

**Study 8**  
**Doctrine of Salvation**

**I. Introduction**

**A. The salvation of mankind stands as one of the great themes of Scripture and the chief aim of the incarnation.**

**B. The salvation story in Scripture declares man's "restoration to divine favor and to a life in intimate communion with God." <sup>1</sup>**

**C. The angel announced to Joseph concerning the child Mary was carrying that, "she will bring forth a Son, and you shall call His name JESUS, for He will save His people from their sins" (Matt 1:21).**

**D. Likewise, Jesus declared "the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many" (Matt 20:28).**

**E. In pursuit of exploring this most excellent doctrine this chapter will consider the plan of salvation, the atonement, the conversion of man and the result of salvation.**

**II. The Plan of Salvation**

**A. That a conversation can even be had about the plan of salvation is good news!**

1. If it were not for God being moved in eternity past to create and save man this discussion would not even be possible.
2. That God has revealed His counsel to redeem Him is a further blessing.

**B. In this section the election and predestination of God will be considered first.**

**C. The second half will discuss the purpose and means of salvation.**

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<sup>1</sup> L. Berkhof, *Systematic Theology* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans publishing co., 1938), 415.

## **D. Election**

1. The New Testament clearly teaches that God has chosen or “elected” men and women to be recipients of salvation through Jesus Christ (Eph 1:4; 1 Pet 2:9).

Ephesians 1:4 (NKJV) <sup>4</sup> just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love, 1 Peter 2:9 (NKJV) <sup>9</sup> But you *are* a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light;

2. The two words used in Ephesians 1:4 and 1 Peter 2:9 are respectively the verb ἐκλέγομαι (*ek-leg-omai*) and the adjective ἐκλεκτός (*ek-lek-tos*).

a) **The verb ἐκλέγομαι as defined by Mounce means, “to choose, set apart, elect.”<sup>2</sup>**

b) **The adjective refers to the “quality of being “chosen, selected, set apart,” with the biblical implication that it is God who chooses.”<sup>3</sup>**

3. That God would elect us to be recipients of His love through a sovereign choice is truly amazing.

a) **When David mused upon God taking time to consider his ways he declared, “LORD, what *is* man, that You take knowledge of him? Or the son of man, that You are mindful of him? (Psalm 144:3).”**

b) **Too often this amazing doctrine of election has been the occasion of dividing the brethren rather than praising our Maker.**

4. That there are differing opinions concerning the doctrine of election is undeniable.

a) **Henry Thiessen frames this controversy well writing,**

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<sup>2</sup> William D. Mounce, *Mounce’s Complete Expository Dictionary of Old & New Testament Words* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2006), 209.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

The Christian church is divided on the understanding of this doctrine especially as it relates to divine sovereignty and human responsibility coupled with the righteousness and holiness of God and the sinfulness of man. Scripture indicates that election is based on foreknowledge (1 Pet. 1:1f.; cf. Rom. 8:29), but the actual meaning of foreknowledge is debated. Is it merely prescience or **foresight**, or does it relate more closely to **actual choice**? Does God, in his foreknowledge, perceive what each man will do in response to his call and then elect him to salvation in harmony with this knowledge? Or does foreknowledge mean that God, from eternity past, looked with favor upon some and then elected them to salvation?<sup>4</sup>

**b) Great men and women of God have wrestled with this debate in every generation of the Church, resulting in well-read people landing on both sides of the argument.**

**c) Ryrie acknowledges that “No human mind will ever harmonize sovereignty and free will, but ignoring or downplaying one or the other in the interests of a supposed harmony will solve nothing.”<sup>5</sup>**

**d) The free will of man and sovereignty of God are like two oars in a boat and both must be employed to make meaningful progress.**

**e) This means that both the sovereignty of God and the free will of men must be wrestled with and taught.**

**f) Divine election is according to the foreknowledge of those who would confess Christ as Savior.**

(1) It is understood that some will see this as promoting salvation by works or a diminishing of the sovereignty of God.

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<sup>4</sup> Henry Clarence Thiessen and Vernon D. Doerksen, *Lectures in Systematic Theology* (Grand Rapids, MI; Cambridge: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1979), 258.

<sup>5</sup> Charles Caldwell Ryrie, *Basic Theology: A Popular Systematic Guide to Understanding Biblical Truth* (Chicago, IL: Moody Press, 1999), 359.

