught throughout the Bible.

Deuteronomy 7:6-8: ⁶For you are a holy people to the LORD your God; **the LORD your God has chosen you to be a people for His own possession** out of all the peoples who are on the face of the earth. ⁷The LORD did not set His love on you nor choose you because you were more in number than any of the peoples, for you were the fewest of all peoples, ⁸but because **the LORD loved you and kept the oath which He swore to your forefathers**, the LORD brought you out by a mighty hand, and redeemed you from the house of slavery, from the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt.

Psalms 33:11-12: ¹¹The counsel of the LORD stands forever, The plans of His heart from generation to generation. ¹²Blessed is the nation whose God is the LORD, **The people whom He has chosen for His own inheritance.**

Isaiah 65:9: And I will bring forth offspring from Jacob, And an heir of My mountains from Judah; **Even My chosen ones shall inherit it, And my servants shall dwell there.**

John 15:16: **You did not choose Me, but I chose you, and appointed you, that you should go and bear fruit,** and that your fruit should remain, that whatever you ask of the Father in My name, He may give to you.

Ephesians 1:3-6: ³Blessed by the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ, ⁴just **as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world**, that we should be holy and blameless before Him. In love ⁵**He predestined us to adoption as sons through Jesus Christ to Himself**, according to the kind intention of His will, ⁶to the praise of the glory of His grace, which He freely bestowed on us in the Beloved.

Titus 1:1-2: ¹Paul, a bond-servant of God, and an apostle of Jesus Christ, **for the faith of those chosen of God** and the knowledge of the truth which is according to godliness, ²**in the hope of eternal life, which God, who cannot lie, promised long ages ago,** ³**but at the proper time manifested**, even His word, in the proclamation with which I was entrusted according to the commandment of God our Savior; ⁴to Titus, my true child in a common faith: Grace and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Savior.

2 Timothy 2:10: For this reason I endure all things **for the sake of those who are chosen**, that they also may obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus and with it eternal glory.

2 Thessalonians 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.

1 Peter 1:1-2: ¹Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, to those who reside as aliens, scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia, **who are chosen ²according to the foreknowledge of God the Father**, by the sanctifying work of the Spirit, that you

may obey Jesus Christ and be sprinkled with His blood: May grace and peace be yours in fullest measure.

Matthew 11:27: All things have been handed over to Me by My Father; and no one knows the Son, except the Father; **nor does anyone know the Father, except the Son, and anyone to whom the Son wills to reveal Him.**

Election is closely related to **predestination**, another concept clearly presented in the Bible. **Predestination** refers to the fact that God has determined the destiny of His chosen people from before the beginning of time.

Acts 13:48: And when the Gentiles heard this, they began rejoicing and glorifying the word of the Lord; and **as many as had been appointed to eternal life believed.**

Romans 8:28-30: ²⁸And 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.** ²⁹**For whom He foreknew, He also predestined** to become conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the first-born among many brethren; ³⁰**and whom He predestined, these He also called; and whom He called, these He also justified; and whom He justified, these He also glorified.**

Romans 9:22-24: ²²What if God, although willing to demonstrate His wrath and to make His power known, endured with much patience vessels of wrath prepared for destruction? ²³And He did so in order that He might make known the riches of His glory upon vessels of mercy, **which He prepared beforehand for glory,** ²⁴**even us, whom He also called,** not from among Jews only, but also from among Gentiles.

1 Corinthians 2:6-9: ⁶Yet we do speak wisdom among those who are mature; a wisdom, however, not of this age, nor of the rulers of this age, who are passing away; ⁷**but we speak God's wisdom in a mystery,** the hidden wisdom, **which God predestined before the ages to our glory;** ⁸the wisdom which none of the rulers of this age has understood; for if they had understood it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory; ⁹but just as it is written, "Things which eye has not seen and ear has not, And which have not entered the heart of man, **All that God has prepared for those who love Him.**"

Ephesians 1:12: ¹¹also we have obtained an inheritance, **having been predestined according to His purpose who works all things after the counsel of His will,** ¹²to the end that we who were the first to hope in Christ should be to the praise of His glory.

Question #134: Carefully read the preceding Scripture passages. Then in your own words, distinguish between the terms "election" and "predestination." _____

Election and **predestination** are clearly biblical doctrines. This fact is rarely disputed; however, much controversy arises over questions such as:

- Who does God choose?
- Why does He choose them?
- Does He base these choices on some foreseen act or faith of people or on His own free and sovereign purpose?

These questions and more are addressed below.

Election is unconditional

When we say election is *unconditional*, we mean that God's election of sinners to salvation is not determined by anything in the sinner that *merits* salvation, or any condition that needs to be met in the sinner that moves God to choose them. Scripture never speaks of election as something we deserve or earn. Rather it affirms that God's choice of us was motivated by His *free sovereign grace*. Salvation by *grace alone* cannot be merited by any human work or condition.

The word grace is typically defined as *unmerited favor*, describing the nature of salvation as God's freely bestowed gift. An even better definition might be *favor against merit*, emphasizing the fact that although sinners have in fact merited or earned damnation, God has given them salvation instead.

Titus 3:4-7: ⁴But when the kindness of God our Savior and His love for mankind appeared, ⁵**He saved us, not on the basis of deeds which we have done in righteousness, but according to His mercy**, by the washing of regeneration and renewing by the Holy Spirit, ⁶whom He poured out upon us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior, ⁷that **being justified by His grace** we might be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life.

2 Timothy 1:8-11: ⁸Therefore do not be ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, or of me His prisoner; but join with me in suffering for the gospel according to the power of God, ⁹who 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, ¹⁰but now has been revealed by the appearing of our Savior Christ Jesus, who abolished death, and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel, ¹¹for which I was appointed a preacher and an apostle and a teacher.

Ephesians 2:4-5: ⁴But **God, being rich in mercy**, because of His great love with which He loved us, ⁵even **when we were dead in our transgressions**, made us alive together with Christ **(by grace you have been saved)**,

If grace could be merited, it would *no longer be grace* because God would owe us salvation.

Romans 11:5-6: ⁵In the same way then, there has also come to be at the present time a remnant **according to God's gracious choice**. ⁶**But if it is by grace, it is no longer on the basis of works, otherwise grace is no longer grace.**

Even the faith we exercised to believe is *"the gift of God."* Scripture specifically says it is *"not of ourselves."*

Ephesians 2:8-9: ⁸**For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; ⁹not as a result of works**, that no one should boast.

Scripture speaks in this way as to exalt God's free and sovereign choice in the matter so that we glorify Him for His *"freely bestowed"* grace and so that we do not *"boast"* or somehow take credit for the fact that we have been saved. Notice in the passage in Ephesians below the Scripture plainly says that *"He predestines us...according to"....*

- to the kind intention of *His will*
- to the praise of the glory of *His grace*
- it is *freely* bestowed

Ephesians 1:3-6: ³Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who **has blessed us with every spiritual blessing** in the heavenly places in Christ, ⁴just as **He**

chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before Him. In love ⁵He predestined us to adoption as sons through Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the kind intention of His will, ⁶to the praise of the glory of His grace, which He freely bestowed on us in the Beloved.

Question #135: In your own words, define unconditional election. _____

Question #136: Why is *favor against merit* a fuller description of grace than *unmerited favor*? _____

Question #137: List words and phrases from Ephesians 1:3-6 that emphasize God's free and sovereign choice of sinners for salvation. _____

Question #138: According to Ephesians 1:6, for what purpose does God save sinners? _____

Those God has redeemed cannot take any credit for their salvation or boast in anything they have done to earn it. The Bible plainly declares that sinners contribute nothing to merit their salvation. It is wholly and completely God's free gift given by His own free and sovereign grace.

1 Corinthians 1:26-31: ²⁶For consider your calling, brethren, that there were not many wise according to the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble; ²⁷but 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, ²⁸and the base things of the world and the despised, God has chosen, the things that are not, that He might nullify the things that are, ²⁹that no man should boast before God. ³⁰But by His doing you are in Christ Jesus, who became to us wisdom from God, and righteousness and sanctification, and redemption, ³¹that, just as it is written, "Let him who boasts, boast in the Lord."

Romans 5:15-16 - ¹⁵ But the free gift is not like the transgression. For if by the transgression of the one the many died, much more did the grace of God and the gift by the grace of the one Man, Jesus Christ, abound to the many. ¹⁶ And the gift is not like that which came through the one who sinned; for on the one hand the judgment arose from one transgression resulting in condemnation, but on the other hand the free gift arose from many transgressions resulting in justification. NASB

Romans 6:23 - ²³ For the wages of sin is death, but **the free gift of God is eternal life** in Christ Jesus our Lord. NASB

The **Bible plainly declares** that sinners are chosen for salvation *not on the basis of their will*, but by the free mercy of God.

Romans 9:10-16: ¹⁰ And not only this, but there was Rebekah also, when she had conceived twins by one man, our father Isaac; ¹¹ **for though the twins were not yet born, and had not done anything good or bad, in order that God's purpose according to His choice might stand, not because of works, but because of Him who calls,** ¹² it was said to her, "The older will serve the younger." ¹³ Just as it is written, "Jacob I loved, but Esau I hated." ¹⁴ What shall we say then? There is no injustice with God, is there? May it never be! ¹⁵ For He says to Moses, **"I will have mercy on whom I have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I have compassion."** ¹⁶ **So then it does not depend on the man who wills or the man who runs, but on God who has mercy.**

John 1:12-13: ¹² But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in His name, ¹³ **who were born not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.**

In fact, the Gentile nations of the world did not seek God at all until God chose to reveal Himself to them.

Romans 3:9-11: ⁹ What then? Are we better than they? Not at all; for we have already charged that **both Jews and Greeks are all under sin;** ¹⁰ as it is written, "There is none righteous, not even one; ¹¹ **There is none who understands, There is none who seeks for God."**

Isaiah 65:1: **I permitted Myself to be sought by those who did not ask for Me; I permitted Myself to be found by those who did not seek Me.** I said, "Here am I, here am I," To a nation which did not call on My name.

Question #139: List several specific statements from the above quoted Scripture passages which affirm that sinners contribute *nothing* to their own salvation. _____

Question #140: Meditate on your answer to *Question #139*. Then describe your personal response (mentally, emotionally, practically) to what God has done for you. _____

Election and Foreknowledge

Peter and Paul both use the word *foreknowledge* in connection with election:

1 Peter 1:1-2: ¹ Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, to those who reside as aliens, scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia, **who are chosen ² according to the foreknowledge of God the Father,** by the sanctifying work of the Spirit, that you may obey Jesus Christ and be sprinkled with His blood: May grace and peace be yours in fullest measure.

Romans 8:28-30: ²⁸And 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. ²⁹**For whom He foreknew, He also predestined** to become conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the first-born among many brethren; ³⁰and **whom He predestined, these He also called**; and whom He called, these He also justified; and whom He justified, these He also glorified.

Some students of Scripture explain the connection between foreknowledge and election like this: God *knew beforehand* who would be saved and based election on that foreknowledge. He simply looked into the future to see who would believe the Gospel; then He chose (elected) those He saw choosing Him. This view cannot stand however, because it misunderstands and misrepresents the biblical meaning of **foreknowledge**. **John MacArthur** explains: “*When the Bible speaks of God’s foreknowledge, it refers to God’s establishment of a love relationship with that person. The word “know,” in both the Old and New Testament, refers to much more than mere cognitive knowledge of a person. Such passages as Hosea 13:4-5; Amos 3:2 (KJV); and Romans 11:2 clearly indicate this. For example, 1 Peter 1:20 says Christ was ‘foreknown before the foundation of the world.’ Surely this means more than that God the Father looked into the future to behold Christ! It means He had an eternal, loving relationship with Him. The same is true of the elect, whom we are told God ‘foreknew’ (Romans 8:29). That means He knew them—he loved them—before the foundation of the world.*”³⁰

Hosea 13:4-5: ⁴Yet I have been the LORD your God Since the land of Egypt; And **you were not to know any god except Me**, For there is no savior besides Me. ⁵**I cared for [Hebrew “yada” – to know] you** in the wilderness, In the land of drought.

Amos 3:2: You only have I **chosen [Hebrew “yada” – to know]** among all the families of the earth; Therefore, I will punish you for all your iniquities.

Romans 11:2: God has not rejected His people **whom He foreknew**. Or do you not know what the Scripture says in the passage about Elijah, how he pleads with God against Israel?

In the first chapter of 1 Peter, believers are said to be “**chosen according to the foreknowledge of God the Father. . .**” (vs. 1-2). Several verses later, Peter writes that Christ “**was foreknown before the foundation of the world**” (v. 20). In Acts 2:23 and 4:27-28, Peter speaks in a sermon and prays with a group of Christians. We know his words are inspired by God’s Holy Spirit because they are included in Scripture. In these passages, he affirms that Christ’s election as Savior and God’s foreknowledge of His crucifixion occurred “**by the predetermined plan and foreknowledge of God.**” Obviously, foreknowledge has a much fuller meaning here than simply prior knowledge of the events! Peter affirmed that God’s foreknowledge of these events **resulted from His predetermined plan**, not from looking into the future to see what would happen. He **foreknew** these events because He chose, elected, and planned them. God’s foreknowledge is a necessary result of His **decree and foreordination** of whatsoever comes to pass.

Acts 2:22-23: ²²Men of Israel, listen to these words: Jesus the Nazarene, a man attested to you by God with miracles and wonders and signs which God performed through him in your midst, just as you yourselves know—²³this Man, **delivered up by the predetermined**

³⁰ John MacArthur *Grace to You Questions QA86* – “What does the bible teach about election”

plan and foreknowledge of God, you nailed to a cross by the hands of godless men and put Him to death.

Acts 4:27-28: ²⁷For truly in this city there were gathered together against Thy holy servant Jesus, whom Thou didst anoint, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, along with the Gentiles and the peoples of Israel, ²⁸**to do whatever Thy hand and Thy purpose predestined to occur.**

Consider the following discussion of the Greek word for “foreknowledge” in Spiros Zodhiates’ New Testament Word Study.

4267. proginôskœ; fut. prognôsomai, 2 d aor. proégnœn, from pró (4253), before, and ginôskœ (1097), to know. To perceive or recognize beforehand, know previously, take into account or specially consider beforehand, to grant prior acknowledgement or recognition to someone, to foreknow.

(I) Used of mere prescience, to know before (Acts 26:5; 2 Peter 3:17).

(II) **Used of God’s eternal counsel it includes all that He has considered and purposed to do prior to human history.** In the language of Scripture, something foreknown is not simply that which God was aware of prior to a certain point. Rather, it is presented as that which God gave prior consent to, that which received His favorable or special recognition. Hence, **this term is reserved for those matters which God favorably, deliberately and freely chose and ordained.**

(A) **Used of persons, to foreknow with approbation, to fore-approve or make a previous choice of, as special people (Rom 8:29; 11:2).**

(B) Used of events, to previously decide or plan, to foreknow for God is to foreordain 1 Peter 1:19,20 presents Christ as the “Lamb of God foreknown from the foundation of the world” (a.t.). He is said to be foreknown because God had planned and determined in His eternal counsel to provide His Son as a sacrifice for His people. Certainly more is meant than that God knew ahead of time that Christ would so come and die. God’s foreknowledge is given here as the cause for His Son’s sacrifice — because He planned and decreed it.

(C) **In Rom 8:29**, in relation to believers, proginôskœ occurs with the verb proôrise, aor. act. indic. of proorízœ (4309), **to predestinate. Foreknowledge and foreordination are logically coordinate.** The former emphasizes the exercise of God’s wisdom and intelligence in regard to His eternal purpose and the latter emphasizes the exercise of God’s will in regard to it. **What He has decreed is what He has decided.** This foreknowledge and foreordination in the Scripture are always unto salvation and not unto perdition. Therefore, it should be said that the Lord never foreordains someone to be lost. **Rather, He foreordains unto salvation those whom He specially considered and chose in eternity past (see Matt 7:23; John 10:14; Rom 11:2; 1 Cor 8:3; Gal 4:9; 2 Tim 2:19; Sept.: Hos 13:5; Amos 3:2).** Any thought of the lost being appointed or ordained unto condemnation should be understood as an act of passing over in which the lost are permitted to suffer the consequences of their choice of sin (1 Peter 2:8). **The salvation of every believer is known and determined in the mind of God before its realization in time. Thus, proginôskœ corresponds with the idea of having been chosen (eklégomai [1586], to choose) before the foundation of the world mentioned in Eph 1:4 and logically precedes the action indicated by proorízœ. Proginôskœ**

essentially entails a gracious self- determining on God's part from eternity to extend fellowship with Himself to undeserving sinners (Rom 8:29).³¹

Question #141: Explain in your own words how the Bible affirms that God's *foreknowledge* is based on His predetermined plan, not on looking into the future to see what will happen. _____

Election is a major theme in God's plan

Nelson's New Illustrated Bible Dictionary defines **election** as: "The gracious and free act of God by which He calls those who become part of His kingdom and special beneficiaries of His love and blessings. The Bible describes the concept of election in three distinct ways. Election sometimes refers to the election of Israel and the church as a people for special service and privileges. Election may also refer to the election of a specific individual to some office or to perform some special service. Still other passages of the Bible refer to the election of individuals to be children of God and heirs of eternal life."³² We see from this definition that the doctrine of election is not confined to the New Testament; it characterizes God's interaction with mankind throughout all of human history. Election describes God's method of God for selecting specific individuals for specific purposes. Those purposes include the performance of *particular services* and the receipt of *particular privileges*.

Question #142: Based on the information in the preceding paragraph, write a simple definition of election that a young child would understand. _____

Consider the following **biblical examples of election**:

Noah was specifically chosen by God to build an ark in which he and his family would be saved from God's coming destruction of the entire population of the earth. Noah's faith in God's Word was credited to him and his family for eternal salvation.

Hebrews 11:7: By faith **Noah, being warned by God about things not yet seen**, in reverence prepared an ark for the salvation of his household, by which he condemned the world, and became an heir of the righteousness which is according to faith.

Abraham was specifically chosen by God from among the Gentiles in Chaldea to move to Canaan and become the ancestor of Christ. He became the father of the nation of Israel through which the Messiah would come.

³¹Spiros Zodhiates, *The Complete Word Study Dictionary: New Testament* (Chattanooga, Tenn.: AMG Publishers, 1991), 1215-1216.

³²*Nelson's New Illustrated Bible Dictionary*, gen. ed. Ronald F Youngblood (Nashville: Nelson, 1995), 389.

