

November 8, 2023

The Origin of Salvation: Unconditional Election vs. Conditional Election

Goal for This Week

To consider where our salvation comes from so we can faithfully articulate our great dependence on God to transform us to be look more like Christ, from one degree of glory to another (Romans 8:29 & 2 Cor. 3:18).

Review from Past Weeks

Theological Reflection – _____

Because theological reflection should always begin, remain, and end with God, and because God has revealed Himself to us through His Word to transform us to be conformed to the image of His Son (Rom 8:28), theology should not only be intellectual but also *transformational*, which includes our _____ and _____.

Doing Soteriology is to _____ on what God says about _____. It seeks to understand how God saves humanity through the death of Christ on the cross. Again, since theological reflection begins, remains, and ends with God, we must consider God primarily when we think about salvation. We are saved by God, from God, and for God.

Total Depravity means that _____ has extended to all aspects of human nature and because of this corruption we can do nothing to merit saving favor with God.

“Salvation is the work of God that delivers us from _____ and its penalty, _____ us to a right relationship with him, and imparts to us eternal life.”¹

Our union with Christ informs our _____ and the way we raise children.

The Origin of Salvation

Ephesians 1:3-5 – “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places, (4) even 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 for adoption to himself as sons through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of *his will*.”

Observations from the text: _____

Definition: “Election is the gracious decision of God by which he chooses certain ones to be the recipients of salvation.”²

¹ Daniel Akin, *A Theology For The Church* (Nashville, TN: B&H Publishing Group, 2014), 543.

² *Ibid.*, 558.

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Romans 9:8-23 – “It is not the children of the flesh who are the children of God, but the children of the promise are counted as offspring. (9) For this is what the promise said: ‘About this time next year I will return, and Sarah shall have a son.’ (10) And not only so, but also when Rebekah had conceived children by one man, our forefather Isaac, (11) though they were not yet born and had done nothing either good or bad – in order that God’s purpose of election might continue, not because of works but because of him who calls – (12) she was told, ‘The older will serve the younger.’ (13) As it is written, ‘Jacob I loved, but Esau I hated.’ (14) What shall we say then? Is there injustice on God’s part? By no means! (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 depends not on human will or exertion, but on God, who has mercy. (17) For the Scripture says to Pharaoh, ‘For this very purpose I have raised you up, that I might show my power in you, and that my name might be proclaimed in all the earth.’ (18) So then he has mercy on whomever he wills, and he hardens whomever he wills. (19) You will say to me then, ‘Why does he still find fault? For who can resist his will? (20) But who are you, O man, to answer back to God? Will what is molded say to its molder, ‘Why have you made me like this?’ (21) Has the potter no right over the clay, to make out of the same lump one vessel for honorable use and another for dishonorable use? (22) What if God, desiring to show his wrath and to make known his power, has endured with much patience vessels of wrath prepared for destruction, (23) in order to make known the riches of his glory for vessels of mercy, which he has prepared beforehand for glory.”

According to the Romans 9, what is not a reason for God choosing Jacob and not Esau? What is the reason?

Why does the one who is not elect still find fault if God hardened their heart, like Pharaoh?

Why would God show mercy and compassion to some and not others?

Does God choose based on the foreseen faith of the elect? Is God the ultimate cause of our choice to receive salvation?

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Unconditional Election (Calvinistic Position)

Unconditional election understands God's _____ of an individual to be the ultimate _____, or reason, of the person's choice to believe.

John 15:16a – “You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit and that your fruit should abide.”

Debate Among the Calvinistic Christians

- *Supralapsarianism* (supra – “before” and lapse – “fall”) – argues that God's decrees to save some and not others logically occurred before his decision to ordain the fall.
- *Infralapsarianism* (infra – “after” and lapse – “fall”) – argues that God decrees to save some after his decree to allow the fall.

How would this position explain 1 Timothy 2:4 and 2 Peter 3:9?

1 Timothy 2:4 – “Who desires all people to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.”

2 Peter 3:9 – “The Lord is not slow to fulfill his promise as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing that any [of you] should perish, but that all should reach repentance.”

Conditional Election (Arminian Position)

Conditional election sees God's _____ of a person to be based or _____ on that person's foreseen faith.

Romans 8:29a – “For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son.”

1 Peter 1:2a – “According to the foreknowledge of God the Father.”

According to this position, how is someone capable of responding to the gospel message if total depravity is true?

Concluding Question: Which position do you think best articulates how our salvation begins (originates) with God? How does this make us dependent of God to transform us?

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Preparation for Next Week:

Read Article – <https://gbtseminary.org/the-golden-chain-of-redemption/>
(Attached to this document.)

Further Resources:

Akin, Daniel L. *A Theology For The Church: Revised Edition*. Nashville, TN: B&H Publishing Group, 2014.

Chapman, Gary. *Covenant Marriage: Building Communication and Intimacy*. Nashville, TN: Broadman, 2003.

Danylak, Barry. *A Biblical Theology of Singleness*. Cambridge, UK: Grove, 2007.

Keller, Timothy and Kathy Keller. *The Meaning of Marriage: Facing the Complexities of Commitment with the Wisdom of God*. New York: Penguin Books, 2016.

Köstenberger, Andreas J. and David W. Jones. *God, Marriage, and Family: Rebuilding the Biblical Foundation*. 2nd Ed. Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2010.

Plantinga, Cornelius. *Not the Way It's Supposed to Be: A Breviary of Sin*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1995.