(2) However, God in His sovereignty, has allowed men to make a choice when confronted with the gospel.

(3) In other words, man's ability to make a choice in no way compromises God's sovereign rule.

### **E. Predestination**

1. The word predestination is derived from the Greek word προορίζω (*proorizo*) and is used six times (Acts 4:28; Rom. 8:29–30; 1 Cor. 2:7; Eph. 1:5, 11).

Acts 4:28 (NKJV) <sup>28</sup> to do whatever Your hand and Your purpose **determined** before to be done.

Romans 8:29–30 (NKJV) <sup>29</sup> For whom He foreknew, He also **predestined to be** conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren. <sup>30</sup> Moreover whom He **predestined**, these He also called; whom He called, these He also justified; and whom He justified, these He also glorified.

1 Corinthians 2:7 (NKJV) <sup>7</sup> But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, the hidden *wisdom* which God **ordained** before the ages for our glory,

Ephesians 1:5 (NKJV) <sup>5</sup> having **predestined** us to adoption as sons by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will,

Ephesians 1:11 (NKJV) <sup>11</sup> In Him also we have obtained an inheritance, being **predestined** according to the purpose of Him who works all things according to the counsel of His will,

a) **Predestination is defined by BDAG as to, “decide upon beforehand, predetermine.”<sup>6</sup>**

b) **Mounce adds, “It is derived from *pro*, meaning ‘before’ or ‘ahead of’, and *orizō*, meaning ‘to appoint, decide, determine.’ God is always the one doing the action of this verb.”<sup>7</sup>**

2. Predestination is an act of God for those God has elected for salvation.

a) **Some have added to this doctrine of predestination of the elect, saying that God has**

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<sup>6</sup> William Arndt et al., *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 873.

<sup>7</sup> Mounce, 533

predestined the rest of mankind to eternal destruction (double predestination).

b) While God is to be praised for the salvation of every soul, the responsibility for those who are perishing falls upon the unrepentant person.

c) As noted in the previous chapter God is not willing that any should perish (2 Pet 3:9).

2 Peter 3:9 (NKJV) <sup>9</sup> The Lord is not slack concerning *His* promise, as some count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance.

d) While it is God who predestines some for salvation it is men who reject the gospel that bear the responsibility of their lost state (2 Thess 1:8).

2 Thessalonians 1:8 (NKJV) <sup>8</sup> in flaming fire taking vengeance on those who do not know God, and on those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ.

## **F. The Purpose of Salvation**

1. As noted in the introduction the doctrine of salvation records the sovereign act of God to restore man to a right standing with His maker.
2. Scripture provides at least two clearly stated reasons for offering salvation.

a) First, because of His love for the world (John 3:16).

John 3:16 (NKJV) <sup>16</sup> For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.

(1) Without understanding how wonderfully man is loved by God, the cross is a difficult act to understand.

b) Second, to make known His amazing grace in the ages to come (Eph 2:7).

Ephesians 2:7 (NKJV) <sup>7</sup> that in the ages to come He might show the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us in Christ Jesus.

(1) John Stott writes of this second motivation, “[what prompted God to act on our behalf was not](#)

something in us (some supposed merit) but something in himself (his own unmerited favour).”<sup>8</sup>

(2) Believers will stand as trophies of God’s grace and kindness.

(3) His loving act of redemption will declare for all of eternity that He is a God of grace.

### **G. The Means of Salvation**

1. It was the will of God to save mankind but how did He accomplish this salvation?

2. To answer this question attention must now turn to the gospel.

**a) The word gospel is the Greek word εὐαγγέλιον (*euangelion*) and according to Mounce it means “the ‘good news’ about the salvation God has provided through Jesus Christ.”<sup>9</sup>**

3. Paul declared in **Romans 1:16** “For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes, for the Jew first and also for the Greek.”

4. Writing to the Corinthians Paul gives a succinct explanation of this good news writing

**1 Corinthians 15:3–4** “For I delivered to you first of all that which I also received: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, and that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures.”

**a) Therefore, the gospel is the account of the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ.**

**b) In this salvation act man can have his sins forgiven and a right standing with God restored.**

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<sup>8</sup> John R. W. Stott, *God’s New Society: The Message of Ephesians*, The Bible Speaks Today (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1979), 82.