Genesis 12:1-3: Now the LORD said to Abram, “Go forth from your country, And from your relatives And from your father’s house, **To the land which I will show you;** ²**And I will make you a great nation**, And I will bless you, And make your name great; And so you shall be a blessing; ³And I will bless those who bless you, And the one who curses you I will curse. And **in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.**”

Nehemiah 9:7: Thou art the LORD God, **Who chose Abram And brought him out from Ur of the Chaldees, And gave him the name Abraham.**

Joshua 24:2: And Joshua said to all the people, “Thus says the LORD, the God of Israel, ‘From ancient times your fathers lived beyond the River, namely, **Terah, the father of Abraham** and the father of Nahor, and **they served other gods.**’”

Moses was specifically chosen by God to deliver Israel from cruel bondage in Egypt.

Exodus 3:10: Therefore, **come now, and I will send you to Pharaoh**, so that you may bring My people, the sons of Israel, out of Egypt.

Question #143: In what specific ways were Noah, Abraham, and Moses *elected* by God? _____

Israel was specifically chosen by God to witness His incomparable power displayed in mighty miracles that resulted in their release from Egyptian bondage. **Israel** was specifically chosen by God to be bound to Him in a covenant relationship rich in great privileges. **Israel** was specifically chosen by God to receive the Word of God, record it in the Old Testament Scriptures, and bring forth the prophesied Messiah.

Deuteronomy 7:6-8: ⁶For you are a holy people to the LORD your God; **the Lord your God has chosen you to be a people for His own possession out of all the peoples who are on the face of the earth.** ⁷The LORD did not set His love on you nor choose you because you were more in number than any of the peoples, for you were the fewest of all peoples, ⁸**but because the LORD loved you** and kept the oath which He swore to your forefathers, the LORD brought you out by a mighty hand, and redeemed you from the house of slavery, from the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt.

Isaiah 41:8-9: ⁸But you, Israel, My servant, **Jacob whom I have chosen**, Descendant of Abraham My friend, ⁹**You whom I have taken from the ends of the earth, And called from its remotest parts, And said to you, “You are My servant, I have chosen you and not rejected you.”**

Isaiah 44:1-4: But now listen, O Jacob, My servant; And **Israel, whom I have chosen:** ²Thus says the LORD who made you And formed you from the womb, who will help you, “Do not fear, O Jacob My servant; And **you Jeshurun whom I have chosen.** ³For I will pour out water on the thirsty land And streams on the dry ground; **I will pour out My Spirit on your offspring, And My blessing on your descendants;** ⁴And they will spring up among the grass Like poplars by streams of water.”

Consider how greatly Israel was blessed to be specifically chosen by God! They were appointed to:

- be the nation through whom the **Messiah** would come
- be the people through whom God would speak in the **Law and the Prophets**
- have a **personal relationship** with God as He led them by prophet, fire, and cloud

- be heirs of **salvation by grace through faith** in God's promise to them
- have access to Him through the **Levitical Priesthood** and the prescribed service of worship
- have God's *Shekinah glory* dwell in their midst
- eventually inherit **the promised land and God's Kingdom** on earth

Romans 9:3-5: ³For I could wish that I myself were accursed, separated from Christ for the sake of my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh, ⁴who are Israelites, **to whom belongs the adoption as sons and the glory and the covenants and the giving of the Law and the temple service and the promises,** ⁵**whose are the fathers, and from whom is the Christ according to the flesh,** who is over all, God blessed forever. Amen

Question #144: In what specific ways was Israel blessed by God's election? _____

Question #145: Does Israel's election for specific purposes and blessings necessarily mean that every Israelite was saved? _____ Explain your answer. _____

In addition to those listed above, Gideon, Samson, David, Solomon, and many others became the recipients of God's special favor (His grace), *through no merit of their own*. They too were specifically chosen by God for His service and richly blessed by innumerable related benefits. This clearly discernable Old Testament pattern runs through the New Testament as well, firmly supporting the cardinal doctrine of salvation by faith alone through grace alone. The New Testament clearly affirms that people come to Christ and are saved because they have been *elected* by God beforehand for this blessed privilege.

John 6:37, 44, 65: ³⁷**All that the Father gives Me shall come to Me, and the one who comes to Me I will certainly not cast out.** . . . ⁴⁴**No one can come to Me, unless the Father who sent Me draws him;** and I will raise him up on the last day. . . . ⁶⁵And He was saying, "For this reason I have said to you, that **no one can come to Me, unless it has been granted him from the Father.**"

John 15:16: **You did not choose Me, but I chose you,** and appointed you, that you should go and bear fruit, and that your fruit should remain, that whatever you ask of the Father in My name, He may give to you.

Ephesians 1:3-6: ³Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ, ⁴just as **He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before Him.** In love ⁵**He predestined us to adoption as sons** through Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the kind intention of His will, ⁶to the praise of the glory of His grace, which He freely bestowed on us in the Beloved.

Romans 8:29-30: ²⁹**For whom He foreknew, He also predestined** to become conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren; ³⁰**and whom**

He predestined, these He also called, and whom He called, these He also justified; and whom He justified, these He also glorified.

Romans 11:5-6: ⁵In the same way then, there has also come to be at the present time a remnant **according to God's gracious choice**. ⁶But if it is by grace, it is no longer on the basis of works, otherwise grace is no longer grace.

2 Thessalonians 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.

Cornelius and his family were specifically chosen by God for salvation (Acts 10:1-44). In this passage, note how God worked in specific, unusual ways to save this God-fearing Roman centurion and his Gentile family:

- God used an angelic vision to instruct Cornelius to send for Peter, who was staying with the tanner named Simon (vs 1-8, 22).
- God prepared Peter for the arrival of Cornelius' messengers by giving him a heavenly vision (vs 9-16).
- God instructed Peter to go to Cornelius (vs 17-33).
- Peter preached the Gospel to Cornelius, his relatives, and friends (vs 34-43).
- God sovereignly imparted the Holy Spirit to the whole crowd, to the amazement of the Jewish believers who had accompanied Peter (vs 44-48).

Saul of Tarsus was specifically chosen by God, not only for salvation, but also to be His Gospel messenger to the Gentile world. Saul's salvation was particularly amazing because of his vicious hatred of the Church.

Acts 9:13-17: ¹³But Ananias answered, "Lord, I have heard from many about this man, **how much harm he did to Thy saints at Jerusalem**; ¹⁴and here he has authority from the chief priests to bind all who call upon Thy name." ¹⁵But the Lord said to him, **"Go, for he is a chosen instrument of Mine, to bear My name before the Gentiles and kings and the sons of Israel**; ¹⁶for I will show him how much he must suffer for My name's sake."

Galatians 1:13-17, 22-24: ¹³For you have heard of my former manner of life in Judaism, how **I used to persecute the church of God beyond measure, and tried to destroy it**; ¹⁴and I was advancing in Judaism beyond many of my contemporaries, being more extremely zealous for my ancestral traditions. ¹⁵But **when He who had set me apart, even from my mother's womb, and called me through His grace, was pleased ¹⁶to reveal His Son in me, that I might preach Him among the Gentiles**, I did not immediately consult with flesh and blood, ¹⁷nor did I go up to Jerusalem to those who were apostles before me; but I went away to Arabia, and returned once more to Damascus. . . . ²²And I was still unknown by sight to the churches of Judea which were in Christ; ²³but only, they kept hearing, **"He who once persecuted us is now preaching the faith which he once tried to destroy."** ²⁴**And they were glorifying God because of me.**

Lydia was specifically chosen by God to be saved.

Acts 16:14-15: ¹⁴And a certain woman named Lydia, from the city of Thyatira, a seller of purple fabrics, a worshiper of God, was listening; and **the Lord opened her heart to respond to the things spoken by Paul**. ¹⁵And when she and her household had been baptized, she urged us, saying, "If you have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come into my house and stay." And she prevailed upon us.

Christ's disciples were specifically chosen by God to be saved. Consider how the Bible describes their salvation.

John 15:16, 19: ¹⁶**You did not choose Me, but I chose you**, and appointed you, that you should go and bear fruit, and that your fruit should remain, that whatever you ask of the Father in My name, He may give to you. . . . ¹⁹If you were of the world, the world would love its own; but because you are not of the world, **but I chose you out of the world**, therefore the world hates you.

John 6:70: Jesus answered them, **"Did I Myself not choose you, the twelve**, and yet one of you is a devil?"

The New Testament refers repeatedly to the *election* of the church to salvation. The Greek word for *church* (*ekklesia*) means "to call out of."

1 Peter 2:9: But **you are a chosen race**, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for God's own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies **of Him who has called you out** of darkness into His marvelous light;

Mark 13:20: And unless the Lord had shortened those days, no life would have been saved; but for the **sake of the elect whom He chose**, He shortened the days.

Colossians 3:12: And so, as those who **have been chosen of God**, holy and beloved, put on a heart of compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience;

Scripture plainly declares that God reserves the right to choose whomever He will for His own purposes.

Luke 1:30-31: ³⁰And the angel said to her, **"Do not be afraid, Mary; for you have found favor with God**. ³¹And behold, you will conceive in your womb, and bear a son, and you shall name Him Jesus."

John 5:5-9: ⁵And **a certain man was there, who had been thirty-eight years in his sickness**. ⁶When Jesus saw him lying there, and knew that he had already been a long time in that condition, He said to him, **"Do you wish to get well?"** ⁷The sick man answered Him, "Sir, I have no man to put me into the pool when the water is stirred up, but while I am coming, another steps down before me." ⁸Jesus said to him, "Arise, take up your pallet, and walk." ⁹And immediately the man became well, and took up his pallet and began to walk.

Acts 10:40-41: ⁴⁰God raised Him up on the third day, and granted that He should become visible, ⁴¹**not to all the people, but to witnesses who were chosen beforehand by God**, that is, to us, who ate and drank with Him after He arose from the dead.

Question #146: From the New Testament scriptures listed above, explain the role that God's election plays in the salvation of sinners. _____

The Sovereignty of God In Salvation

An Exposition of Romans 9: God's Free and Sovereign Grace

Romans 9: Outline

- 9:1-3:** Paul's sorrow over Israel's present rejection of Christ
9:4-5: Paul enumerates Israel's privileges and blessings
9:6-17: God's sovereignty in salvation and judgment explained in the cases of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Esau, and Pharaoh
9:18-21: God's mercy and judgment according to His own sovereign purpose; humanity's lack of right or power to find fault with His decisions
9:22-24: God's grand design in dispensing judgment and mercy
9:25-29: Prophetic predictions of Gentile salvation and Jewish defection
9:30-33: The point: Gentiles attained righteous by faith; whereas Israel stumbled in pursuit of righteousness by works.

Question #147: Read Romans 9:1-33 slowly and thoughtfully. Then list the primary distinctions you see Paul making between Israel and the Gentiles. _____

Romans 9:1-5: ¹I am telling the truth in Christ, I am not lying, my conscience bearing me witness in the Holy Spirit, ²that I have great sorrow and unceasing grief in my heart. ³For I could wish that I myself were accursed, separated from Christ for the sake of my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh, ⁴who are Israelites, to whom belongs the adoption as sons and the glory and the covenants and the giving of the Law and the temple service and the promises, ⁵whose are the fathers, and from whom is the Christ according to the flesh, who is over all, God blessed forever. Amen.

¹I am telling the truth in Christ, I am not lying, my conscience bearing me witness in the Holy Spirit, ²that I have great sorrow and unceasing grief in my heart.

Paul expresses His deep sorrow over Israel's rejection of Christ. Note the context of the passage which carries over from Romans 8:28-32. In these verses Paul described the salvation of called and elect **individuals**. Thus, we can affirm that Romans 9 is speaking of the salvation of individual Jews rather than of **corporate** calling or privilege. (See also 9:30-32.) Commentator **Albert Barnes** writes, "*The chapter, therefore, has not reference to national election, or to choice to external privileges, but has direct reference to the doctrine of the election to salvation which had been stated in chap. 8. To suppose that it refers merely to external privileges, and national distinctions, makes the whole discussion unconnected, unmeaning, and unnecessary.*" ³³

³³ (from Barnes' Notes on Romans 9, Electronic Database Copyright © 1997, 2003, 2005, 2006 by BibleSoft, Inc.)

³For I could wish that I myself were accursed, separated from Christ for the sake of my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh,

Paul's sorrow is so severe that he is willing to trade his faith for Israel's acceptance of Christ. Here is the deep and godly compassion of a man who believes in God's sovereignty through and through, and yet struggles in his own finite mind to understand God's purpose in Israel's rejection of Christ.

⁴who are Israelites, to whom belongs the adoption as sons and the glory and the covenants and the giving of the Law and the temple service and the promises, ⁵whose are the fathers, and from whom is the Christ according to the flesh, who is over all, God blessed forever. Amen.

Here Paul emphasizes that in spite of Israel's great privileges, they are lost—unsaved. This is the reason for his deep sorrow. In the rest of this chapter, he will show that salvation is rooted in divine privilege extended to individuals solely by God's sovereign free grace and received solely by God-given faith. Salvation is not according to works (vv 11, 16, 31-32) nor according to man's will (v. 16), but is wholly God's doing (vv 8, 11, 15-18, 21-24, 28-29).

Question #148: Is Paul speaking of individual Jews in Romans 9, or is he addressing the nation of Israel as a whole? Support your answer with scriptural evidence. _____

Question #149: What specific aspects of Israel's peculiar relationship with God intensifies both Paul's grief over their unbelief and their own culpability in rejecting Jesus as their Messiah? _____

Romans 9:6-9: ⁶But it is not as though the word of God has failed. For they are not all Israel who are descended from Israel; ⁷neither are they all children because they are Abraham's descendants, but: "through Isaac your descendants will be named." ⁸That is, it is not the children of the flesh who are children of God, but the children of the promise are regarded as descendants. ⁹For this is a word of promise: "At this time I will come, and Sarah shall have a son."

⁶But it is not as though the word of God has failed. For they are not all Israel who are descended from Israel

God's promises to Israel have not failed but are being realized even now by those God has called.

⁷neither are they all children because they are Abraham's descendants, but: "through Isaac your descendants will be named." ⁸That is, it is not the children of the flesh who are children of God, but the children of the promise are regarded as descendants.

⁹For this is a word of promise: "At this time I will come, and Sarah shall have a son."

Salvation is not based on direct physical descent from Abraham, but on God's choice. Although both Isaac and Ishmael were Abraham's physical sons, only Isaac was the child promised by God,

born wholly by God's will, power, and purpose. Ishmael was the child of short-sighted human effort, born out of frustration, fear, and unbelief. Together, they picture the biblical truth that salvation results from the choice, power, and action of God, not from the plans, decisions, and efforts of people.

Romans 9:10-13: ¹⁰And not only this, but there was Rebekah also, when she had conceived twins by one man, our father Isaac; ¹¹for though the twins were not yet born, and had not done anything good or bad, in order that God's purpose according to His choice might stand, not because of works, but because of Him who calls, ¹²it was said to her, "The older will serve the younger." ¹³Just as it is written, "Jacob I loved, but Esau I hated."

¹⁰**And not only this, but there was Rebekah also, when she had conceived twins by one man, our father Isaac;**

Paul goes on to affirm God's sovereignty in salvation by demonstrating that believing parents do not necessarily produce believing children. Jacob and Esau were the twin sons of Isaac and Rebekah, but only one was chosen by God for His redeeming privileges.

¹¹**for though the twins were not yet born, and had not done anything good or bad, in order that God's purpose according to His choice might stand, not because of works, but because of Him who calls, ¹²it was said to her, "The older will serve the younger."**

¹³**Just as it is written, "Jacob I loved, but Esau I hated."**

Before the twins were born, before they had done anything good or bad, God purposed to choose the younger for salvation and pass over the older. His choice was obviously not based on any works done by the twins, but resulted from His sovereign decision to accomplish His predetermined purpose. (See also Romans 11:5, Ephesians 1:4-6, 1 Thessalonians 1:4, 2 Timothy 1:9.)

Question #150: Explain in your own words how the conception of Abraham's two sons and God's words to Rebekah concerning her twins picture the nature of salvation. _____

Question #151: What implications for the nation of Israel do you see in Romans 9:6-13? _____

Question #152: In your own words, summarize the teaching of each of the following passages: Romans 11:5: _____

Ephesians 1:4-6: _____

1 Thessalonians 1:4: _____

2 Timothy 1:9: _____

Question #153: How do the passages cited in **Question #152** support Paul's teaching in Romans 9:6-13? _____

Romans 9:14-15: ¹⁴What shall we say then? There is no injustice with God, is there? May it never be! ¹⁵For He says to Moses, "I will have mercy on whom I have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I have compassion."

¹⁴**What shall we say then? There is no injustice with God, is there? May it never be!**

At this point, Paul anticipates his reader's likely reaction to the unsettling truth that salvation is by God's choice, not human effort or will (vs 11, 16, 31-32). Unsaved sinners naturally seek to usurp God's absolute sovereignty and typically believe that *they* control their own destiny. If Paul had presented salvation (as it is often presented today) as if it were based on man's will rather than God's sovereign choice, he would have not have needed to bring this up. But because he presented salvation truthfully, he had to address their expected response—accusing God of being unjust. Rather than argue the point with them, however, he simply affirmed the righteousness of God in exercising His sovereign prerogative.

¹⁵**For He says to Moses, "I will have mercy on whom I have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I have compassion."**

God bestows His mercy and compassion freely (i.e., under no obligation or compulsion). He calls specific sinners to salvation "in order that [His] purpose according to His choice might stand, not because of [their] works" (v. 11). If His choice of sinners to be saved was based on *anything* they had done to earn it, it would no longer be gracious, but merited. (Recall the definition of grace: "unmerited favor" or "favor against merit.") Paul further expounds this theme in Romans 11:

Romans 11:6-8: ⁶But if it is by grace, it is no longer on the basis of works, **otherwise grace is no longer grace.** ⁷What then? That which Israel is seeking for, it has not obtained, but **those who were chosen obtained it, and the rest were hardened;** ⁸just as it is written, "**God gave** them a spirit of stupor, Eyes to see not and ears to hear not, Down to this very day."

God, by His own will, showed mercy to Isaac and not to Ishmael; by His own choice, He blessed Jacob rather than Esau. Neither Isaac nor Jacob were more deserving than their brothers of God's favor. God's choice was motivated *solely* by His own will; it was not based on either man's heritage, works, or desires (this theme is continued in Romans 9:16-18).

Question #154: How does the utter sovereignty of God's grace (seen in His utterly sovereign choice of individuals of salvation) impact you at this point in your study? Honestly record your reactions. Then spend some time in prayer, asking God to help you rightly understand and submit to His truth recorded in Scripture. _____

Romans 9:16-18: ¹⁶So then it does not depend on the man who wills or the man who runs, but on God who has mercy. ¹⁷For 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." ¹⁸So then He has mercy on whom He desires, and He hardens whom He desires.

¹⁶So then it does not depend on the man who wills or the man who runs, but on God who has mercy.

Consider the word "*it*" in verse 16. To what does "*it*" refer? We must answer this question by considering the *context* of the verse. The paragraph in which verse 16 is located begins at verse 14 and runs through verse 18. Please pause and read those verses carefully. Paul, in this paragraph, makes the point that God is not unjust because His choice of those who will be saved is based on His mercy and compassion rather than human merit. Paul affirms this same truth in verses 8 and 11. In verse 8, Paul said that God's choice doesn't result from human lineage, and in verse 11, that God's choice isn't motivated by human works. Thus, we see from *the context of verse 16* that "*it*" refers to God's dispensing of mercy and compassion to "the children of the promise" rather than to "the children of the flesh." He does this in accordance with *His purpose* rather than who people are or what they have done. We can also sense *the importance of this point* from the fact that Paul chose to *make this point* three times in two paragraphs.

¹⁷For 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."

Paul reasons that God's doing as He willed with Pharaoh was not unjust but His privilege and right. His purpose was to make His name famous by exercising His righteous power to judge Pharaoh as well His ability to harden Pharaoh's heart in order to accomplish His purpose (Numbers 14:15; Ezekiel 20:9,14,22; Psalm 46:10).

Proverbs 21:1: The **king's heart is like channels of water in the hand of the LORD**; He turns it wherever He wishes.

¹⁸So then He has mercy on whom He desires, and He hardens whom He desires.

Paul re-asserts (see v. 15) that God dispenses His mercy to whomever He “desires” or wills. Most of us gratefully acknowledge that statement. But we may balk the next statement: “He hardens whom He desires.” When we find ourselves resisting this truth, we do well to ask ourselves: Who are we to charge God with injustice? Who is powerful enough to overrule His sovereign authority? In what court could we arraign God for wrongdoing and bring Him to trial?

Question #155: Summarize in your own words what Scripture clearly teaches about God’s sovereignty in Romans 9:16-18. _____

Given that God Himself is the Author of Scripture, do readers of Scripture have the option of rejecting any of its teaching as untrue? _____ Thus, if this passage is troubling for you, please spend a few moments in prayer asking God’s Holy Spirit to help you understand, appreciate, and affirm the truth of His Word.

Romans 9:19-21: ¹⁹You will say to me then, “Why does He still find fault? For who resists His will?” ²⁰On 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? ²¹Or 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?

¹⁹**You will say to me then, “Why does He still find fault? For who resists His will?”**

Paul again anticipates an argument from those who would hear his words and charge God with injustice. He expects some to ask: If God dispenses His mercy and executes His judgment on vessels He sovereignly created for those very purposes, how can He righteously reward or blame them for their actions? Paul’s *anticipation* of such questions affirms that he is indeed teaching God’s absolute sovereignty in salvation. Paul would have had no need to address this anticipated argument if he were reasoning that the dispensing of God’s mercy in salvation came as a result of man’s will or that it was withheld because of man’s stubborn rejection.

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?**

Paul shuts the mouths of any who would dare challenge the design and purposes of God. He reasons that God, as the Creator, has the sovereign prerogative to do as He pleases with what He has made.

²¹**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?**

Paul affirms that just as a potter has a “*right over the clay*” to make vessels destined for honorable or common use, God has the ultimate right to determine the destinies of the people He creates. The potter’s clay is analogous to people. Those created for “*honorable use*” will receive the privileges of eternal salvation; whereas those created for “*common use*” are “*prepared for destruction*” (vs 22-24). God, in His goodness and mercy, creates both kinds of people with no humanly discernable differences. We cannot tell by looking at or speaking to someone whether

that person was created for honorable or common use. Thus we freely proclaim the gospel of salvation by grace to faith to *everyone*, without any attempt to distinguish between the two types of vessels. Dear reader, if you have not received Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior, we earnestly plead with you to hear and heed these words: *Now* is the day of salvation; the free offer of the Gospel is extended to you! Why will you be destroyed? Repent and trust Christ by faith and you *shall* be saved!

Question #156: What objection does Paul anticipate in Romans 9:19-21?_____

How does He answer this objection?_____

Question #157: Explain in your own words how the Christian's great privilege of evangelizing the lost is wholly consistent with the truth of this passage._____

Romans 9:22-24: ²²What if God, although willing to demonstrate His wrath and to make His power known, endured with much patience vessels of wrath prepared for destruction? ²³And He did so in order that He might make known the riches of His glory upon vessels of mercy, which He prepared beforehand for glory, ²⁴even us, whom He also called, not from among Jews only, but also from among Gentiles.

²²What if God, although willing to demonstrate His wrath and to make His power known, endured with much patience vessels of wrath prepared for destruction?

Here is the second point of Paul's answer to the objection anticipated in verse 19. You will recall that his first point was *the potter has a right over the clay*. And here Paul explains that God has at least four reasons for exercising His right to permit sin in His creation:

- To demonstrate His wrath
- To make His power known
- To exercise much patience with the vessels of wrath
- To make known the riches of His glory upon vessels of mercy

This passage teaches that God is sovereign over evil as well as good and uses evil to accomplish His good and righteous purposes. God will do as He pleases with the wicked, and He will do it to glorify Himself by revealing His goodness to His chosen vessels of mercy. This answer to the objection in verse 19, "Why does He still find fault?" is a clear statement of God's free sovereign right (or prerogative) to do as He pleases with His creation.

²³And He did so in order that He might make known the riches of His glory upon vessels of mercy

God demonstrates His wrath, power, and patience with the wicked to make known or to *display* “the riches of His glory” to His chosen “vessels of mercy.” When God’s vessels of mercy (those who are redeemed) consider the destruction of the wicked, they will stand in awe of God’s wrath, power, and patience. The Bible plainly declares that God’s purpose in the destruction of the wicked is to display His glory.

which He prepared beforehand for glory, ²⁴even us, whom He also called, not from among Jews only, but also from among Gentiles.

The vessels of mercy God “prepared beforehand for glory” comprise His church: the saved, the elect, the called (the foreknown remnant of Jews and those foreknown among the Gentiles.) The Bible plainly declares that God *predestines* these vessels of mercy for salvation by working according “to His own purpose and grace” (2 Timothy 1:9) to prepare them for *glory*. Second Peter 1:3-4 affirms that those who have been called “by His own glory and excellence . . . become partakers of the divine nature.” What a cause for rejoicing!

Question #158: For what purposes does God endure “vessels of wrath prepared for destruction”? _____

Question #159: In your own words, explain why these are good and right purposes. _____

Romans 9:25-29: ²⁵As He says also in Hosea, “I will call those who were not My people, ‘My people,’ And her who was not beloved, ‘beloved.’” ²⁶“And it shall be that in the place where it was said to them, ‘you are not My people,’ There they shall be called sons of the living God.” ²⁷And Isaiah cries out concerning Israel, “Though the number of the sons of Israel be as the sand of the sea, it is the remnant that will be saved; ²⁸for the Lord will execute His word upon the earth, thoroughly and quickly.” ²⁹And just as Isaiah foretold, “Except the LORD of Sabaoth had left to us a posterity, We would have become as Sodom, and would have resembled Gomorrah.”

²⁵As He says also in Hosea, “I will call those who were not My people, ‘My people,’ And her who was not beloved, ‘beloved.’” ²⁶“And it shall be that in the place where it was said to them, ‘you are not My people,’ There they shall be called sons of the living God.”

Paul here affirms that Hosea’s prophecy is fulfilled in God’s choosing certain Gentiles to be saved and called “My people . . . sons of the living God.” They receive this new identity because of their faith in Christ, not by becoming Jews.

²⁷And Isaiah cries out concerning Israel, “Though the number of the sons of Israel be as the sand of the sea, it is the remnant that will be saved; ²⁸for the Lord will execute His word upon the earth, thoroughly and quickly.” ²⁹And just as Isaiah foretold,

“Except the LORD of Sabaoth had left to us a posterity, We would have become as Sodom, and would have resembled Gomorrah.”

Conversely, Israel (known as the sons of Israel) did not receive the promised blessing of salvation as a nation. Only a remnant of Jews believed in Jesus Christ along with many Gentiles. Here the point of Romans 9:6-7 is re-affirmed:

Romans 9:6-7: ⁶But it is not as though the word of God has failed. For **they are not all Israel who are descended from Israel; ⁷neither are they all children because they are Abraham’s descendants**, but: “Through Isaac your descendants will be named.”

Jacob was chosen over Esau “in order that God’s purpose according to His choice might stand” (Romans 9:11). Were these choices of God, made apart from human works, unjust? “May it never be!” Paul affirms (v. 14). Then he reminds his readers of **God’s explanation** of how His sovereignty works in salvation: “I will have mercy on whom I have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I have compassion” (v. 15). Paul understood that God chose some for salvation and passed over others (vs. 16-18), “in order that He might make known the riches of His glory upon vessels of mercy, which He **prepared beforehand for glory**” (v. 23). And here he re-affirms what he has already taught: that only a remnant of Jews will be saved, and that only by the mercy of God. If God had not graciously “left to us a posterity,” the Jews would have been destroyed as completely as Sodom and Gomorrah.

Question #160: Do you see how Paul strengthened His argument in verse 27-29 by seeing God’s choice of a remnant out of the midst of Israel’s utter rebellion against God? In your own words describe this. _____

Romans 9:30-33: ³⁰What shall we say then? That Gentiles, who did not pursue righteousness, attained righteousness, even the righteousness which is by faith; ³¹but Israel, pursuing a law of righteousness, did not arrive at that law. ³²Why? Because they did not pursue it by faith, but as though it were by works. They stumbled over the stumbling stone, ³³just as it is written, “Behold, I lay in Zion a stone of stumbling and a rock of offense, And he who believes in Him will not be disappointed.”

³⁰What shall we say then? That Gentiles, who did not pursue righteousness, attained righteousness, even the righteousness which is by faith; ³¹but Israel, pursuing a law of righteousness, did not arrive at that law. ³²Why? Because they did not pursue it by faith, but as though it were by works.

What an amazing contrast we see here! The Gentiles did not seek righteous standing with God by their own merit but received it **by faith**. Israel, however, sought righteous standing with God by boasting in their **heritage** as Abraham’s seed and their own futile efforts to keep the Law—and were corporately cut off from the blessing of salvation. They failed to glorify their merciful God by humbly acknowledging their dependence on Him by faith and trusting in Christ’s righteousness alone for justification in God’s sight.

They stumbled over the stumbling stone, ³³just as it is written, “Behold, I lay in Zion a stone of stumbling and a rock of offense, And he who believes in Him will not be disappointed.”

They stumbled by rejecting Christ the Messiah, who alone merited the righteousness of God for sinners. Here is the reason for Paul's great sorrow and unceasing grief for his kinsmen (vv. 2-3).

Question #161: Describe the "stumbling stone" and "rock of offense" that tripped up so many Jews _____

Is that same stone still causing people to stumble? _____ What is the only way to avoid falling over it? _____

God is Sovereign in the dispensing of His grace

Simply put, God determines who receives grace and who does not. If this were not true, humanity would be sovereign in this matter and could rightfully boast. Grace would play no part in salvation because the faith to believe would not be *freely* bestowed on whomever God wills to have mercy: **"I will have mercy on whom I have mercy"** (Romans 9:15).

Luke 4:25-29: ²⁵"But I say to you in truth, there were many widows in Israel in the days of Elijah, when the sky was shut up for three years and six months, when a great famine came over all the land; ²⁶**and yet Elijah was sent to none of them, but only to Zarephath, in the land of Sidon, to a woman who was a widow.** ²⁷And there were many lepers in Israel in the time of Elisha the prophet; and **none of them was cleansed, but only Naaman the Syrian.**" ²⁸And all in the synagogue were filled with rage as they heard these things; ²⁹and they rose up and cast Him out of the city, and led Him to the brow of the hill on which their city had been built, in order to throw Him down the cliff.

God's sovereignty is seen in many places in the Bible and concerns broader matters than salvation.

1 Chronicles 29:11-13: ¹¹Thine, O LORD, is the greatness and the power and the glory and the victory and the majesty, indeed everything that is in the heavens and the earth; Thine is the dominion, O LORD, and Thou dost exalt Thyself as head over all. ¹²**Both riches and honor come from Thee, and Thou dost rule over all, and in Thy hand is power and might; and it lies in Thy hand to make great, and to strengthen everyone.** ¹³Now therefore, our God, we thank Thee, and praise Thy glorious name.

Exodus 4:11: And the LORD said to him, **"Who has made man's mouth? Or who makes him dumb or deaf, or seeing or blind? Is it not I, the LORD?"**

Isaiah 45:7: The One forming light and creating darkness, **Causing well-being and creating calamity; I am the LORD who does all these.**

Question #162: Explain in your own words why it is *good* that *God determines* who receives grace and who does not. _____

God Sovereignly bestows the revelation of salvation on whomever He wishes

Salvation is a *revelatory process* which comes by the regenerating work of the Holy Spirit.

New life for some

Sinners are saved when God regenerates them (gives them new life) and they are born again. Consider how Jesus rejoices in the fact that some receive this revelation from God and some do not.

Matthew 11:25-28: ²⁵At that time Jesus answered and said, "I praise Thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that **Thou didst hide these things from the wise and intelligent and didst reveal them to babes.** ²⁶**Yes, Father, for thus it was well-pleasing in Thy sight.** ²⁷All things have been handed over to Me by My Father; and no one knows the Son, except the Father; **nor does anyone know the Father, except the Son, and anyone to whom the Son wills to reveal Him.**"

Consider also Scripture's plain declaration that God is responsible for the blindness of some.

Romans 11:7-10: ⁷What then? That which Israel is seeking for, it has not obtained, **but those who were chosen obtained it, and the rest were hardened;** ⁸just as it is written, **"God gave them a spirit of stupor, Eyes to see not and ears to hear not, Down to this very day."** ⁹And David says, "Let their table become a snare and a trap, And a stumbling block and a retribution to them. ¹⁰**Let their eyes be darkened to see not,** And bend their backs forever."

Isaiah 6:8-10: ⁸Then I heard the voice of the Lord, saying, "Whom shall I send, and who will go for Us?" Then I said, "Here am I. Send me!" ⁹And He said, "Go, and tell this people: 'Keep on listening, but do not perceive; Keep on looking, but do not understand.' ¹⁰**Render the hearts of this people insensitive, Their ears dull, And their eyes dim, Lest they see with their eyes, Hear with their ears, Understand with their hearts, And return and be healed.**"

Human beings *cannot* do anything to save themselves because they are dead in trespasses and sins. They are *naturally unable* to even understand and accept the Gospel. The only way they can be saved is for God to fulfill His electing process through His work of *regeneration*. He does this by freely and sovereignly giving His elect understanding of sin, righteousness and judgment, which ultimately brings them to repentance, faith, and conversion. **Charles Hodge** explains:

*God is no less sovereign in the distribution of his favours. He does what He wills with his own. He gives to some riches, to others, honour; to others, health; while others are poor, unknown, or the victims of disease. To some, the light of the gospel is sent; others are left in darkness. Some are brought through faith unto salvation; others perish in unbelief. To the question, Why is this? the only answer is that given by our Lord. "Even so, Father, for so it seemeth good in thy sight."*³⁴

Is it not apparent and amazing that God has had a special love relationship with the elect from all eternity? His foreknowledge and election of them for salvation surely reflects His deep love for them! Although we finite human beings cannot fully understand why God chose some for salvation and left others in their sinful state, we do know that His attributes always operate in perfect harmony with each other. Thus, God's sovereignty is always exercised in perfect harmony with His goodness, love, wisdom, and justice.

³⁴Charles Hodge, *Systematic Theology*, (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Wm B. Eerdmans Publishing Company), vol. 1: 441.

Question #163: Carefully consider Matthew 11:25-28, Romans 11:7-10, Isaiah 6:8-10, and the above quote from Charles Hodge. Then in your own words, explain the *necessity* of regeneration and revelation in salvation. _____

Reprobation for others

Since God elects some people to be saved out of the whole of humanity, He obviously passes over those He does not choose. This is called *reprobation*. Wayne Grudem defines *reprobation* as follows:

When we understand election as God's sovereign choice of some persons to be saved, then there is necessarily another aspect of that choice, namely, God's sovereign decision to pass over others and not to save them. This decision of God in eternity past is called reprobation. *Reprobation is the sovereign decision of God before creation to pass over some persons, in sorrow deciding not to save them, and to punish them for their sins, and thereby to manifest his justice.*³⁵

The Scripture speaks of this reality in many places. Here are just a few:

Psalm 92:5-9: ⁵How great are Thy works, O LORD! Thy thoughts are very deep. ⁶A senseless man has no knowledge; Nor does a stupid man understand this: ⁷That when the wicked sprouted up like grass, And all who did iniquity flourished, **It was only that they might be destroyed forevermore.** ⁸But Thou, O LORD, art on high forever. ⁹For, behold, Thine enemies, O LORD, For behold, Thine enemies will perish; All who do iniquity will be scattered.

Romans 9:17-21: ¹⁷For 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."** ¹⁸So then He has mercy on whom He desires, and He hardens whom He desires. ¹⁹You will say to me then, "Why does He still find fault? For who resists His will?" ²⁰On 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? **²¹Or 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?**

Romans 11:6-8: ⁶But if it is by grace, it is no longer on the basis of works, otherwise grace is no longer grace. ⁷What then? That which Israel is seeking for, it has not obtained, but **those who were chosen obtained it, and the rest were hardened;** ⁸just as it is written, **"God gave** them a spirit of stupor, Eyes to see not and ears to hear not, Down to this very day."

1 Peter 2:7-8: ⁷This precious value, then, is for you who believe. But for those who disbelieve, "The stone which the builders rejected, This became the very corner stone," ⁸and, "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.**

³⁵Wayne Grudem, *Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Biblical Doctrine*. (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan), 684.

This fact is terrible, but nonetheless true. Although the reality of hell and damnation is difficult to consider, it is an essential part of God's eternal plan. Reprobation and damnation serve His ultimate purpose of manifesting of His glory. Scripture clearly teaches these difficult truths.

Exodus 9:13-17: ¹³Then the LORD said to Moses, "Rise up early in the morning and stand before Pharaoh and say to him, 'Thus says the LORD, the God of the Hebrews, "Let My people go, that they may serve Me. ¹⁴For this time **I will send all My plagues on you and your servants and your people, so that you may know that there is no one like Me in all the earth.** ¹⁵For if by now I had put forth My hand and struck you and your people with pestilence, you would have been cut off from the earth. ¹⁶But, indeed, for this cause I have allowed you to remain, **in order to show you My power, and in order to proclaim My name through all the earth.** ¹⁷Still you exalt yourself against My people by not letting them go.'""