<sup>9</sup> Mounce, *Mounce’s Complete Expository Dictionary*, 302.

5. It is in the finished work of Christ alone that man finds the means of salvation.

Acts 4:12 Nor is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved.

6. Topics of election, predestination, God's purpose and means of salvation rank as the highest declarations of any truth or literature.

a) **At the mere mention of these glorious truths all should respond with hands and voices raised in highest praise to God.**

### **III. The Atonement**

***A. Atonement is a topic that brings us into the details of salvation.***

1. Topics such as redemption and propitiation will be explored.
2. Lastly, a brief amount of time will be given to explore to the extent Christ's atonement.

### ***B. Redemption***

1. Redemption is a topic frequently spoken of in both the Old and New Testament.

a) **The Old Testament uses three root words (*pādâ*, *gā'al*, and *kāpar*) in its discussion of redemption.**

b) **The New Testament uses four root words (*Agorazō*, *Exagorazō*, *Peripoioumai* and *Lutroō*) to communicate the concept of redemption.**

2. The basic idea behind the word redemption is that of **freeing**.

a) **David Rightmire writing for the *Evangelical Dictionary of Biblical Theology* offers this concise summary of redemption, "the ideas of loosing from a bond, setting free from captivity or slavery, buying**

**back something lost or sold, exchanging something in one's possession for something possessed by another, and ransoming.”<sup>10</sup>**

**b) Whether the discussion is about redeeming the firstborn, property, a person or losing something, the basic idea is liberation.**

3. Redemption in Christ is a primary focus in the New Testament.

**a) Peter provides a clear understanding of this redemption writing,**

1 Peter 1:18–20 “knowing that you were not redeemed with corruptible things, like silver or gold, from your aimless conduct *received* by tradition from your fathers, but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot. He indeed was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you.”

**b) Man was lost in sin having no hope in the dark slave market of sin but God, moved with compassion, sent His Son Jesus Christ to offer His life to redeem Him from this plight.**

### **C. Propitiation**

1. In our study on the doctrine of sin it was seen from Scripture that all have sinned and that God being a just God must punish sin.

**a) That God would pour out His wrath on sin is explicitly noted by the New Testament writers (Rom 1:18, Col 3:6; 2 Thess 1:7–9; Rev 6:16).**

**b) Yet, the Lord loves man and desires for Him to be saved.**

2. This is where the discussion of propitiation comes in.

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<sup>10</sup> R. David Rightmire, “Redeem, Redemption,” *Evangelical Dictionary of Biblical Theology*, Baker Reference Library (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1996), 664.



a) Ryrie explains propitiation as the “...placating or satisfying the wrath of God by the atoning sacrifice of Christ.”<sup>11</sup>

b) This definition accurately captures the truth communicated in Romans where it is stated of Jesus,

Romans 3:25 “whom God set forth *as* a propitiation by His blood, through faith, to demonstrate His righteousness, because in His forbearance God had passed over the sins that were previously committed.”

c) Define propitiation (ἱλαστήριον *hilastérion*) - that which serves as an instrument for regaining the goodwill of a deity.<sup>12</sup>

3. There is picture of propitiation as we consider the mercy seat.

a) The same Greek word is used for mercy seat in the LXX as is used for the word propitiation in the NT.

ἱλαστήριος *hilastérios*; ...The lid or covering of the ark of the covenant made of pure gold, on and before which the high priest was to sprinkle the blood of the expiatory sacrifices on the Day of Atonement, and where the Lord promised to meet His people (Ex. 25:17, 22; Lev. 16:2, 14, 15). Paul, by applying this name to Christ in Rom. 3:25, assures us that Christ was the true mercy seat, the reality typified by the cover on the ark of the covenant (Heb. 9:5...Jesus Christ is designated as *hilastérion* in Rom. 3:25 and Heb. 9:5 because He is designated not only as the place where the sinner deposits his sin, but He Himself is the means of expiation.<sup>13</sup>

a) Romans 3:25 tells us that Jesus is our propitiation.

Romans 3:25 (NKJV) whom God set forth *as* a propitiation by His blood, through faith, to demonstrate His righteousness, because in His forbearance God had passed over the sins that were previously committed,

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<sup>11</sup> Ryrie, *Basic Theology*, 339.