Proverbs 16:4: The LORD has made everything for its own purpose, **Even the wicked for the day of evil.**

Nevertheless, God experiences very real sorrow when anyone perishes.

Ezekiel 18:32: "For **I have no pleasure in the death of anyone who dies,**" declares the Lord GOD. "Therefore, repent and live."

Wayne Grudem comments: "*But it might be objected at this point, if God genuinely feels sorrow at the punishment of the wicked, then why does he allow it or even decree that it will come about? The answer must be that God knows that this will ultimately result in greater glory for himself. It will show his power and wrath and justice and mercy in a way that could not otherwise be demonstrated. Certainly in our own human experience it is possible to do something that causes us great sorrow but which we know will result in long-term greater good. And so, after this faint human analogy, we may somewhat understand that God can decree something that causes him sorrow yet ultimately will further his glory.*"³⁶

Question #164: Describe your initial reaction to the doctrine of reprobation. _____

Question #165: How do the Bible passages quoted above and the words from Wayne Grudem's *Systematic Theology* enhance your appreciation of the the doctrine of reprobation (i.e., how do they help you view this doctrine from the right perspective)? _____

Election comforts and fills us with thanksgiving as it glorifies God

³⁶ Wayne Grudem, *Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Biblical Doctrine*. (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan), 686.

The doctrine of election comforts those whom God has chosen by assuring us of the certainty of our salvation. If God has chosen to save us, can anyone thwart His intended purpose? **NO!** Our salvation has been securely ordained by God's eternal decree from before the world began.

2 Timothy 1:8-10: ⁸Therefore, do not be ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, or of me His prisoner; but join with me in suffering for the gospel according to the power of God, 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,** ¹⁰but now has been revealed by the appearing of our Savior Christ Jesus, who abolished death, and brought life and immortality to light through the Gospel, ¹¹for which I was appointed a preacher and an apostle and a teacher.

Ephesians 1:3-6: ³Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ ⁴just as **He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world,** that we should be holy and blameless before Him. In love ⁵**He predestined us** to adoption as sons through Jesus Christ to Himself, **according to the kind intention of His will,** ⁶**to the praise of the glory of His grace, which He freely bestowed on us** in the Beloved.

Romans 8:29-35: ²⁹For **whom He foreknew, He also predestined** to become conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the first-born among many brethren ³⁰and **whom He predestined,** these **He** also called; and whom **He** called, these **He** also justified; and whom **He** justified, these **He** also glorified. ³¹What then shall we say to these things? **If God is for us, who is against us?** ³²**He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how will He not also with Him freely give us all things?** ³³**Who will bring a charge against God's elect?** God is the one who justifies; ³⁴who is the one who condemns? Christ Jesus is He who died, yes, rather who was raised, who is at the right hand of God, who also intercedes for us. ³⁵**Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?** Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?

When we consider that our salvation is rooted in the free and sovereign purpose of God, we naturally rejoice with thanksgiving. How amazing that God would stoop to save such unworthy sinners caught up in sin and rebellion and deserving of hell! We exult in His amazing grace, which frees us from the eternal death we have merited. With grateful hearts, may we glorify God for our salvation by freely proclaiming His goodness to us.

2 Thessalonians 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.

Psalms 65:4: **How blessed is the one whom Thou dost choose, and bring near to Thee,** To dwell in Thy courts. We will be satisfied with the goodness of Thy house, Thy holy temple.

Psalms 106:4-5: ⁴Remember me, O LORD, in Thy favor toward Thy people; Visit me with Thy salvation, ⁵**That I may see the prosperity of Thy chosen ones, That I may rejoice in the gladness of Thy nation, That I may glory with Thine inheritance.**

Question #166: Carefully read 2 Timothy 1:8-10, Ephesians 1:3-6, and Romans 8:29-35. According to these passages, how secure is your salvation? _____

If God is for you (and He is if you are saved), who can be against you? _____
Who can successfully bring a damning accusation against you? _____
Who has the power to condemn a person God has justified? _____
Who is able to separate you from the love of God? _____
What else in all of creation can separate you from the love of God? _____
What makes your salvation so secure? _____

Question #167: Do 2 Thessalonians 2:13, Psalm 65:4, and Psalm 106:4-5, accurately describe your attitude toward your salvation? _____ If not, it would be wise for you to spend more time studying and meditation on what Scripture teaches about the security of your salvation.

Election should encourage evangelism

We should zealously preach the gospel and evangelize people because *God has promised* to save people from every tribe and nation, indeed from every language and ethnic group in the world.

Matthew 28:19-20: ¹⁹Go therefore and **make disciples of all the nations**, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, ²⁰teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.

Luke 24:45-47: ⁴⁵Then He opened their minds to understand the Scriptures, ⁴⁶and He said to them, "Thus it is written, that the Christ should suffer and rise again from the dead the third day; ⁴⁷and that **repentance for forgiveness of sins should be proclaimed in His name to all the nations, beginning from Jerusalem.**"

Revelation 5:9-10: And they sang a new song, saying, "Worthy art Thou to take the book, and to break its seals; **for Thou wast slain, and didst purchase for God with Thy blood men from every tribe and tongue and people and nation.** ¹⁰And Thou hast made them to be a kingdom and priests to our God; and they will reign upon the earth.

We see Paul, in his missionary journeys in the book of Acts, being encouraged by God to evangelize in certain areas because God's elect people were there.

Acts 16:6-10: ⁶And they passed through the Phrygian and Galatian region, **having been forbidden by the Holy Spirit to speak the word in Asia;** ⁷and when they had come to Mysia, they were trying to go into Bithynia, and **the Spirit of Jesus did not permit them;** ⁸and passing by Mysia, they came down to Troas. ⁹**And a vision appeared to Paul in the night: a certain man of Macedonia was standing and appealing to him, and saying, "Come over to Macedonia and help us."** ¹⁰And when he had seen the vision, immediately we sought to go into Macedonia, **concluding that God had called us to preach the gospel to them.**

Acts 18:8-11: ⁸And Crispus, the leader of the synagogue, believed in the Lord with all his household, and many of the Corinthians when they heard were believing and being baptized. ⁹And **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; ¹⁰for I am with you, and no man will attack you in order to harm you, for I have many people in this city"** ¹¹And **he settled there a year and six months,** teaching the word of God among them.

2 Corinthians 2:14-16: ¹⁴But thanks be to God, **who always leads us in His triumph in Christ**, and manifests through us the sweet aroma of the knowledge of Him in every place. ¹⁵For we are a fragrance of Christ to God among **those who are being saved and among those who are perishing; ¹⁶to the one an aroma from death to death, to the other an aroma of life to life.** And who is adequate for these things?

Paul affirmed that he did all for sake of God's elect, the church he zealously sought to reach with his relentless preaching of the Gospel.

2 Timothy 2:10-11: For this reason I **endure all things for the sake of those who are chosen, that they also may obtain the salvation** which is in Christ Jesus and with it eternal glory.

Paul affirms in Romans 9 that God elects according to His own free and sovereign purpose. Then in Romans 10, he explains that people are saved when they call upon the name of the Lord. God saves those He has elected through the means of Gospel preaching! ***"How shall they hear without a preacher?"***

Romans 10:12-15: ¹²For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek; for the same Lord is Lord of all, abounding in riches for all who call upon Him; ¹³for "Whoever will call upon the name of the Lord will be saved." ¹⁴How then shall they call upon Him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in Him whom they have not heard? And **how shall they hear without a preacher? ¹⁵And how shall they preach unless they are sent?** Just as it is written, "How beautiful are the feet of those who bring glad tidings of good things!"

Question 168: From the above Scripture passages, describe at least four specific ways in which the doctrine of election *encourages* evangelism:

- 1) _____
- 2) _____
- 3) _____
- 4) _____

Consider a few statements from the **Canons of the Synod of Dort:**

ARTICLE 7. Election is the unchangeable purpose of God, whereby, before the foundation of the world, He has out of mere grace, according to the sovereign good pleasure of His own will, chosen from the whole human race, which had fallen through their own fault from the primitive state of rectitude into sin and destruction, a certain number of persons to redemption in Christ, whom He from eternity appointed the Mediator and Head of the elect and the foundation of salvation. This elect number, though by nature neither better nor more deserving than others, but with them involved in one common misery, God has decreed to give to Christ to be saved by Him, and effectually to call and draw them to His communion by His Word and Spirit; to bestow upon them true faith, justification, and sanctification; and having powerfully preserved them in the fellowship of His son, finally to glorify them for the demonstration of His mercy, and for the praise of the riches of His glorious grace; as it is written "For he chose us in him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight. In love he predestined us to be adopted as his sons through Jesus Christ, in accordance with his pleasure and will — to the praise of his glorious grace, which he has freely given us in the One he loves" (Ephesians 1:4-6). And elsewhere: "And those

he predestined, he also called; those he called, he also justified; those he justified, he also glorified” (Romans 8:30).

ARTICLE 8. There are not various decrees of election, but one and the same decree respecting all those who shall be saved, both under the Old and New Testament; since the Scripture declares the good pleasure, purpose, and counsel of the divine will to be one, according to which He has chosen us from eternity, both to grace and to glory, to salvation and to the way of salvation, which He has ordained that we should walk therein (Ephesians 1:4,5; 2:10).

ARTICLE 9. This election was not founded upon foreseen faith and the obedience of faith, holiness, or any other good quality or disposition in man, as the prerequisite, cause, or condition of which it depended; but men are chosen to faith and to the obedience of faith, holiness, etc. Therefore election is the fountain of every saving good, from which proceed faith, holiness, and the other gifts of salvation, and finally eternal life itself, as its fruits and effects, according to the testimony of the apostle: “For He chose us (not because we were, but) in Him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in His sight” (Ephesians 1:4).

ARTICLE 10. The good pleasure of God is the sole cause of this gracious election; which does not consist herein that out of all possible qualities and actions of men God has chosen some as a condition of salvation, but that He was pleased out of the common mass of sinners to adopt some certain persons as a peculiar people to Himself, as it is written: “Yet, before the twins were born or had done anything good or bad — in order that God’s purpose in election might stand: not by works but by Him who calls — she (Rebekah) was told, ‘The older will serve the younger.’ Just as it is written: ‘Jacob I loved, but Esau I hated’” (Romans 9:11-13). “When the Gentiles heard this, they were glad and honored the word of the Lord; and all who were appointed for eternal life believed” (Acts 13:48).

ARTICLE 11. And as God Himself is most wise, unchangeable, omniscient, and omnipotent, so the election made by Him can neither be interrupted nor changed, recalled, or annulled; neither can the elect be cast away, nor their number diminished.

The Sovereignty of God

Part 4: In Salvation

Effectual Calling

What Does the Bible Say?

We have seen that salvation is a supernatural work of God accomplished by the regenerating work of the Holy Spirit. This is the only way salvation can occur because mankind is naturally unable to see, hear, and understand the Gospel. Salvation rests upon the free electing grace of God. He chooses (elects) those who will be saved from before the beginning of time. Election is unconditional; that is, it is not **conditioned** (determined or based) upon any response in man. People are saved in time and space because God has chosen them in eternity past and regenerates them (causes them to be born again) at a specific point in the course of their lives.

John 3:3: Jesus answered and said to him, “Truly, truly, I say to you, **unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.**”

1 Peter 1:1-3 - ¹Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, to those who reside as aliens, scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia, **who are chosen ²according to the foreknowledge of God the Father**, by the sanctifying work of the Spirit, that you may obey Jesus Christ and be sprinkled with His blood: May grace and peace be yours in fullest measure. ³Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, **who according to His great mercy has caused us to be born again** to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead,

Salvation is a supernatural work of God, initiated by election and accomplished by the new birth. Although predestined to occur in eternity past, it actually happens when the chosen sinner’s heart is regenerated by God’s Holy Spirit. He does this through a process of **drawing** or **calling**. The **Bible plainly declares** that those whom God has elected and predestined are **drawn** to salvation by God Himself.

John 6:37: **All that the Father gives Me shall come to Me, and the one who comes to Me I will certainly not cast out.**

John 6:44: **No one can come to Me, unless the Father who sent Me draws him;** and I will raise him up on the last day.

John 6:65: And He was saying, “For this reason I have said to you, that **no one can come to Me, unless it has been granted him from the Father.**”

Jeremiah 31:2-3: ²Thus says the LORD, “The people who survived the sword Found grace in the wilderness—Israel, when it went to find its rest.” ³The LORD appeared to him from afar, saying, “I have loved you with an everlasting love; **Therefore I have drawn you with lovingkindness.**”

Exodus 19:4: You yourselves have seen what I did to the Egyptians, and **how I bore you on eagles’ wings, and brought you to Myself.**

Question 169: From the passages listed above, describe in your own words the supernatural work of God that saves sinners. _____

The Bible plainly declares that the Church, ie., those who are the elected recipients of salvation, have been called by God at a particular point in their lives. This clearly affirms that *God is the initiator* of their salvation.

Romans 8:28: 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.

Romans 1:1-7: ¹Paul, a bond-servant of Christ Jesus, called as an apostle, set apart for the gospel of God, ²which He promised before-hand through His prophets in the holy Scriptures, ³concerning His Son, who was born of a descendant of David according to the flesh, ⁴who was declared the Son of God with power by the resurrection from the dead, according to the spirit of holiness, Jesus Christ our Lord, ⁵through whom we have received grace and apostleship to bring about the obedience of faith among all the Gentiles, for His name's sake, ⁶among whom you also are the called of Jesus Christ; ⁷to all who are beloved of God in Rome, called as saints: Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Romans 9:23-24: ²³And He did so in order that He might make known the riches of His glory upon vessels of mercy, which He prepared beforehand for glory, ²⁴even us, whom He also called, not from among Jews only, but also from among Gentiles.

1 Corinthians 1:9: God is faithful, through whom you were called into fellowship with His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

1 Corinthians 1:22-24: ²²For indeed Jews ask for signs, and Greeks search for wisdom; ²³but we preach Christ crucified, to Jews a stumbling block, and to Gentiles foolishness, ²⁴but to those who are the called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God.

2 Thessalonians 2:14: And it was for this He called you through our gospel, that you may gain the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ.

1 Timothy 6:12: Fight the good fight of faith; take hold of the eternal life to which you were called, and you made the good confession in the presence of many witnesses.

2 Timothy 1:8-11: ⁸Therefore, do not be ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, or of me His prisoner; but join with me in suffering for the gospel according to the power of God, ⁹who 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, ¹⁰but now has been revealed by the appearing of our Savior Christ Jesus, who abolished death, and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel, ¹¹for which I was appointed a preacher and an apostle and a teacher.

Hebrews 9:15: And for this reason He is the mediator of a new covenant, in order that since a death has taken place for the redemption of the transgressions that were committed under the first covenant, those who have been called may receive the promise of the eternal inheritance.

1 Peter 5:10: And after you have suffered for a little while, the God of all grace, who called you to His eternal glory in Christ, will Himself perfect, confirm, strengthen and establish you.

Scripture also speaks of our salvation as a **calling** by God, i.e., a divine favor or privilege which has been given to all the saints.

Romans 11:28-29: ²⁸From the standpoint of the gospel they are enemies for your sake, but from the standpoint of God's choice they are beloved for the sake of the fathers; ²⁹for **the gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable.**

1 Corinthians 1:1-3: ¹Paul, called as an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, and Sosthenes, our brother, ²to the church of God which is at Corinth, to those who have been sanctified in Christ Jesus, **saints by calling**, with all who in every place call upon the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, their Lord and ours: ³Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

1 Corinthians 1:26-29: ²⁶For **consider your calling, brethren**, that there were not many wise according to the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble; ²⁷but **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, ²⁸and the base things of the world and the despised, **God has chosen**, the things that are not, that He might nullify the things that are, ²⁹that no man should boast before God.

Ephesians 1:18-19a: ¹⁸I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened, so that you may know what is the **hope of His calling**, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, ¹⁹and what is the surpassing greatness of His power toward us who believe.

Hebrews 3:1: Therefore, **holy brethren, partakers of a heavenly calling**, consider Jesus, the Apostle and High Priest of our confession.

Question #170: According to the above passages, who is the initiator of our salvation?_____ Is this clear teaching of Scripture difficult for you to accept?_____ If so, read these passages again, prayerfully asking God to open your heart to receive this truth with joy and contentment.

All the Elect will be Saved

The **Bible plainly declares** that everyone God the Father chooses for salvation will be saved and glorified. God is sovereign, and His purpose to save His people (those He elects, predestines and calls) cannot be frustrated. God works everything after the counsel of His will (Ephesians 1:11), including His plan of redemption. Consider the words of our Lord Jesus Christ:

John 6:37-39: ³⁷**All that the Father gives Me shall come to Me**, and the one who comes to Me I will certainly not cast out. ³⁸For I have come down from heaven, not to do My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me. ³⁹And this is the will of Him who sent Me, **that of all that He has given Me I lose nothing**, but raise it up on the last day.

Notice how Jesus affirms the **certainty** of salvation of **all** whom the Father has given Him. Oh, what comfort for the saints! The very purpose of almighty God, which cannot be thwarted, upholds their final salvation. This great truth will be examined further under the doctrine of Eternal Security. For now, consider the following verses:

Acts 13:48: And when the Gentiles heard this, they began rejoicing and glorifying the word of the Lord; and **as many as had been appointed to eternal life believed.**

How many believed? *As many as had been appointed to eternal life*, as a consequence of the divine appointment (predestination). God acted upon them in a calling of regeneration to grant them the gift of faith so they could believe, and “as many” did.

Romans 8:29-30: ²⁹For whom He foreknew, He also predestined to become conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren; ³⁰and **whom He predestined, these He also called; and whom He called, these He also justified; and whom He justified, these He also glorified.**

How many of those whom God foreknew and predestined to salvation were also called, justified, and glorified? *All!*

Question 171: Describe your initial reaction to this scriptural truth. _____

The Golden Chain

Romans 8:28-30 has been rightly described as *the golden chain of salvation* because of its profound assurance that God’s purpose in salvation cannot be thwarted by anyone or anything. It describes the effectual calling of salvation on Christian believers.

Romans 8:28-30: ²⁸And 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.** ²⁹**For whom He foreknew, He also predestined** to become conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the first-born among many brethren; ³⁰and **whom He predestined, these He also called; and whom He called, these He also justified; and whom He justified, these He also glorified.**

Notice first that, in the *effectual calling* of His saints, God is the divine initiator of salvation and strong protector of those whom He has chosen to save.