<sup>12</sup> Arndt, *A Greek-English Lexicon*, 474.

<sup>13</sup> Spiros Zodhiates, *The Complete Word Study Dictionary: New Testament* (Chattanooga, TN: AMG Publishers, 2000).

4. In summary Jesus took the wrath of God (propitiation) that our relationship might be restored.

#### **D. Biblical Atonement View**

1. Enns defines atonement as “He (*Jesus*) died in place of sinners that He might purchase their freedom, reconcile them to God, and thereby satisfy the righteous demands of a holy God.”<sup>14</sup>

2. A key element to having a proper understanding of atonement is the substitutionary aspect of Christ’s sacrifice.

**a) Jesus did not simply die on the cross.**

**b) He willingly went as a lamb to the slaughter to take man’s judgment for sin (2 Cor 5:21).**

2 Corinthians 5:21 (NKJV) <sup>21</sup> For He made Him who knew no sin *to be* sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.

3. William Mounce states that, “we see that Jesus is represented in the NT as the priest who does the atonement sacrifice (*hilaskomai*), as the One who is himself the sacrifice of atonement (*hilasmos*), and as the place where atonement occurs (*hilastērion*). Everything we need for forgiveness, for the removal of God’s anger, and for reconciliation with him can be found in Jesus.”<sup>15</sup>

4. In short, atonement is that work of Jesus Christ, in His death, burial and resurrection, to restore lost humanity into a right relationship with God (1 Cor 15:3; 1 Cor 15:17 1 Pet 2:24).

1 Corinthians 15:3 (NKJV) <sup>3</sup> For I delivered to you first of all that which I also received: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures,

1 Corinthians 15:17 (NKJV) <sup>17</sup> And if Christ is not risen, your faith *is* futile; you are still in your sins!

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<sup>14</sup> Paul P. Enns, *The Moody Handbook of Theology*, (Chicago: Moody Press, 1989), WORDsearch CROSS e-book, 321.

<sup>15</sup> Mounce, *Mounce’s Complete Expository Dictionary*, 46.

1 Peter 2:24 (NKJV) <sup>24</sup> who Himself bore our sins in His own body on the tree, that we, having died to sins, might live for righteousness—by whose stripes you were healed.

### **E. Extent of the Atonement**

1. A point of much debate among conservative scholars centers around the question of for whom did Christ atone?
2. The terminology most often associated with this question is Limited Atonement vs Unlimited Atonement.
3. The **limited atonement** view holds that Jesus only died for the elect whereas the unlimited views teaches that Jesus died for everyone.

**a) Passages such as John 10:15 and Acts 20:28 are often put forth to support the limited atonement view.**

John 10:15 (NKJV) <sup>15</sup> As the Father knows Me, even so I know the Father; and I lay down My life **for the sheep.**

Acts 20:28 (NKJV) <sup>28</sup> Therefore take heed to yourselves and to 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.

**b) These verses, along with others, refer to Jesus dying for His “sheep” or the “Church.”**

**c) The conclusion is drawn that only those named are the ones whom Christ atoned.**

4. The **unlimited atonement** view, which is the position of this author, is that Jesus died for the sins of all people.

**a) While it is true that most will not benefit from the atoning work of Christ this view has great biblical support.**

**b) Enns notes that “the word *whosoever* is used more than 110 times in the New Testament and**

always with an unrestricted meaning (cf. John 3:16; Acts 2:21; 10:43; Rom. 10:13; Rev. 22:17).”<sup>16</sup>

John 3:16 (NKJV) <sup>16</sup> For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.

Acts 2:21 (NKJV) <sup>21</sup> And it shall come to pass That **whoever** calls on the name of the LORD Shall be saved.”

Acts 10:43 (NKJV) <sup>43</sup> To Him all the prophets witness that, through His name, **whoever** believes in Him will receive remission of sins.”

Romans 10:13 (NKJV) <sup>13</sup> For “*whoever calls* on the name of the LORD shall be saved.”