Romans 8:28: 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.**

Surely the highest good of those God has “called according to His purpose” is their salvation. He *causes* all things to work together to accomplish this specific purpose as well as all His other purposes for them. He will draw them, regenerate them, gift them with repentance and saving faith in Christ, and bring them to conversion. Then He will continue working in them through the indwelling power of His Holy Spirit to conform them to the image of Jesus Christ before finally glorifying them in Heaven.

1 Peter 1:3-5: ³Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His great mercy has **caused us to be born again** to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, ⁴**to obtain an inheritance which is imperishable and undefiled and will not fade away**, reserved in heaven for you, ⁵**who are protected by the power of God though faith** for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.

Philippians 2:12-13: ¹²So then, my beloved, just as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your salvation with fear and trembling; ¹³**for it is God who is at work in you, both to will and to work for His good pleasure.**

Second, we see that God predestined those He *foreknew* (fore-loved) to “be conformed to the image of” Christ. Being conformed to the image of Christ is a process that begins, *by God’s work*

in us, at salvation and is completed, *by His work in us*, at glorification. The “predestination” has a final destination of the completed work of sanctification (which we call Glorification when the saints are finally changed by God with glorified bodies).

Romans 8:29: For whom He foreknew, He also predestined to become conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren;

Thus, the *destiny* of those God foreknew has been *pre-destined* (pre-determined) by God.

Ephesians 1:5-6: ⁵He predestined us to adoption as sons through Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the kind intention of His will, ⁶to the praise of the glory of His grace, which He freely bestowed on us in the Beloved.

Ephesians 1:11-12: In Him ¹¹also we have obtained an inheritance, **having been predestined according to His purpose who works all things after the counsel of His will**, ¹²to the end that we who were the first to hope in Christ should be to the praise of His glory.

Third, consider this concise summary of the salvation process.

Romans 8:30: and **whom He predestined, these He also called; and whom He called, these He also justified; and whom He justified, these He also glorified.**

Clearly, those who have been predestined are called; and those who are called are regenerated by the Spirit and saved through faith in the justifying work of the Son. The calling of God is thus *effectual* because His Holy Spirit *effects* salvation in those who are called by moving them to be willing accept the Gospel.

John 6:65: And He was saying, “For this reason I have said to you, that **no one can come to Me, unless it has been granted him from the Father.**”

We have already seen this *effectual calling* at work in many who were saved in the narrative passages of Acts. Paul, Lydia and Cornelius are a few examples.

Question 172: According to the passages quoted above, what prevents the links in “the golden chain” from being broken? _____

What does this tell you about the security of your salvation? _____

Is saving Grace Irresistible?

Yes, it cannot be resisted because salvation is a supernatural work of God in regeneration. Could Lazarus have resisted his resurrection from the dead? God has, in eternity past, elected and predestined *all* who will come to saving faith through the irresistible or effectual calling (working) of His Holy Spirit. **The calling effects salvation in the elect.**

Deuteronomy 30:6: Moreover **the LORD your God will circumcise your heart and the heart of your descendants, to love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul**, in order that you may live.

John 6:37: **All that the Father gives Me shall come to Me, and the one who comes to Me I will certainly not cast out.**

John 6:44: No one can come to Me, unless the Father who sent Me draws him; and I will raise him up on the last day.

John 6:65: And He was saying, “For this reason I have said to you, that no one can come to Me, unless it has been granted him from the Father.”

Regeneration, which precedes and enables believing faith, is an irresistible working of God’s Holy Spirit that changes sinners’ hearts and minds, raises them from spiritual death to spiritual life, and implants within them the nature of God. This work of the Spirit is accomplished according to the Father’s good will and cannot be thwarted by the creature.

Titus 3:4-7: ⁴But when the kindness of God our Savior and His love for mankind appeared, ⁵He saved us, not on the basis of deeds which we have done in righteousness, but according to His mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewing by the Holy Spirit, ⁶whom He poured out upon us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior, ⁷that being justified by His grace we might be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life.

Ezekiel 36:26-27: ²⁶Moreover, I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; and I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. ²⁷And I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes, and you will be careful to observe My ordinances.

Romans 8:9: However, you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you. But if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Him.

1 John 4:13: By this we know that we abide in Him and He in us, because He has given us of His Spirit.

Romans 8:16-17: ¹⁶The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, heirs also, heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him in order that we may also be glorified with Him.

Question 173: According to the verses above, what is Holy Spirit’s role in regeneration?_____

Question 174: Write a brief prayer of thanksgiving for the Holy Spirit’s work in your life._____

David N. Steele comments:

“The gospel invitation extends a call to salvation to everyone who hears its message. It invites all men without distinction to drink freely of the water of life and live. It promises salvation to all who repent and believe. But this outward general call, extended to the elect and non-elect alike, will not bring sinners to Christ. Why? Because men are by nature dead in sin and are under its power. They are of themselves unable and unwilling to forsake their evil ways and to turn to Christ for mercy. Consequently, the unregenerate will not respond to the gospel call to

repentance and faith. No amount of external threatenings or promises will cause blind, deaf, dead, rebellious sinners to bow before Christ as Lord and to look to Him alone for salvation. Such an act of faith and submission is contrary to the lost man's nature.

Therefore, the Holy Spirit, in order to bring God's elect to salvation, extends to them a special inward call in addition to the outward call contained in the gospel message. Through this special call the Holy Spirit performs a work of grace within the sinner which inevitably brings him to faith in Christ . . .

Although the general outward call of the gospel can be, and often is, rejected, the special inward call of the Spirit never fails to result in the conversion of those to whom it is made. This special call is not made to all sinners but is issued to the elect only! The Spirit is in no way dependent upon their help or cooperation for success in His work of bringing them to Christ. It is for this reason that Calvinists speak of the Spirit's call and of God's grace in saving sinners as being 'efficacious,' 'invincible,' or 'irresistible.' For the grace which the Holy Spirit extends to the elect cannot be thwarted or refused, it never fails to bring them to true faith in Christ!" ³⁷

Let's review: How are people saved? By exercising their human wisdom and choosing to follow Christ? Or by **God choosing** to save them before they were born, before they had done anything good or bad, and then powerfully calling them in regeneration at some point in their life?

Romans 9:10-12: ¹⁰And not only this, but there was Rebekah also, when she had conceived twins by one man, our father Isaac; ¹¹for though the twins **were not yet born, and had not done anything good or bad, in order that God's purpose according to His choice might stand**, not because of works, but because of Him who calls, ¹²it was said to her, "The older will serve the younger."

Romans 9:15-16,18: ¹⁵For He says to Moses, **"I will have mercy on whom I have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I have compassion."** ¹⁶So then **it does not depend on the man who wills or the man who runs**, but on God who has mercy. . . . ¹⁸**So then He has mercy on whom He desires, and He hardens whom He desires.**

Question 175: What does this say about people's ability to resist the Spirit's work in salvation?

Could Paul have chosen **not** to be God's appointed instrument to take the Gospel to the Gentiles?

_____ Could Jeremiah have decided not to be God's prophet to the nations? _____

Could you have refused the Holy Spirit's call to repent and believe the Gospel? _____

Daniel 4:35: And all the inhabitants of the earth are counted as nothing, **But He does according to His will in the host of heaven And among the inhabitatns of earth; And no one can ward off His hand Or say to Him, "What hast Thou done?"**

Acts 9:13-16: ¹³But Ananias answered, "Lord, I have heard from many about this man, **how much harm he did to Thy saints at Jerusalem;** ¹⁴and here he has authority from the

³⁷ David N. Steele *The Five Points of Calvinism: Defined, Defended, Documented* P&R Publishing 1963 page 48

chief priests to bind all who call upon Thy name.” ¹⁵But the Lord said to him, **“Go, for he is a chosen instrument of Mine, to bear My name before the Gentiles and kings and the sons of Israel;** ¹⁶for I will show him how much he must suffer for My name’s sake.”

Galatians 1:15-17: ¹⁵But **when He who had set me apart, even from my mother's womb, and called me through His grace,** was pleased ¹⁶to reveal His Son in me, that I might preach Him among the Gentiles, I did not immediately consult with flesh and blood, ¹⁷nor did I go up to Jerusalem to those who were apostles before me; but I went away to Arabia, and returned once more to Damascus.

Jeremiah 1:4-5: ⁴Now the word of the LORD came to me saying, ⁵**“Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, And before you were born I consecrated you; I have appointed you a prophet to the nations.”**

With this in mind, let us consider again whether or not we would take a Semi-Pelagian or an Augustinian view of this doctrine.

Man's will is free and he can successfully resist the Spirit's call.	Human Resistance	Effectual Calling	The calling of God to the elect does effect salvation infallibly.
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We have seen that the Bible clearly teaches that God’s call to the elect actually effects their salvation infallibly (without fail).

Question #176: How will you respond to God’s word on this subject?_____

Notes:

The Sovereignty of God

Part 4: In Salvation

Particular Redemption

What Does the Bible Say?

God's work of redemption cannot be both *universal* and *particular*. The language of Scripture reveals which it is. The following are just a few of the Scriptures affirming that: (1) the benefits of Christ's atonement are the *definite* possession of the Church in *particular* (believers); and, (2) the sufficient work of Christ guarantees to the elect all of God's promises of reconciliation and eternal blessing. The words *us*, *we*, *our*, and *they* in these passages indicate that the merit of Christ's atonement belongs to His Church *in particular*.

Matthew 1:21: And she will bear a Son; and you shall call His name Jesus, for it is **He who will save His people from their sins.**

John 10:11: I am the good shepherd; **the good shepherd lays down His life for the sheep.**

Acts 20:28: Be on guard for yourselves and for all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God **which He purchased with His own blood.**

Romans 5:8-11: ⁸But God demonstrates His own love toward **us**, in that while **we** were yet sinners, **Christ died for us.** ⁹Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, **we** shall be saved from the wrath of God through Him. ¹⁰For if while **we** were enemies, **we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son**, much more, having been reconciled, **we shall be saved** by His life. ¹¹And not only this, but we also exult in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, **through whom we have now received the reconciliation.**

Romans 8:31-34: ³¹What then shall we say to these things? If God is for **us**, who is against **us**? ³²He who did not spare His own Son, but **delivered Him up for us all**, how will He not also with **Him freely give us all things?** ³³Who will bring a charge against **God's elect?** God is the one who justifies; ³⁴who is the one who condemns? **Christ Jesus is He** who died, yes, rather who was raised, who is at the right hand of God, **who also intercedes for us.**

2 Corinthians 5:21: He made **Him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, that we** might become the righteousness of God in Him.

Galatians 1:3-5: ³Grace to you and peace from God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ, ⁴**who gave Himself for our sins, that He might deliver us** out of this present evil age, according to the will of our God and Father, ⁵to whom be the glory forevermore. Amen.

Galatians 3:13: **Christ redeemed us** from the curse of the Law, **having become a curse for us**—for it is written, “Cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree”—

Ephesians 1:7: **In Him we have redemption through His blood**, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of His grace, . . .

Ephesians 5:25-27: ²⁵Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and **gave Himself up for her**; ²⁶that He might **sanctify her**, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, ²⁷that He might present to Himself the church in all her glory, having no spot or wrinkle or any such thing; but **that she should be holy and blameless.**

Colossians 1:13-14: ¹³For **He delivered us** from the domain of darkness, and **transferred us** to the kingdom of His beloved Son, ¹⁴**in whom we have redemption**, the forgiveness of sins.

Titus 3:5-7: ⁵**He saved us**, not on the basis of deeds which we have done in righteousness, but according to His mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewing by the Holy Spirit, ⁶whom He **poured out upon us richly through Jesus Christ** our Savior, ⁷that **being justified by His grace** we might be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life.

Hebrews 10:14: For **by one offering He has perfected** for all time **those** who are sanctified.

1 Peter 2:21-24: ²¹For you have been called for this purpose, since Christ also **suffered for you**, leaving you an example for you to follow, ²²who committed no sin, nor was any deceit found in His mouth; ²³and while being reviled, He did not revile in return; while suffering, He uttered no threats, but kept entrusting Himself to Him who judges righteously; ²⁴and **He Himself bore our sins** in His body on the cross, that **we** might die to sin and live to righteousness; for **by His wounds you were healed**.

1 John 1:6-7: ⁶If we say we have fellowship with Him and yet walk in the darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth, ⁷but if we walk in the light as He Himself is in the light, **we** have fellowship with one another, and **the blood of Jesus His Son cleanses us from all sin**.

These passages (and many more) clearly affirm that Christ's work *definitely* secures for the Church *in particular* all the benefits of reconciliation to God. This fact is rarely disputed. What is often disputed is that the Church *alone* receives these benefits.

Question 177: Reread the above passage, circling specific words or phrases affirming that Christ's atonement applied specifically to those God has chosen for salvation. Based on this evidence, are you willing to accept this doctrine? _____ Explain your answer. _____

Does the Bible teach universal atonement?

Since the Bible teaches that only those who believe are justified, it necessarily implies that the benefits of Christ's atonement are *not* afforded to unbelievers.

Romans 3:21-25a: ²¹But now apart from the Law the righteousness of God has been manifested, being witnessed by the Law and the Prophets, ²²even **the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all those who believe**; for there is no distinction; ²³for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, ²⁴**being justified as a gift by His grace** through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus; ²⁵whom God displayed publically as a propitiation in His blood **through faith**.

Clearly, salvation is given to those whom God chose to give it before time began. Clearly, salvation is brought to pass in time through the effectual calling of the Holy Spirit and results in regeneration.

Romans 8:28-30: ²⁸And 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**. ²⁹**For whom He foreknew, He also predestined** to become conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the first-born among many brethren; ³⁰and **whom He predestined, these He also**

called; and whom He called, these He also justified; and whom He justified, these He also glorified.

God's effectual calling brings the sinner to repentance and faith through the enabling work of God's Holy Spirit. This results in conversion, justification and imputation, as well as ultimate sanctification and glorification. At the point of repentance and faith, sinners are *justified* because God's wrath against their sins has been satisfied (*propitiated*). Their guilt has been removed from them (*expiated*), and they are declared righteous in Christ (imputation).

Romans 3:25-28: . . . ²⁵whom God displayed publicly as a **propitiation in His blood through faith**. This was to demonstrate His righteousness, because in the forbearance of God He passed over the sins previously committed; ²⁶for the demonstration, I say, of His righteousness at the present time, that He might be just and **the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus**. ²⁷Where then is boasting? It is excluded. By what kind of law? Of works? No, but by a law of faith. ²⁸For we maintain that **a man is justified by faith apart from works of the Law.**

Believers in Christ are thus *saved* from God's wrath through Christ's work of *justification*.

Romans 5:9: Much more then, **having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from the wrath of God through Him.**

Question #178: On what basis are believers saved? _____

Question #179: How does this guarantee that all the glory for the salvation of sinners goes to God alone? _____

Some passages of Scripture seem to imply that Christ's atonement was universal. Do the benefits of the atonement extend to unbelievers? Did Christ die for the sins of people who will never be saved?

John 1:29: The next day he saw Jesus coming to him, and said, "Behold, the Lamb of God **who takes away the sin of the world!**"

1 John 2:1-2: ¹My little children, I am writing these things to you that you may not sin. And if anyone sins, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous; ²and He Himself is the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but **also for those of the whole world.**

2 Corinthians 5:18-19: ¹⁸Now all these things are from God, who reconciled us to Himself through Christ, and gave us the ministry of reconciliation, ¹⁹namely, that **God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself**, not counting their trespasses against them, and He has committed to us the word of reconciliation.

1 John 4:14: And we have beheld and bear witness that the Father has sent the Son to be **the Savior of the world.**

If God, through the work of Jesus Christ, has *taken away the sin of the world* through the *propitiation of sins*, how can He righteously punish unbelievers in Hell according to the perfect and good justice of God? Since Scripture cannot contradict itself, these individual passages must

be understood in the whole context of Scripture. Thus, these passages cannot mean that the *specific sins of all the people* in the world have been *propitiated*. Scripture defines *propitiation* is the satisfaction of God's wrath against sin; it also teaches that apart from repentance and faith, sinners are doomed by the wrath of God. If the above passages could be understood to mean the benefits of the atonement extend to all people everywhere, then preaching the Gospel would be unnecessary. If the sins of the whole world have already been *taken away* and *propitiated*, repentance and faith are unnecessary for salvation. There is no need for the Gospel. We might even say there is no need for a Bible! Of course, since God's Word is *wholly true*, these passages cannot be understood in a way that invalidates the rest of Scripture. How should we understand these passages in the light of the whole counsel of God? We *must* understand that although Christ's sacrificial death on the Cross was *sufficient* to save all, it was not *efficacious* for all. The atonement is sufficient to propitiate the sins of all, but only proficient for believers.

Question #180: What primary truth about Scripture *must be* applied as we seek understanding of John 1:29, 1 John 2:1-2, 2 Corinthians 5:18-19, and 1 John 4:14? _____

Why is it absolutely necessary that we do this? _____

Hebrews 2:9: But we do see Him who has been made for a little while lower than the angels, namely, Jesus, because of the suffering of death crowned with glory and honor, that by the grace of God **He might taste death for everyone.**

If Christ has already "*tasted death for everyone*," then why is there any need at all for anyone to die? Is it not rather plain that this "tasting death" is not meant to imply that it will cover or **atone** for the sins of non-elect people, for they will actually "*taste death*" themselves. The **Reformation Study Bible** regarding Hebrews 2:9 is very helpful. "*Here, 'everyone' must be understood in the light of the context and of the results of Jesus' death described elsewhere in Hebrews. It refers to the 'many sons' whom God brings to glory (v.10), whom Jesus calls 'brothers' (v. 11). Those for whom Jesus tasted death were made holy and perfect once for all by His sacrifice (10:10,14), their consciences cleansed from acts that lead to death (9:14), so they are freed from the fear of death (2:14,15). By contrast, there are those (even within Christian congregations) who do not trust the Son but subject Him to ridicule (6:6). For them, 'there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins, but a fearful expectation of judgment' (10:26,27). Thus 'everyone' here includes all those (but only those) who persevere in trusting Jesus (3:6,14).*" See here how important understanding texts in their context really is!

Sufficient but not Efficacious

When the Bible speaks of "*the sins of the whole world*" or "*the sins of the world*," it is addressing the *sufficiency* of Christ's atonement rather than its efficacy. Christ would not have had to suffer

any more or any less if God had chosen to save more or fewer people. The *efficacy* of Christ's atonement addresses the *application* of Christ's suffering to particular sinners who come to Christ in faith believing. Only those God has specifically chosen to save are *benefited* by Christ's atoning death because only they possess God given gift of saving faith. Hell is a reality which portrays that the atonement is **not benefiting the non-elect (and unbelieving) in the same way** it is benefiting the elect and believing.

Ephesians 1:7-8a: ⁷In Him **we have redemption through His blood**, the forgiveness of **our trespasses**, according to the riches of His grace, ⁸which He **lavished upon us**.

Although the free offer of the Gospel goes out to *the whole world*, the *benefit* of the atonement is received only by those who believe the Gospel. The efficacy of Christ's death is applied (made specifically effective for particular people) when **they place their faith** (believe and rely) on Christ for salvation. Christ's atonement remains *non-effectual* for those who do not place their faith in it. **Propitiation** of sins and **justification** before God only **result** from **grace alone by faith alone in Christ alone**.

Romans 3:21-25a...28 - ²¹But now apart from the Law, the righteousness of God has been manifested, being witnessed by the Law and the Prophets, ²²even **the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all those who believe**; for there is no distinction; ²³for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, ²⁴being justified as a gift by His grace **through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus**; ²⁵whom God displayed publically **as a propitiation in His blood through faith...** ²⁸For we maintain that **a man is justified by faith apart from works of the Law**.

Scripture passages that describe Christ's death as universal in scope are clearly consistent with the full counsel of God. Christ's death, as the perfect unblemished sacrifice, is *infinite* in its ability and power to atone for *the sins of the whole world*, but limited in its application to those who, as a result of God's work of regeneration, repent and place their faith in Jesus Christ. **The Bible plainly declares** that *redemption* is applied in *particular and only* to people who believe the Gospel with saving faith. This is done *as a result of* God's foreknowledge and predestination. *All* of God's elect come to this saving faith by the effectual calling and regeneration of *His Holy Spirit*, which faith is a gift given in regeneration.

Question #181: In your own words, explain the relationship between the *sufficiency* of Christ's atonement and its *efficacy*. _____

Particular Redemption can be reasoned from the Decree

The Church is ultimately saved by God's *eternal decree*. God purposed, *from the beginning*, to redeem a specific group of people for His own possession. Each member of the Trinity participated in the redemption of this group, the Church, the bride of Christ. God the Father *planned* redemption (by election and foreknowledge), God the Son *purchased* redemption (by atonement), and God the Spirit *applied* redemption (by regeneration).

2 Timothy 1:8-10: ⁸Therefore do not be ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, or of me His prisoner; but join with me in suffering for the gospel according to the power of God, ⁹who 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**,¹⁰ but now has been revealed by the appearing of **our Savior, Christ Jesus, who abolished death, and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel**, for which I was appointed a preacher and an apostle and a teacher.

Romans 8:29-30: ²⁹**For whom He foreknew, He also predestined** to become conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren; ³⁰**and whom He predestined, these He also called**; and whom He called, these He also justified; and whom He justified, these He also glorified.

Romans 3:21-25a: ²¹But now apart from the Law the righteousness of God has been manifested, being witnessed by the Law and the Prophets, ²²even the righteousness of God through in Jesus Christ for all those who believe; for there is no distinction; ²³for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, ²⁴**being justified as a gift by His grace through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus**; ²⁵whom God displayed publically as a propitiation in His blood through faith.

Titus 3:4-7: ⁴But when the kindness of God our Savior and His love for mankind appeared, ⁵He saved us, not on the basis of deeds which we have done in righteousness, but according to His mercy, **by the washing of regeneration and renewing by the Holy Spirit**, ⁶whom He poured out upon us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior, ⁷that being justified by His grace we might be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life.

Question #182: In your own words, describe the role of each Person of the Trinity in redeeming sinners. _____

Thus, we affirm Scripture's clear teaching that God did, in fact, **decree** from eternity past to save specific individuals who would comprise the Church of Jesus Christ. The unfolding of history progressively validates this great truth. God's people are being effectually called by His Spirit, redeemed from sin, and reconciled to God through the work of His Son for the purpose of enjoying God and glorifying Him forever. Scripture teaches that whatever comes to pass has been **eternally decreed by God**. This means that God has predetermined all of the events of history. The theological term for this divine activity is **foreordination**. God has **fore** (before time began), **ordained** (determined) all that comes to pass. Jonathan Edwards helpfully explained: "Whether God has decreed all things that ever come to pass or not, all that own the being of a God, own that He knows all things beforehand. *Now, it is self-evident that if He knows all things beforehand, He doth approve of them or doth not approve of them*; that is, He is either willing they should be, or He is not willing they should be. *But to will that they should be is to decree them*."

In the final analysis, the question, "To whom does the atonement apply?" has only one scriptural answer: the believer in Christ. We have seen that the benefits of the atonement are efficacious for believers **only**. Thus, redemption in Christ Jesus is a **particular redemption**.

Ephesians 1:7-8a: ⁷In Him **we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses**, according to the riches of His grace, ⁸which He lavished upon us.

Revelation 5:9-10: ⁹And they sang a new song, saying, “Worthy art Thou to take the book, and to break its seals; **for Thou wast slain, and didst purchase for God with Thy blood men from every tribe and tongue and people and nation.** ¹⁰**And Thou has made them to be a kingdom and priests to our God;** and they will reign upon the earth.”

Question #183: How do the highlighted phrases in the above passages indicate that our redemption in Jesus Christ is a particular redemption? _____

Christ’s Priesthood is Exclusive

Scripture clearly teaches that Christ is not interceding for unbelievers. If He were, they would have an advocate with God and enjoy the benefit of salvation through Christ’s perfect mediation. However, this is *not* the case. The Bible plainly declares that Christ’s sacrifice of atonement benefits only believers in Christ.

Ephesians 3:8-12: ⁸To me, the very least of all saints, this grace was given, to preach to the Gentiles the unfathomable riches of Christ, ⁹and to bring to light what is the administration of **the mystery which for ages has been hidden in God, who created all things;** ¹⁰in order that the manifold wisdom of God might now be made known through the church to the rulers and the authorities in the heavenly places. ¹¹**This was in accordance with the eternal purpose which He carried out in Christ Jesus our Lord,** ¹²**in whom we have boldness and confident access through faith in Him.**

Hebrews 10:10-15: ¹⁰By this will **we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.** ¹¹And every priest stands daily ministering and offering time after time the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins; ¹²but He, having **offered one sacrifice for sins for all time,** sat down at the right hand of God, ¹³waiting from that time onward until His enemies be made a footstool for His feet. ¹⁴For **by one offering He has perfected for all time those who are sanctified.**

When Jesus prays for the church in His high priestly prayer, He does not pray for the world, nor for unbelievers, but specifically for those the Father has given Him. His prayer of intercession for His own will be answered by the Father absolutely and completely in the course of time.

John 17:9, 20-21: ⁹**I ask on their behalf; I do not ask on behalf of the world, but of those whom Thou hast given Me;** for they are Thine; . . . ²⁰I do not ask in behalf of these alone, but **for those also who believe in Me through their word;** ²¹**that they may all be one;** even as Thou, Father, art in Me, and I in Thee, that they also may be in Us; that the world may believe that Thou didst send me.

Other passages also affirm that His intercession is for believers only.

Romans 8:33-34: ³³**Who will bring a charge against God's elect?** God is the one who justifies; ³⁴who is the one who condemns? Christ Jesus is He who died, yes, rather who was raised, who is at the right hand of God, **who also intercedes for us.**

Hebrews 4:14-15: ¹⁴Since then **we have a great high priest** who has passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast **our confession.** ¹⁵For we do not have a high priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who has been tempted in all things as we are, yet without sin.

Hebrews 7:25: Hence, also, He is able to save forever **those who draw near to God through Him**, since **He always lives to make intercession for them**.

Question #184: If you are a Christian, write a brief prayer of thanksgiving to God for choosing you for salvation. If you are not a Christian but would like to be, write a brief prayer asking God to guide you into genuine repentance and faith. _____

Notes:

The Sovereignty of God

Part 4: In Salvation

Eternal Security

Someone may ask, “Is my salvation secure, or can I lose it.” As you read on we will see how the Bible will answer this question in detail. For the moment, be assured that if the security of our salvation depended on our ability to remain faithful to God, we would all be hopelessly lost. The security of our salvation does not depend on our ability to keep faith, but on the greatness of the One in whom we have faith. He will never leave or forsake those who are His. He is the good shepherd, who gives eternal life to His sheep; no one or no thing is able to snatch them out of His hand (John 10:26-30). Jesus Himself will see to it that we make it to heaven. We can rest *assured* that we have eternal life if we have been born again by the power of the Holy Spirit. The Bible plainly declares that those who truly believe *will* persevere to the end by Christ’s power.

Colossians 3:3-4: ³For you have died and **your life is hidden with Christ in God**. ⁴When Christ, who is our life, is revealed, then **you also will be revealed with Him in glory**.

1 Peter 1:3-5: ³Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His great mercy has **caused us to be born again to a living hope** through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, ⁴**to obtain an inheritance** which is imperishable and undefiled and will not fade away, reserved in heaven for you, ⁵**who are protected by the power of God through faith** for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.

God has “caused us to be born again to a living hope . . . to obtain an inheritance.” Being born again by God’s power generates vibrant hope in our heavenly inheritance because we “are protected by the power of God through faith.” Living hope results from assurance that no one can thwart the mighty purpose of God to protect us through faith, insuring that we will indeed receive the promised inheritance. The foundation of our hope could not be any more secure! Not even the darkest day of doubt and trouble can remove us from His mighty hand.

They Shall Never Perish

The teaching of Jesus also affirms that we shall not fall away.

John 10:27-29: ²⁷My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me; ²⁸and **I give eternal life to them, and they shall never perish**; and **no one shall snatch them out of My hand**. ²⁹My 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**.

Here Jesus described the unassailable security of those the Father has given to Him. They “shall never perish” because they **have** “eternal life.” *Eternal* life is life that **cannot** end; it extends *forever*. Thus, we who are in His hand are absolutely secure; no one or no thing can break His grip on us. As if this were not enough to affirm our security, He further asserts, “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.” Christ’s unbreakable grip on His sheep is further strengthened by the hand of the Father. Through the combined power of God the Father and God the Son, all the saved will be kept forever, having eternal life. The Bible plainly declares that the final perseverance of the saints does not lie in the strength of their will but in the power of God. Our salvation is ultimately a transaction

between Father and Son. The Father gives; the Son receives; the power of both secures the transaction. Those given to the Son by the Father will never be lost.

John 6:39-40: ³⁹And this is the will of Him who sent Me, that **of all that He has given Me I lose nothing, but raise it up on the last day.** ⁴⁰For this is the will of My Father, that everyone who beholds the Son and believes in Him, may have eternal life; and **I Myself will raise him up on the last day.**

Jesus says that He will lose none of those the Father has given Him but will raise them up “on the last day.” Those who believe in Him are *secure*. They are safe in *His* hands. He will raise them up on the last day, and they will live forever. The life He gives is *eternal*. Those who twist the clear meaning of this text to say that believers in Christ are not secure in their faith discourage the saints by misrepresenting the truth of their security. Dear Christian, do not be misled! Hold fast to this glorious promise! Our Shepherd, Jesus Christ, will see us through to the end. We who belong to Him shall never perish.

Question #185: According to John 10:26-30, what distinguishes “My sheep” (those who belong to Jesus Christ) from other sheep?_____

Question #186: According to John 10:29 and 1 Peter 1:3-5, how does one become one of Jesus’ sheep?_____

Question #187: What great assurance is given to Jesus’ sheep in Colossians 3:3-4 and 1 Peter 1:3-5?_____

Question #188: According to John 6:39-40 and 10:27-29, on what basis is our salvation secure?_____

The Saints will Persevere

The New Testament writers consistently affirm this crucial doctrine. We have already heard from Peter and John; now let’s consider the writings of Paul and Jude (the brother of Jesus). In Romans 8, Paul solidly grounds the security of the believer in the nature and purpose of God.

Romans 8:1-2: ¹There is therefore now **no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.** ²For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has **set you free from the law of sin and of death.**

Here Paul addresses the nature of Christ's atoning work in accomplishing the Christian's justification. We are ***not condemned*** by God's Law because Christ has paid its penalty for ***all*** of our sins—past, present, and future. We stand before God ***totally free*** of our debt of sin. Thus, the law of sin and death ***no longer applies to us***. We now live under ***the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus***. This is what it means to be a Christian! Our salvation is ***secure*** because ***all*** of God's wrath against ***all*** of our sin has been fully absorbed by Jesus Christ, as the hymn writer declares, "in my place condemned He stood!".

Consider now the profound truths about our security and final perseverance taught in Romans 8:28-30, which has been aptly called "The Golden Chain."

Romans 8:28-30: ²⁸And 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.** ²⁹**For whom He foreknew, He also predestined** to become conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the first-born among many brethren; ³⁰and **whom He predestined, these He also called; and whom He called, these He also justified; and whom He justified, these He also glorified.**

The saints, those whom God foreknew (chose to set His love on beforehand) are ***called according to His purpose***. In fulfilling His purpose for those chosen sinners, He causes all things to work together for their good. Would failing to save those He has specifically chosen for that purpose work together for their good? Hardly!

The ***destiny*** of every Christian is to be conformed to the ***image of Christ***. We shall be like Him and share in His glory! This is also affirmed in Paul's letter to the Philippians.

Philippians 3:20-21: ²⁰For our citizenship is in heaven, from which also we eagerly wait for a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ; ²¹**who will transform the body of our humble state into conformity with the body of His glory**, by the exertion of the power that He has even to subject all things to Himself.

According to Romans 8:29, those God has called, foreknown, and predestined shall be ***glorified***. He has elected them from all eternity. Is there any possibility that they could be lost in the end? No! Jude, the brother of our Lord, affirms our security in Christ when He speaks of the keeping power of Christ in relation to our final salvation.

Jude 24-25: ²⁴Now **to Him who is able to keep you from stumbling, and to make you stand** in the presence of His glory blameless with great joy, ²⁵to the only God our Savior, through Jesus Christ our Lord, be glory, majesty, dominion and authority, before all time and now and forever. Amen.

The **Bible plainly declares** that ***God keeps us from stumbling***. This means that God equips, empowers, and motivates us to persevere so that we do not finally fall away. This is affirmed in Jude's statement that God ("Him") ***is able . . . to make you stand in the presence of His glory blameless***. Here again we see the divine nature of our salvation: We are ***blameless*** (guiltless) in His presence because of His ability to make us guiltless. The guilt of all our sins has been washed away by the blood of Jesus so that we stand in God's presence blameless! Dear saint, the Lord will ***"keep you from stumbling and make you stand"*** because of Christ!

Romans 8:31-34: ³¹What then shall we say to these things? **If God is for us, who is against us?** ³²He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how will He not also with Him freely give us all things? ³³**Who will bring a charge against God's elect? God is the one who justifies;** ³⁴**who is the one who condemns?**

Rest assured, the saints *will* persevere to the end and be glorified in the presence of God because of *His* Almighty power, *His* immutable purpose to save His elect, and *His Son's* all-sufficient sacrifice of atonement at Calvary.

Question #189: In your own words, distinguish between the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus and the law of sin and death. _____

Question #190: From Romans 8:28-30, describe how God causes all things to work together for good for those who love Him. _____

Question #191: According to Philippians 3:20-21 and Jude 24-25, what is every Christian's destiny? _____

Question #192: If you are a Christian, describe your personal expectations of this destiny. _____

Question #193: In your own mind, answer each of the five questions Paul asks in Romans 8:31-34. Then write a brief prayer of thanksgiving to God for what He has done for you through Jesus Christ. _____

Does the security of salvation depend on man or God?

The Bible portrays us as sheep and Christ as the Good Shepherd who will lose none that the Father has given Him. Christ keeps us secure by giving us *eternal* life. Thus, our assurance is rooted in His sovereign love and mighty power, not in our human ability.

John 6:39: And this is the will of Him who sent Me, that of all that He has given Me I lose nothing, but raise it up on the last day.

John 10:27-29: ²⁷My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me; ²⁸and I give eternal life to them, and they shall never perish; and **no one shall snatch them out of My hand.** ²⁹My 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.**

1 Peter 1:3-5: ³Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His great mercy **has caused us to be born again to a living hope** through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, ⁴to obtain an inheritance which is imperishable and undefiled and will not fade away, reserved in heaven for you, ⁵**who are protected by the power of God through faith for a salvation** ready to be revealed in the last time.

Jude 24-25: ²⁴Now to **Him who is able to keep you from stumbling, and to make you stand in the presence of His glory blameless** with great joy, ²⁵to the only wise God our Savior, through Jesus Christ our Lord, be glory, majesty, dominion and authority, before all time and now and forever. Amen.

Hebrews 10:14: ¹⁴For by one offering He has perfected for all time those who are sanctified.

Ephesians 2:8-9: ⁸For **by grace you have been saved through faith**; and that not of yourselves, **it is the gift of God; ⁹not as a result of works**, that no one should boast.

Scripture presents salvation as a gift, not as something we earn. The works required to save us are attributed to Jesus Christ, not to us. We are saved because **He has caused** us to be born again (1 Peter 1:3), not on the basis of our deeds but the work of Christ (Titus 3:4-7). We are **protected by His power** (1 Peter 1:5), saved by **grace** (Ephesians 2:8-9), **sustained** blameless until the end (Jude 24), and made perfect forever by His sacrifice (Hebrews 10:11-14).

The security of our salvation does not rest on human strength and ability, but on God's sustaining power. Perseverance in the faith is empowered by God's Holy Spirit **equipping, enabling, and motivating** believers to faithfully pursue God's kingdom and righteousness all the days of their lives. Thus, we are saved (from beginning to end) by God's sovereign electing love and sustaining power, not by any human ability to keep ourselves from falling. If salvation depended on any human ability, we would be hopelessly lost. Scripture affirms that **true believers persevere by God's power**.

1 Thessalonians 5:23-24: ²³Now may the God of peace Himself **sanctify you entirely; and may your spirit and soul and body be preserved complete, without blame** at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. ²⁴Faithful is He who calls you, and **He also will bring it to pass**.

Here Paul extols God's faithfulness to those He has called to salvation and instructed to persevere in the faith. He **sanctifies us entirely** and **preserves us completely**, so that we are **without blame at the coming of our Lord**. The security of our salvation rests firmly on God's **faithfulness** to us; we **will** persevere because of His Spirit's work in us.