Revelation 22:17 (NKJV) <sup>17</sup> And the Spirit and the bride say, “Come!” And let him who hears say, “Come!” And let him who thirsts come. **Whoever** desires, let him take the water of life freely.

c) The call to preach to the nations and the desire that all would come to salvation provide solid biblical evidence that Christ’s salvation was not limited to only the elect.

d) Not only will men find themselves enduring the judgement of God for their sin in general but also for their specific rejection of Christ’s atoning work on the cross (2 Thess 1:8).

2 Thessalonians 1:8 (NKJV) <sup>8</sup> in flaming fire taking vengeance on those who do not know God, and on those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ.

e) Men will be held responsible for rejecting the gospel but if it was never an option in the first place it hardly seems just to punish them—and we know God is just.

5. The study of the atoning work of Christ lies at the center of the discussion of salvation.

a) While it cannot be denied that godly brothers and sisters hold to different emphasis of this most noble doctrine; it is also true that more is agreed upon concerning Christ atonement than argued over.

#### IV. Conversion

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<sup>16</sup> Enns, *The Moody Handbook of Theology*, 327.

**A. The conversion of an individual is the way the spiritual transformation from death to life, from darkness to light is referred (Acts 3:19).**

Acts 3:19 (NKJV) <sup>19</sup> Repent therefore and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, so that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord,

1. Louw-Nida explains the word convert (ἐπιστρέφω *epistrephō*) as, “to return to a point or area where one has been before, with probable emphasis on turning about—‘to return to, to go back to’.”<sup>17</sup>
2. It is that work that happens in a person’s life when they move from living for themselves to being totally committed to God.
3. There are three key action words that help to understand this glorious work, they are grace, faith and repentance.

## **B. Grace**

1. The work of converting a soul back to the purposes for which it was created is an act of grace by God.
2. Man has never experienced salvation apart from the grace of God.
3. There are only two roads mankind will have traveled when they stand before God.
  - a) **They will either have traveled the road of grace through Jesus Christ or they will have come by way of works.**
  - b) **Jesus declared empathically that it was only through Him that man could find a favorable standing before God.**
  - c) **Paul states succinctly that,**

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<sup>17</sup> Johannes P. Louw and Eugene Albert Nida, *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament: Based on Semantic Domains* (New York: United Bible Societies, 1996), 193.

Eph 2:8–9 For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; *it is* the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast.

### **C. Faith**

1. Conversion is the result of the grace of God being offered to man through the atoning work of Christ.
2. How then does one receive this gift of salvation, appropriating the grace of God?

**a) Again Ephesians 2:8-9 are helpful in understanding God's ways.**

Ephesians 2:8–9 (NKJV) <sup>8</sup> For by grace you have been saved **through faith**, and that not of yourselves; *it is* the gift of God, <sup>9</sup> not of works, lest anyone should boast.

3. Harold Hoehner writing for the Bible Knowledge Commentary notes that, "Faith is not a 'work.' It does not merit salvation; **it is only the means by which one accepts God's free salvation.**"<sup>18</sup>

**a) While faith is not the grace that saves, it is nonetheless a vital aspect of how God has made His grace accessible to men.**

**b) God has stated clearly that we must come to Him by faith alone and that even the faith is a gift of God.**

### **D. Repentance**

1. Repentance is defined by Grudem as, "**a heartfelt sorrow for sin, a renouncing of it, and a sincere commitment to forsake it and walk in obedience to Christ.**"<sup>19</sup>
2. It is important when considering repentance that it not be viewed as a step before putting faith in Christ.

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<sup>18</sup> Harold W. Hoehner, "Ephesians," in *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures*, ed. J. F. Walvoord and R. B. Zuck, vol. 2 (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1985), 624.

<sup>19</sup> Wayne A. Grudem, *Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Biblical Doctrine* (Leicester, England; Grand Rapids, MI: Inter-Varsity Press; Zondervan Pub. House, 2004), 713.