1 Corinthians 1:4-9: ⁴I thank my God always concerning you, for the grace of God which was given you in Christ Jesus, ⁵that in everything you were enriched in Him, in all speech and all knowledge, ⁶even as the testimony concerning Christ was confirmed in you, ⁷so that you are not lacking in any gift, awaiting eagerly the revelation of **our Lord Jesus Christ, ⁸who shall also confirm you to the end, blameless** in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ. ⁹**God is faithful**, through whom you were called into fellowship with His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

Philippians 1:6: For I am confident of this very thing, that **He who began a good work in you will perfect it until the day of Christ Jesus**.

Philippians 2:12-13: ¹²So then, my beloved, just as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, **work out your salvation with fear**

and trembling;¹³ for it is God who is at work in you, both to will and to work for His good pleasure.

Here the Bible plainly declares that our final perseverance is *a matter of God's persistent faithfulness* to those He has chosen. Dear saint, what additional evidence do you need to trust that your salvation is secure? Believe God's promise! If it is God's purpose to save us finally, who or what shall thwart this purpose of Almighty God?

Question #194: How secure must *eternal* life be? _____

Question #195: Based on Philippians 2:12-13 and Ephesians 5:15-21, 6:10-13, explain in your own words the relationship between perseverance in the faith and the security of salvation. _____

Sealed by the Holy Spirit

We have seen that the New Testament clearly teaches that regeneration is an irreversible work of God (pgs. 49-52 **update**). Those who have been born again cannot be unborn. Someone will ask, what about those who believe for a while, but later commit apostasy and turn from the faith? We will answer that question after laying some scriptural groundwork. ***The Bible clearly affirms that: (1) those who have savingly believed the gospel are sealed with the Holy Spirit; and (2) this sealing guarantees that they will inherit the kingdom.*** Scripture presents the Holy Spirit as the earnest or deposit that guarantees eternal redemption. Christians cannot lose their salvation because **God** sees to it that they remain in Christ. Salvation is not something they are able to lose; it is an *eternal* relationship with God that they enter into *because of* His mighty power and calling. If you are a child of God, the Holy Spirit has transformed your being by new birth. This new birth implants the life of God in you and seals you for the day of redemption.

2 Corinthians 1:21-22: ²¹Now He who establishes us with you in Christ and anointed us is God, ²²who also **sealed us and gave us the Spirit in our hearts as a pledge.**

Here Paul described the *sealing* of the Spirit as a *pledge*. In other words, it is *an earnest, a down payment* on the full payment of redemption. The Greek word used here for *pledge* is "**arrabon**," which means: *a pledge, part of the purchase-money or property given in advance as security for the rest: earnest*. Paul clearly affirmed that our redemption is guaranteed by God's down payment. He makes similar statements in Ephesians.

Ephesians 1:13-14: ¹³In Him, you also, after listening to the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation—having also believed, **you were sealed in Him with the Holy Spirit of promise,** ¹⁴**who is given as a pledge of our inheritance,** with a view to the redemption of God's own possession, to the praise of His glory.

When Christians receive the indwelling Holy Spirit at salvation, they are guaranteed redemption because the Holy Spirit Himself is the guaranteeing downpayment on their inheritance. The sealing of the Spirit is *unto* redemption.

Ephesians 4:30: And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, **by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption.**

Here Paul affirms that we are sealed for the purpose of redemption. The Bible plainly declares that Christians are *sealed* by God for the divine purpose of being redeemed. The final perseverance and salvation of true believers in Christ is guaranteed by the very character and nature of God: He *will accomplish* all His purposes.

John 5:24: Truly, truly, I say to you, he who hears My word, and believes Him who sent Me, has eternal life, and does not come into judgment, but has passed out of death into life.

Isaiah 46:9-11: ⁹Remember the former things long past, For I am God, and there is no other; I am God, and there is no one like Me, ¹⁰Declaring the end from the beginning And from ancient times things which have not been done, Saying, “My purpose will be established, and I will accomplish all My good pleasure”; ¹¹Calling a bird of prey from the east, The man of My purpose from a far country. Truly I have spoken; truly I will bring it to pass. I have planned it, surely I will do it.

Question #196: Reread 2 Corinthians 1:21-22, Ephesians 1:14;14, Ephesians 4:30. Then discuss the sealing of the Holy Spirit being described in Scripture as a *pledge* of God to believers. _____

Eternal Security Results From Election

The *primary* reason we are saved is because God chose us for salvation from the beginning (2 Thessalonians 2:13). Those who are in Christ are the *elect* or *chosen* of God. They *will* persevere in faith and repentance. *God will work in those He has chosen to enable them, by the power of the Holy Spirit to persevere in faith to the end.* Scripture clearly states that those God has predestined He will also glorify. Predestination guarantees receipt in heaven of an inheritance already obtained by faith for the purpose of sharing in the glory of God.

Romans 8:29-30: ²⁹For whom He foreknew, He also predestined to become conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren; ³⁰and whom He predestined, these He also called; and whom He called, these He also justified; and whom He justified, these He also glorified.

Romans 9:23-24: ²³And He did so in order that He might make known the riches of His glory upon vessels of mercy, which He prepared beforehand for glory, ²⁴even us, whom He also called, not from among Jews only, but also from among Gentiles.

Ephesians 1:11-12: In Him ¹¹also we have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to His purpose who works all things after the counsel of His will, ¹²to the end that we who were the first to hope in Christ should be to the praise of His glory.

Those God chose for salvation from before the foundation of the world, He effectually called by His Spirit and gave new birth (Regeneration). Sinners are converted when the divine gifts of grace and faith empower them to repent of sin and believe the Gospel. God’s Holy Spirit comes to live in them, producing persevering sanctification that ultimately results in glorification, i.e., the redemption of their bodies which become immortal and incorruptible. Consider the wise words of **R. L. Dabney:** ““The perseverance of believers follows from the free and unchangeable love of God the Father, which was the ground of their being chosen unto salvation. The Scriptures make

it plain that the reason why God ever determined to save any man was not His seeing in him anything good, attractive or extenuating, but something without, known to His wisdom, which was to God a good and wise reason to bestow His eternal love on that particular sinner (Rom. 9:11, 16). This sovereign and unmerited love is the cause of the believer's effectual calling (Jer. 31:3; Rom. 8:30). Now, as the cause is unchangeable, the effect will be unchangeable. That effect is, the constant communication of grace to the believer in whom God has begun a good work. God was not induced to bestow His renewing grace in the first instance, by anything which He saw, meritorious or attractive, in the repenting sinner; and therefore the subsequent absence of everything in him would be no new motive to God for withdrawing His grace. When He first bestowed that grace, He knew that the sinner on whom He bestowed it was totally depraved, and wholly and only hateful in himself to the divine holiness; and therefore no new instance of ingratitude or unfaithfulness, of which the sinner may become guilty after his conversion, can be any provocation to God, to change His mind, and wholly withdraw His sustaining grace. God knew all this ingratitude before.... If He had not intended from the first to bear with it, and to forgive it in Christ, He would not have called the sinner by His grace at first. In a word, the causes for which God determined to bestow His electing love on the sinner are wholly in God, and not at all in the believer; and hence, nothing in the believer's heart or conduct can finally change that purpose of love.”³⁸

In Romans 8, Paul reasons from the election of God and the priesthood of Christ to conclude that we shall never be separated from His divine love.

Romans 8:33-35, 37-39: ³³**Who will bring a charge against God's elect?** God is the one who justifies; ³⁴**who is the one who condemns?** Christ Jesus is He who died, yes, rather who was raised, **who is at the right hand of God, who also intercedes for us.** ³⁵**Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?** Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? . . . ³⁷But in all these things we overwhelmingly conquer through Him who loved us. ³⁸For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, ³⁹**nor height, nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.**

Is it not abundantly clear from these verses that the believer is secure? Is it not also clear that our security rests wholly on God's almighty power working through the ministry of Christ's intercession? Scripture teaches that believers will *never* be separated from the love of God in Christ. The love bestowed by God upon His chosen people is an *eternal* love; it is everlasting.

Jeremiah 31:3: The LORD appeared to him from afar, saying, **“I have loved you with an everlasting love;** Therefore I have drawn you with lovingkindness.”

It might be helpful at this point to review the section on Election and Foreknowledge where we learned that the word *foreknowledge* when used in regard to predestination refers to God “loving beforehand” those He chooses for salvation. The nature of God's electing love makes it eternal and unchangeable.

Question 197: Reread Romans 8:29-30, 33-35, 37-39, Ephesians 1:11-12, and Jeremiah 31:3, marking specific words, phrases, and sentences that assure you (personally) that your salvation is

³⁸ *RL Dabney Systematic Theology Banner of Truth 2002 page 690*

secure. Then, using God's own words of assurance to you, write a prayer thanking Him for your salvation. _____

The Covenant of Redemption Guarantees the Security of the Believer

The Covenant of Redemption is an *agreement* between the members of the Godhead from eternity past to save sinners chosen by God through the work of Christ by the power of the Holy Spirit. The Father *planned* redemption (2 Timothy 1:9) by *electing* from all eternity the ones (Ephesians 1:4) He will give to the Son as a gift (Titus 1:2). The Son *agreed* to take on human nature (Colossians 2:9) as a means of purchasing redemption at Calvary (Hebrews 10:7-9) by mediating between God and those He has chosen (Romans 8:34). The Holy Spirit *agreed* to: (1) apply redemption to the elect through effectual calling and regeneration; (2) equip them to persevere in sanctification; and (3) ultimately glorify them. This Covenant of Redemption is the *first cause* of salvation and holds within it the fulfillment of salvation for every believer foreknown and elected by God. The Bible plainly declares that saints persevere until the end *because* God purposed from the beginning to save *forever*.

Hebrews 7:25: Hence, also, **He is able to save forever** those who draw near to God through Him, since **He always lives to make intercession for them**.

John 6:39-40: ³⁹And this is the will of Him who sent Me, that **of all that He has given Me I lose nothing, but raise it up on the last day**. ⁴⁰For this is the will of My Father, that everyone who beholds the Son and believes in Him, may have eternal life; and **I Myself will raise him up on the last day**.

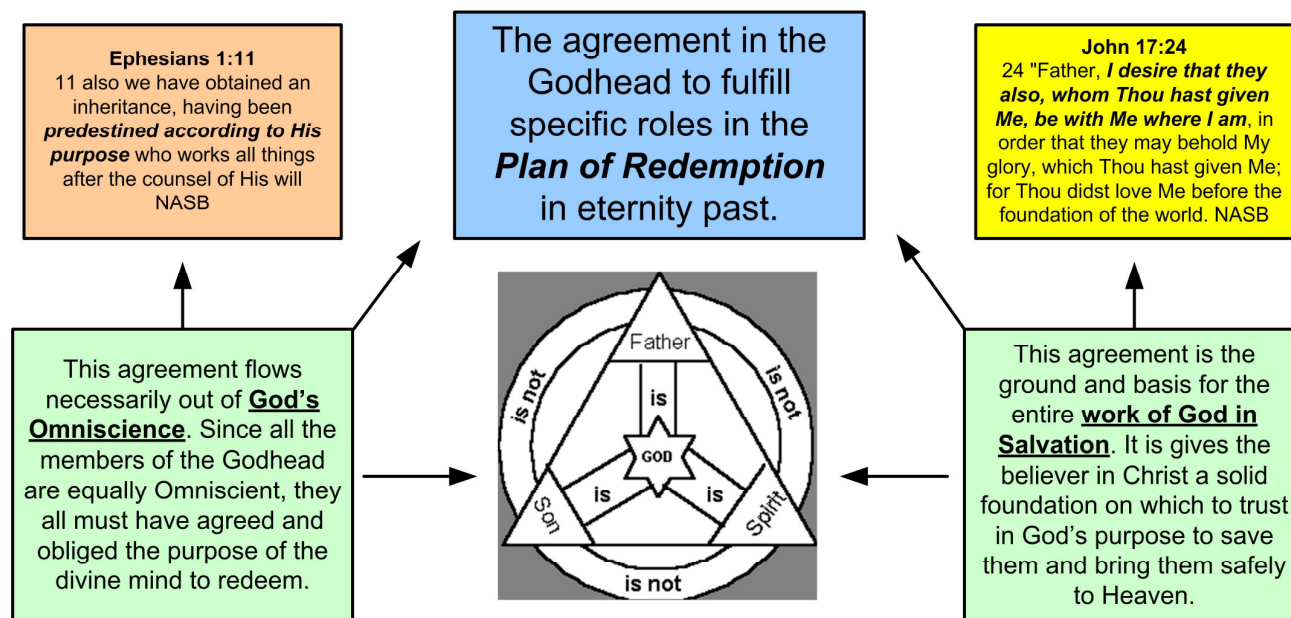
The very nature of God's knowledge (omniscient or all-knowing) requires that He know *the end from the beginning*. He knows the whole of human history before any of it happens because what He planned to happen He made to happen by His providential will. In time and space, the Son of God and the Spirit of God accomplished the Father's plan of redemption, so that *the specific individuals* chosen by the Father to give to the Son are surely saved and secured.

John 6:37-39: ³⁷**All that the Father gives Me shall come to Me, and the one who comes to Me I will certainly not cast out**. ³⁸For I have come down from heaven, not to do My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me. ³⁹**And this is the will of Him who sent Me, that of all that He has given Me I lose nothing, but raise it up on the last day**.

John 10:27-30: ²⁷**My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me**; ²⁸and I give eternal life to them, and they will never perish; and **no one is able to snatch them out of My hand**. ²⁹My 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**. ³⁰**I and the Father are one**.

John 17:24: Father, I desire that they also, whom Thou hast given Me, be with Me where I am, in order that they may behold My glory, which Thou hast given Me; for Thou didst love Me before the foundation of the world.

The Covenant of Redemption



1 Peter 1:18-20

18 knowing that you were not *redeemed* with perishable things like silver or gold from your futile way of life inherited from your forefathers, 19 but with *precious blood*, as of a lamb unblemished and spotless, the blood of Christ. 20 For *He was FOREKNOWN before the foundation of the world*, but has appeared in these last times for the sake of you NASB

Question 198: What three Persons entered into the Covenant of Redemption?_____

Question 199: What did each of these Persons promise to do?_____

Question 200: Can any of these persons fail to keep His promise?_____

Question 201: On what basis then, is our salvation secure?_____

What Eternal Security is Not

The Bible plainly declares that all who truly believe *will in fact* be saved and brought safely to Heaven *by God's power*. This in no way contradicts clear biblical teaching that the distinguishing marks of true believers are: (1) *obedience* which comes from faith, and (2) *perseverance* to the end. The Bible plainly declares that those who do not continue in faith and obedience to the end prove that they are not born again.

Colossians 1:21-23: ²¹And although you were formerly alienated and hostile in mind, engaged in evil deeds, ²²yet He has now reconciled you in His fleshly body through death, in order to present you before Him holy and blameless and beyond reproach— ²³**if indeed you continue in the faith firmly established and steadfast, and not moved away from the hope of the gospel that you have heard**, which was proclaimed in all creation under heaven, and of which I, Paul, was made a minister.

1 John 2:3-6: ³And **by this we know that we have come to know Him, if we keep His commandments**. ⁴The one who says, "I have come to know Him, and does not keep His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him; ⁵**but whoever keeps His word, in him the love of God has truly been perfected**. By this we know that we are in Him: ⁶the one who says he abides in Him ought himself to walk in the same manner as He walked.

The Bible is filled with warnings of falling away and exhortations to *hold fast* the faith we profess. We should not think that, since our salvation is secure in Christ, we can indulge our sinful flesh and still inherit the kingdom of God. Did Christ's death give us a license to sin? Absolutely not! Rather, it transformed our hearts and gave us the power to live for His glory. Would any regenerate person delight in trampling the grace of God and despising the blood of Christ? God forbid! *Because we are kept by God's power, the gospel commands us to prove our repentance by our deeds, and warns that those who do not persevere in faith shall be lost*. We are called to glorify God by reflecting His power at work in us by *enduring in faith to the end*. Such endurance proves positively that we are saved, not by our power, but by God's. We will not persevere in sinless perfection, but will continually repent when we sin and humbly seek God's forgiveness through Christ. Faith that *holds fast* to Christ proves it is real. Only those who willingly obligate themselves to obey Him in the power of His Spirit will see Heaven.

1 Corinthians 15:1-2: ¹Now I make known to you, brethren, the gospel which I preached to you, which also you received, in which also you stand, ²**by which also you are saved, if you hold fast the word which I preached to you**, unless you believed in vain.

Hebrews 3:14-15: ¹⁴For we have become partakers of Christ, **if we hold fast the beginning of our assurance firm until the end**; ¹⁵while it is said, "Today if you hear His voice, do not harden your hearts, as when they provoked Me."

Mark 13:13: And you will be hated by all on account of My name, but **the one who endures to the end, he shall be saved**.

Ezekiel 36:26-27: ²⁶Moreover, **I will give you a new heart and and put a new spirit within you**; and I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. ²⁷And **I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes, and you will be careful to observe My ordinances**.

Eternal security is not fire insurance. It does not guarantee that everyone who *professes* faith in Christ and is accepted into the earthly fellowship of the saints is eternally secure and will go to Heaven. Our Lord frequently warned His disciples of the serious consequences of departing from the faith and lapsing into a fruitless lifestyle. He taught them that the very nature of true saving

faith produces perseverance in His Word and obedience to His teaching. Jesus often *distinguished true disciples from mere professors*, usually with exhortations to persevere to the end in obedience and faith.

John 8:31-32: ³¹Jesus therefore was saying to those Jews who had believed Him, “**If you abide in My word, then you are truly disciples of Mine;** ³²and you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.”

John 15:1-2: ¹I am the true vine, and My Father is the vinedresser. ²**Every branch in Me that does not bear fruit, He takes away;** and every branch that bears fruit, He prunes it, that it may bear more fruit.

Jesus effectively contrasted the life of true saving faith that bears the fruit of righteousness with the life of complacency that accompanies mere profession. His teaching is thoroughly seasoned both with exhortations to bear fruit and warnings against fruitlessness. It calls us to spiritually productive lifestyles motivated by true love and devotion to Him. It affirms that *fruitful faith* is a distinguishing mark of *saving faith*.

John 15:5-8: ⁵I am the vine, you are the branches; **he who abides in Me, and I in him, he bears much fruit;** for apart from Me you can do nothing. ⁶**If anyone does not abide in Me, he is thrown away as a branch, and dries up;** and they gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned. ⁷If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it shall be done for you. ⁸By this is My Father glorified, **that you bear much fruit, and so prove to be My disciples.**

Jesus’ Parable of the Sower clearly illustrates that saving faith is the only “soil” that produces the “firm root” of perseverance required to bring forth fruit.