3. If such an error is made, then a salvation of works is communicated, not grace.

4. Enns is helpful in understanding how faith and repentance operate at salvation, stating, "It should not be understood as a separate step in salvation. Acts 20:21 indicates that repentance and faith should not be seen as separate items in response to the gospel but together they signify belief in Christ. To believe in Christ is to change one's mind about Christ and trust Him alone for salvation."<sup>20</sup>

5. It is both biblical and necessary to call people to repent and put their faith in Jesus. Grudem adds this important insight,

Scripture puts repentance and faith together as different aspects of the one act of coming to Christ for salvation. It is not that a person first turns from sin and next trusts in Christ, or first trusts in Christ and then turns from sin, but rather that both occur at the same time. When we turn to Christ *for* salvation from our sins, we are simultaneously turning *away* from the sins that we are asking Christ to save us from.<sup>21</sup>

6. Faith and repentance are the two sides of a single coin.

**a) In calling people to repentance and faith in Jesus we must remember that repentance is a mindset and not a pattern of living that should be measured before calling people to put their faith in Christ.**

7. God has provided election, predestination and atonement for man.

**a) These works of God express the grace of God.**

**b) Man cannot find salvation through his efforts and is thus totally dependent upon God to save him.**

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<sup>20</sup> Enns, *The Moody Handbook of Theology*, 330.

<sup>21</sup> Grudem, *Systematic Theology*, 713.

c) This salvation must be appropriated by repentance and faith which represent a single act of receiving the grace of God.

## V. Results of Conversion

*A. Having discussed both God's part and man's part in salvation attention will now turn to the benefits and results of conversion.*

1. From forgiveness to eternal security this study will explore what the believer has been promised in salvation.
2. It will quickly become apparent how great a salvation has been provided by the Father in His Son Jesus Christ.

### B. Forgiveness

1. King David wrote in **Psalm 32:1**, "Oh, what joy for those whose disobedience is forgiven, whose sin is put out of sight! Yes, what joy for those whose record the LORD has cleared of guilt, whose lives are lived in complete honesty!"
2. Indeed, how wonderful it is to have the guilt and offense of sin removed.
3. This forgiveness is offered to all who come to faith in Jesus Christ confessing their sins (1 John 1:9).

**1 John 1:9 (NKJV) <sup>9</sup> If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.**

4. Apart from God providing a way for His righteous judgment of sin to be satisfied there could never be the hope of eternal life.
5. The beauty of God's salvation is that not only did He save us, but He also removes the shame associated with our sin (Jude 1:24).

**Jude 24 (NKJV) <sup>24</sup> Now to Him who is able to keep you from stumbling, And to present you faultless Before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy,**



### **C. Justification**

1. Being forgiven by God is truly amazing.

**a) The reality of our conversion is good news but the glory does not stop there.**

Romans 8:30 (NKJV) <sup>30</sup> Moreover whom He predestined, these He also called; whom He called, these He also justified; and whom He justified, these He also glorified.

2. It is to this justification that we now turn our attention.

**a) Wayne Grudem defines justification as, “an instantaneous legal act of God in which he (1) thinks of our sins as forgiven and Christ’s righteousness as belonging to us, and (2) declares us to be righteous in his sight.”<sup>22</sup>**

**b) The teaching of justification is so profound.**

**c) We are no longer guilty before the Lord.**

**d) We stand before God with the righteousness of God.**

3. Consider this amazing statement declared by Paul in his letter to the Corinthians.

2 Cor 5:21 For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.

### **D. Reconciliation and Adoption**

1. The enmity that existed between God and man is removed when a person experiences conversion.

2. This renewed state of peace between God and man is called reconciliation (Col 1:21–22).

Colossians 1:21–22 (NKJV) <sup>21</sup> And you, who once were alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now He has reconciled <sup>22</sup> in the body of His flesh

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<sup>22</sup> Grudem, *Systematic Theology*, 723.

through death, to present you holy, and blameless, and above reproach in His sight—

a) God is the offended party in His relationship with man and it is God who has done all the work to restore this communion (2 Cor 5:18-19).

2 Corinthians 5:18–19 (NKJV) <sup>18</sup> Now all things *are* of God, who has reconciled us to Himself through Jesus Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation, <sup>19</sup> that is, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not imputing their trespasses to them, and has committed to us the word of reconciliation.

b) As Erickson writes, “As important as it is for humans to turn to God, the process of reconciliation primarily involves God’s turning in favor toward them.”<sup>23</sup>

3. Having been reconciled to God man is given the high privilege to be adopted into the family of God (Eph 1:5).

Ephesians 1:5 (NKJV) <sup>5</sup> having predestined us to adoption as sons by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will,

a) One special aspect of adoption it that in the process a distinct choice is made to have a specific child, a choice that is not even present in natural birth.

4. Having been reconciled and adopted man is now free to fulfill his chief aim of enjoying Him and bringing Him glory.

### **E. Sanctification**

1. The work of conversion leads to salvation which leads to sanctification.

2. The moment a believer is saved they are set apart for the glory of the Lord.

3. This work of being sanctified (set apart) continues throughout the believer’s life.

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<sup>23</sup> Millard J. Erickson, *Christian Theology*, 3rd ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2013), 744.

4. Every day the child of God is being shaped by the Lord to conform to the image of their Savior (Eph 4:11–13).

Ephesians 4:11–13 (NKJV) <sup>11</sup> And He Himself gave some *to be* apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, <sup>12</sup> for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ, <sup>13</sup> till we all come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ;

5. The Scriptures are replete with exhortations to be sanctified as in Romans 12:1–2 where Paul exhorts believers to be transformed.

Romans 12:1–2 (NKJV) <sup>1</sup> I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, *which is* your reasonable service. <sup>2</sup> And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what *is* that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.

6. This work of sanctification will continue until the believer leaves this world.

## ***F. Preservation and Eternal Security***

1. We now turn to the question of the preservation and security of this salvation.

a) **John 10:28-29 makes it clear that the eternal life given to the believer could never be thwarted by another.**

John 10:28–29 (NKJV) <sup>28</sup> And I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; neither shall anyone snatch them out of My hand. <sup>29</sup> My Father, who has given *them* to Me, is greater than all; and no one is able to snatch *them* out of My Father's hand.

b) **It is evident that God will preserve His work.**

c) **Additionally, the Scriptures are full of promises that the work of salvation is not a work that is dependent on human effort but a work that rests upon the author and finisher of our faith (Phil 2:6).**

Philippians 2:6 (NKJV) <sup>6</sup> who, being in the form of God, did not consider it robbery to be equal with God,

**d) It is a salvation that is eternal in nature (John 3:16).**

**John 3:16 (NKJV) <sup>16</sup> For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.**

2. There are those who argue that a believer can lose their salvation and others who teach once you are saved you are always saved.

**a) The teaching that salvation ebbs and flows in this life in conjunction with a believer's performance is not founded on Scripture.**

**b) This mishandling has caused much misunderstanding and unnecessary fear among the people of God.**

**c) On the other side of this much debated topic is the unfortunate conclusion that no matter how a person lives they will always be saved.**

**d) Once again, this mishandling has resulted in many within the Church having wrong thinking about their spiritual standing with God.**

**e) The idea that I can live in decided sin/rebellion and still have the promise of a glorious entry into heaven is not found in Scripture.**

3. It is my belief that the Bible both assures the believer of salvation and gives genuine warnings to continue in the faith (Col 1:21–23).

**Colossians 1:21–23 (NKJV) <sup>21</sup> And you, who once were alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now He has reconciled <sup>22</sup> in the body of His flesh through death, to present you holy, and blameless, and above reproach in His sight—<sup>23</sup> if indeed you continue in the faith, grounded and steadfast, and are not moved away from the hope of the gospel which you heard, which was preached to every creature under heaven, of which I, Paul, became a minister.**

4. Furthermore, the language of “losing your salvation” or being “once saved always saved” have greatly complicated this discussion.

- a) In part because these theologically-charged ideas come loaded with extra-biblical baggage.
- b) When teaching the Word of God one must be faithful to assure the believer that the work Christ has begun in them will be completed.
- c) They need not worry that God is finished with them because of their latest transgression or failure.
- d) Likewise, when teaching passages that exhort the believer to continue or abide in Christ (John 15:1–7) the teacher must not cling so tightly to his theological position that he renders all warnings as impossible consequences.

5. The promises of God are certain to all who call upon the name of the Lord and abide in His word.

6. I realize that I have not landed firmly in one theological camp in my explanation but I am okay with this tension.

## **VI. Conclusion**

***A. This study has considered the sovereign plans of God to save man and the atoning work of Christ in this process.***

- 1. Furthermore, exploration was made into the conversion of man and the blessings that accompany his salvation.
- 2. The Doctrine of Salvation stands out as a glimmering jewel among the doctrines of the Christian faith.

***B. While all doctrines are important and valuable, if it were not for the Lord redeeming mankind all truth of God would be lost to his darkened mind.***