Matthew 13:18-23: ¹⁸Hear then the parable of the sower. ¹⁹When anyone hears the word of the kingdom, and does not understand it, the evil one comes and snatches away what has been sown in his heart. This is the one on whom seed was sown beside the road. ²⁰And the one on whom seed was sown on the rocky places, this is the man who hears the word, and **immediately receives it with joy;** ²¹**yet he has no firm root in himself, but is only temporary, and when affliction or persecution arises because of the word, immediately he falls away.** ²²And the one on whom seed was sown among the thorns, this is the man who hears the word, and **the worry of the world, and the deceitfulness of riches choke the word, and it becomes unfruitful.** ²³And the one on whom seed was sown on the good soil, this is the man who hears the word and understands it; **who indeed bears fruit, and brings forth, some a hundredfold, some sixty, and some thirty.**

This fruit-bearing perseverance is the distinguishing mark of true saving faith. Scripture clearly teaches that falling away from the fellowship of professing, obedient, righteous believers to pursue a life of sin and unbelief is *apostasy*.

Question #202: What prevents the eternal security of the believer from becoming a “license to sin”? _____

Question #203: How do we distinguish between true saving faith and empty profession of faith? _____

What is Apostasy?

Apostasy is generally defined as the determined, willful rejection of Christ and His teachings by a professing Christian. **John Murray** wisely explains: “*It is in fact possible to give all the outward signs of faith in Christ and obedience to Him, to witness for a time a good confession and show great zeal for Christ and His kingdom and then lose all interest and become indifferent, if not hostile, to the claims of Christ and of His kingdom.*”³⁹ Scripture clearly portrays Israel, at certain points in her history, as having forsaken and rejected God. Jesus used the illustration of rocky places to portray apostasy.

Matthew 13:20-21: ²⁰And the one on whom seed was sown on the rocky places, this is the man who hears the word, and **immediately receives it with joy; ²¹yet he has no firm root in himself, but is only temporary, and when affliction or persecution arises because of the word, immediately he falls away.**

John Murray comments on this passage: “*Some [people] appear to be converted, they boil over with enthusiasm for a little while, and then suddenly cool off. They disappear from the fellowship of the saints. Others do not show the same enthusiasm; their attachment to the faith of Christ has never been one of very pronounced character. But in the course of time it becomes precariously tenuous and finally the tie is completely broken—they walk no more in the path of the righteous.*”⁴⁰

Let us not underestimate the deceptiveness of such temporary faith. None of the other disciples suspected Judas of false faith and stealing from the money box (John 12:6), although Jesus knew his true character (John 6:70-71). His lack of perseverance in the end revealed him to be apostate—a mere professor, not a true believer. The apostle Peter and the writer to the Hebrews warn professing believers not to return to their sin and defilements of the world.

2 Peter 2:20-22: ²⁰For **if after they have escaped the defilements of the world by the knowledge of the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, they are again entangled in them and are overcome, the last state has become worse for them than the first.** ²¹For it would be better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than having known it, to turn away from the holy commandment delivered to them. ²²It has happened to them according to the true proverb, “A dog returns to its own vomit,” and, “A sow, after washing, returns to wallowing in the mire.”

Hebrews 6:4-6: ⁴For in the case of those who have once been enlightened and have tasted of the heavenly gift and have been made partakers of the Holy Spirit, ⁵and have tasted the good word of God and the powers of the age to come, ⁶and **then have fallen away, it is impossible to renew them again to repentance**, since they again crucify to themselves the Son of God, and put Him to open shame.

John Murray wisely warns professing believers: “The Scripture itself, therefore, leads us to the conclusion that it is possible to have a very uplifting, ennobling, reforming and exhilarating experience of the power and truth of the Gospel, to come into such close contact with the supernatural forces which are operative in God’s kingdom of grace that these forces produce

³⁹ John Murray, *Redemption Accomplished and Applied* Eerdmans Publishing Company pg 152

⁴⁰ John Murray, *Redemption Accomplished and Applied* Eerdmans Publishing Company pg 152

effects in us which to human observation are hardly distinguishable from those produced by God's regenerating and sanctifying grace and yet be not partakers of Christ and heirs of eternal life."⁴¹

Clearly, those who *fall away* in a pattern of continual sin and break fellowship with the Church were never truly *born again*. Scripture warns us that many will confess Christ with their tongues but deny Him in their lives. We may have known someone who appeared to believe and follow Christ, but then became disillusioned and turned away from Him, falling into a life of unrepentant self-will and sin. This may cause us to question our salvation. How can we *know* we are truly saved? By seeing *evidence* in our lives that God's Spirit has regenerated us and lives within us. Such evidence is revealed as bearing the fruit of the Spirit in our lives. Good trees bear good fruit, and bad trees bear bad fruit. If we have truly believed, God's sanctifying power will be at work in our lives, equipping us, by God's good grace, to persevere to the end and be saved. We will not shrink back and be destroyed.

Hebrews 10:39: But **we are not of those who shrink back to destruction, but of those who have faith to the preserving of the soul.**

Question #204: Define apostacy. _____

Question #205: Since only professing believers can commit this sin, how can you test yourself to be sure you are in the faith? _____

1 John and Saving Faith

Christians have been *born of God*. God has given them life, and that life is eternal by nature. We who have been *born again* are new creations kept by Christ through the ministry of the Holy Spirit. The Bible teaches that we cannot turn away from genuine faith by rejecting Christ. Those who apostatize may have made an orthodox *profession* of faith but were never born again. The book of First John greatly illumines our understanding of true salvation.

1 John 2:18-19: ¹⁸Children, it is the last hour; and just as you heard that antichrist is coming, even now many antichrists have arisen; from this we know that it is the last hour. ¹⁹**They went out from us, but they were not really of us; for if they had been of us, they would have remained with us; but they went out, in order that it might be shown that they all are not of us.**

Those who are *born of God* do not continually sin as a distinguishing way of life.

1 John 3:6-10: ⁶**No one who abides in Him sins; no one who sins has seen Him or knows Him.** ⁷Little children, let no one deceive you; the one who practices righteousness is righteous, just as He is righteous; ⁸**the one who practices sin is of the devil;** for the

⁴¹ *Ibid*, 153.

devil has sinned from the beginning. The Son of God appeared for this purpose, that He might destroy the works of the devil. ⁹**No one who is born of God practices sin, because His seed abides in him; and he cannot sin, because he is born of God.** ¹⁰By this the children of God and the children of the devil are obvious: **anyone who does not practice righteousness is not of God**, nor the one who does not love his brother.

Continuing in sin (sinning as a characteristic way of life) reveals the apostate's true identity. In the same way, continuing in righteousness and truth (as a characteristic way of life) reflects the reality of genuine saving faith.

1 John 2:29: If you know that He is righteous, you know **that everyone also who practices righteousness is born of Him.**

When those who have professed faith in Christ break fellowship with Christians and begin to live in continual patterns of sin, they show themselves to be children of the devil.

1 John 3:10: **By this the children of God and the children of the devil are obvious:** anyone who does not **practice righteousness** is not of God, nor the one who does not love his brother.

First John makes it crystal clear that the distinguishing mark of true faith is righteous fruit. Those whose lives reflect a continual pattern of sin reveal that they are mere professors who cannot bear fruit characteristic of those who are *born of God*.

1 John 4:7-8: ⁷Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God; and **everyone who loves is born of God and knows God.** ⁸**The one who does not love does not know God,** for God is love.

Those who have been born of the divine will persevere by the power of God at work in them.

1 John 5:18-19: ¹⁸We know that no one who is born of God sins; **but He who was born of God keeps him and the evil one does not touch him.** ¹⁹We know that **we are of God**, and the whole world lies in the power of the evil one.

Question #206: What primary characteristic distinguishes genuine believers from mere professors? _____

These truths require us to continue in faith and obedience.

We must guard against the temptation to allow our understanding of the security of our salvation to lull us into complacency. The scripture warns us repeatedly to *pursue* our faith in Christ. It exhorts and admonishes us to keep our lives free from sin, to be holy, and to live after the pattern we were given by Christ. Those who are born of God *will* persevere till the end and *will* bear the fruit of the Spirit in their lives. This occurs through our diligent effort in willing obedience which generates assurance that we belong to Christ.

2 Peter 1:10-11: ¹⁰Therefore, brethren, **be all the more diligent to make certain about His calling and choosing you;** for as long as you practice these things, you will never stumble; ¹¹for in this way the entrance into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ will be abundantly supplied to you.

2 Timothy 2:19: Nevertheless, the firm foundation of God stands, having this seal, “The Lord knows those who are His,” and, “**Let everyone who names the name of the Lord abstain from wickedness.**”

Hebrews 6:11-12: ¹¹And we desire that **each one of you show the same diligence so as to realize the full assurance of hope until the end,** ¹²that you may not be sluggish, but imitators of those who through faith and patience inherit the promises.

The Westminster Confession on Perseverance

CHAPTER XVII.

Of The Perseverance of the Saints.

I. They whom God hath accepted in his Beloved, effectually called and sanctified by his Spirit, can neither totally nor finally fall away from the state of grace; but shall certainly persevere therein to the end, and be eternally saved.

II. This perseverance of the saints depends, not upon their own free-will, but upon the immutability of the decree of election, flowing from the free and unchangeable love of God the Father; upon the efficacy of the merit and intercession of Jesus Christ; the abiding of the Spirit and of the seed of God within them; and the nature of the covenant of grace; from all which ariseth also the certainty and infallibility thereof.

III. Nevertheless they may, through the temptations of Satan and of the world, the prevalancy of corruption remaining in them, and the neglect of the means of their perseverance, fall into grievous sins; and for a time continue therein: whereby they incur God's displeasure, and grieve his Holy Spirit; come to be deprived of some measure of their graces and comforts; have their hearts hardened, and their consciences wounded; hurt and prevalancy others, and bring temporal judgments upon themselves.

Question #207: What is the primary danger in rightly understanding the doctrine of perseverance?_____

Question #208: How can believers effectively guard against this danger?_____

Notes:

The Sovereignty of God

Part 4: In Salvation

Dealing with Hebrews 6:4-6

Some Scripture passages relevant to the doctrine of predestination in salvation may seem contradictory, but in fact, they cannot be. This is because all Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and God does not contradict Himself. We have seen Scripture clearly teach that God is sovereign in the salvation of His elect people. We have seen that their security is assured because of *His* faithfulness. Scripture clearly teaches that the benefits of salvation are wholly the work of God. His *election* of sinners for salvation is **unconditional**; He does not choose based on some condition within them or some kind of foreseen faith. Election is grounded in God's sovereign, gracious choice. The *perseverance* of those He chooses and saves is assured by His faithfulness to His own purposes. With these truths firmly in mind, let's examine a passage of Scripture that may seem to contradict to them.

Hebrews 6:4-6

This passage addresses **professing** believers who have strayed from the faith and the basic teachings of salvation. The writer deals with their lack of maturity by giving reproof (5:11-6:3) and warning (6:4-12) concerning the reality of their conversion. The *context* of Hebrews 6:4-12 reveals that the *primary* issue at hand is not the security of the believer, but rather admonition and warning to persevere and remain steadfast in the faith. Although secondary *implications* regarding the security of the believer may be drawn from the passage, they are not the main focus of the passage.

Hebrews 6:4-6: ⁴For in the case of those who **have once been enlightened and have tasted of the heavenly gift and have been made partakers of the Holy Spirit, ⁵and have tasted the good word of God and the powers of the age to come, ⁶and then have fallen away,** it is **impossible** to renew them again to repentance, since they again crucify to themselves the Son of God, and put Him to open shame.

A. At first glance, Hebrews 6:4-6 may seem to describe truly converted people who **fall away** without the possibility of being restored. Since other Scripture passages teach that truly converted people are secure in their faith, this passage appears to contradict them. There is another way to interpret this passage, however. Hebrews 6:4-6 is best understood as referring to **those who are mere professors and not truly born again by the Spirit of God.**

1. The immediate context of the passage supports the understanding that these are not true believers, a fact manifested by their **falling away**.

Hebrews 6:9: **But, beloved, we are convinced of better things concerning you, and things that accompany salvation,** though we are speaking in this way.

By using the word **but**, the writer is drawing an obvious *contrast*. The *contrast* is between two kinds of people: (1) those who are truly born again and are characterized by **things that accompany salvation**, and (2) mere professors who are revealed to be **not** truly born again by the fact that they fall away. Scripture consistently affirms that endurance is one

of the things that accompany salvation. Thus, true believers, by biblical definition, do not fall away. Faith that endures *characterizes* the true believer. This is so evident that the author of Hebrews doesn't explain it.

2. Interestingly, the broader context of the *book of Hebrews* includes warnings, ***addressed to those who will in fact persevere and be saved***. It also provides obvious proofs of apostasy to warn unbelievers, and makes clear contrasts between mere profession and saving faith. These warning urge them to persevere in the faith to avoid coming under the judgment of God.

Hebrews 2:1-4: ¹For this reason **we must pay much closer attention to what we have heard, lest we drift away from it.** ²For if the word spoken through angels proved unalterable, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompense, ³**how shall we escape if we neglect so great a salvation?** After it was at the first spoken through the Lord, **it was confirmed to us by those who heard,** ⁴**God also bearing witness with them,** both by signs and wonders and various miracles and by gifts of the Holy Spirit according to His own will.

Hebrews 10:26-29: ²⁶For **if we go on sinning willfully after receiving the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins,** ²⁷**but a certain terrifying expectation of judgment,** and the fury of a fire which will consume the adversaries. ²⁸Anyone who has set aside the Law of Moses dies without mercy on the testimony of two or three witnesses. ²⁹**How much severer punishment do you think he will deserve who has trampled under foot the Son of God, and has regarded as unclean the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified, and has insulted the Spirit of grace?**

Hebrews 10:39: But we are **not of those who shrink back to destruction, but of those who have faith to the preserving of the soul.**

Hebrews 12:15-17: ¹⁵**See to it that no one comes short of the grace of God;** that no root of bitterness springing up causes trouble, and by it many be defiled; ¹⁶that there be no immoral or godless person like Esau, who sold his own birthright for a single meal. ¹⁷For you know that even afterwards, when he desired to inherit the blessing, he **was rejected, for he found no place for repentance, though he sought for it with tears.**

This passage in Hebrews 6:4-6 is another in this list of warning passages to these mere professors, and also clearly provides a contrast to saving and persevering faith.

Question #209: Summarize what you see as the distinguishing characteristic between warning passages in Hebrews addressed to mere professors of faith and those addressed to genuine believers. _____

B. The terms used in Hebrews 6:4-6 to describe mere professors ***do not*** describe the reality of new birth and true conversion. Rather, they *describe various experiences of life within the Church*. Those who live in close fellowship with genuine believers may experience a great deal of spiritual blessing without being regenerate. The terms used here ("once been enlightened, tasted of the

heavenly gift, partakers of the heavenly gift, tasted of the good word of God and the powers of the age to come”) certainly describe aspects of spiritual blessing within the life and fellowship of the Church. However, they are used ***nowhere in the Bible to describe the reality of regeneration.***

John MacArthur’s comments are helpful:

“The phrase “once enlightened” is often taken to refer to Christians, and the accompanying warning taken to indicate the danger of losing their salvation if “they fall away” and “crucify again for themselves the Son of God.” But there is no mention of their being saved and they are not described with any terms that apply only to believers (such as holy, born again, righteous, or saints). This problem arises from inaccurately identifying the spiritual condition of the ones being addressed. In this case, they were unbelievers who had been exposed to God’s redemptive truth and perhaps had made a profession of faith, but they had not exercised genuine saving faith. In 10:26, the reference once again is to nominal Christians who apostatize, not to genuine believers who are often incorrectly thought to lose their salvation because of their sins.”⁴²

C. Hebrews 4:6 affirms that “it is impossible to renew . . . again to repentance” those “who have fallen away.” Notice that the writer is ***not*** saying that these folks are beyond God’s power to save through the regenerating power of the Holy Spirit. Rather, he is saying that all human efforts of renewing them to repentance have been exhausted with no saving effect.

1) Unbelievers who have lived within the fellowship of the Church, experienced the power and conviction of God’s kingdom first hand, and even manifested outward signs of repentance and true conversion, and then “fall away” into persistent sin and obvious unbelief, reveal that they were never truly saved. They may have been attracted for a time by the apparent benefits of salvation, but their hard hearts were never regenerated by the power of God’s Holy Spirit.

2) This passage ***cannot*** be saying that ***true believers*** who “fall away” will not be forgiven and restored by God. In the first place, true believers ***cannot*** “fall away” in the sense of rejecting Christ and denying their salvation (see relevant pages on security of the believer.) And, in the second place, true believers who “fall away” into persistent sin will be convicted by the Holy Spirit and brought to repentance. Almost all Christians, at some point, fall into persistent sin and deep doubt, but God is faithful to them. He will act to restore them by His gracious love through the ministry of the Holy Spirit. There is no degree of sin that is beyond God’s forgiveness. In fact, all of the sins of every Christian who will ever be saved were forgiven and marked “paid in full” at the moment Christ died on the Cross. His atoning work was wholly sufficient and fully effective in covering every sin of every person who has ever or will ever be saved. We do not have to worry about to what degree we can “fall away” before we are beyond the reach of God’s forgiveness. Such a scenario amounts to a denial of the free mercy of God!

3) Scripture clearly teaches that true believers prove the reality of their regeneration by their **final perseverance**.

⁴² *The MacArthur Bible Commentary John F. MacArthur Thomas Nelson Inc 2005 page 1834*

Romans 8:29-30: ²⁹For whom He foreknew, He also predestined to become conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren; ³⁰and **whom He predestined, these He also called; and whom He called, these He also justified; and whom He justified, these He also glorified.**

1 Corinthians 1:4-9: ⁴I thank my God always concerning you, for the grace of God which was given you in Christ Jesus, that in everything you were enriched in Him, in all speech and all knowledge, even as the testimony concerning Christ was confirmed in you, ⁷so that you are not lacking in any gift, awaiting eagerly the revelation of **our Lord Jesus Christ, ⁸who shall also confirm you to the end, blameless** in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ. ⁹**God is faithful**, through whom you were called into fellowship with His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

In contrast to this truth, those who *fall away* prove they were never saved. Lack of perseverance reflects lack of true saving faith.

1 John 2:19: **They went out from us, but they were not really of us; for if they had been of us, they would have remained with us; but they went out, in order that it might be shown that they all are not of us.**

Luke 8:13: And those on the rocky soil are those who, when they hear, receive the word with joy; and these have no firm root; **they believe for a while, and in time of temptation fall away.**

1 John 3:9: No one who is born of God practices sin, because His seed abides in him; **and he cannot sin, because he is born of God.**

Question #210: What is the ultimate proof of genuine regeneration?_____
