

The Origin of Salvation

Is salvation a work of God or man?

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Elder Council Position Paper

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Introduction

The study of salvation is set within the context of several other major biblical doctrines. For example, it is set within the framework of Theology Proper, Anthropology and Soteriology. Another way of saying this is that the Doctrine of Election is directly associated with the Doctrine of God, the Doctrine of Man and the Doctrine of Salvation.

Where do these doctrines originate? To be accurate and adequate, our understanding of doctrine must draw from all that the Bible says on each subject. We cannot hope to understand a biblical teaching by aggrandizing one verse, while ignoring five others. All that the Bible teaches must be included.

Another issue to address, as we begin to build our doctrine, has to do with the use of human logic. We must be cautious about “logical extensions.” This term refers to our tendency to add to what the Bible says. God’s thoughts are above and beyond ours; we never fully understand His ways. Extending our logic beyond the clear truth of God’s word is a common, but extremely serious mistake. We must tenaciously avoid it.

With these principles in mind, we are ready to proceed in our study. At each step of the way we must remember to allow the Bible to be our authority. Our beliefs and conviction must not be built upon tradition, logic or what we wish was true. We must build our doctrine upon what the Bible itself teaches.

Principal Questions

1. Is belief necessary for salvation? Another way to state this question is to ask: How is a person saved? God’s word is our guide to answering this all important question. We’ll start in John’s Gospel, Chapter 3, as it is a wellspring of teaching on salvation. Jesus said, “**And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up; that whoever believes may in Him have eternal life**” (John 3:14-15 NASB).

This is a good opportunity to point out two key issues related to salvation. First, we are seeking to understand the relationship between salvation and belief. Second, we will be

exposed to the Bible's teaching on the identity of those who can believe. Jesus used the word "whoever" in verse 15. The specific word is the Greek term "pas." Frequently, this word is translated as "all." However, we must understand that "all" can mean every person, or every person within some context or group.

For example, let's say that I made the following announcement this week, "We are having a reception for new members this Sunday, all are invited to attend." It is difficult to interpret this statement. Was I saying that all the new members were invited to attend, or was my reference to everyone in the church? Further examination is required to understand my meaning.

Another classic example of this is found in Mark 1:5, "And all the country of Judea was going out to him, and all the people of Jerusalem; and they were being baptized by him in the Jordan River, confessing their sins." Does Mark mean to say that every person in Judea, and every inhabitant of Jerusalem, was being baptized by John? No, obviously he does not mean this. As *Barnes on the New Testament* points out, Mark was saying all the different kinds of people in Judea and Jerusalem were going out to meet with John and receive baptism. So, "all," "whoever" and "whosoever" can mean all types, or all individuals, depending on the context.

We must consider this when we study John 3. Look again at the passage, "And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up; {15} that whoever believes may in Him have eternal life." (John 3:14-15 NASB). All who believe in Jesus have eternal life. However, who is the "whoever" talking about? Is Jesus referring to all people of the earth, or all the people God convicts of their sins and leads to salvation? We face the same question in John 3:16, "For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish, but have eternal life." While we are at it, let's add the following words of John, "He who believes in the Son has eternal life; but he who does not obey the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him." (John 3:36 NASB). The third chapter of John is comprehensive in the teaching of salvation. What does it teach? It teaches that all who believe are saved. We must continue to seek further definition to identify "whoever." Later in this study we will attempt to recognize who they are through the use of some very helpful passages of Scripture.

Let's go back to our original question: "Is belief necessary for salvation?" John 3 tells us that it is. Does this doctrine carry through the Gospel of John? The answer is certainly affirmative. For example, John writes, "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 5:24 NASB). Later John says, "Jesus said to her, 'I am the resurrection and the life; he who believes in Me shall live even if he dies, and everyone who lives and believes in Me shall never die. Do you believe this?'" (John 11:25-26 NASB). So, throughout John we see the necessity of belief for salvation.

What did the Apostle Paul teach on this subject of belief's relationship to salvation? He said, "For since in the wisdom of God the world through its wisdom did not *come to* know God, God was well-pleased through the foolishness of the message preached to save those who believe." (1 Corinthians 1:21 NASB). Again, we have clear biblical teaching that belief is necessary to salvation.

Finally, we turn to the Book of Acts. What does it teach? Acts 16:30-31 says, "and after he brought them out, he said, 'Sirs, what must I do to be saved?' And they said, 'Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you shall be saved, you and your household.'" Here we have a man, who didn't know Christ, asking the apostles how to be saved. Their response is very explicit; salvation is experienced through belief. Thus we are prepared to answer our first question; belief is necessary for salvation. So, let's go on to the next question.

2. Does God desire for people to be saved? The answer is obvious, "This is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior, who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth" (1 Timothy 2:4 NASB). Paul is sharing a very important truth; God desires for all people to be saved, and to have a complete knowledge of the truth. The Apostle Peter also discussed this by saying, "The Lord is not slow about His promise, as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing for any to perish but for all to come to repentance" (2 Peter 3:9 NASB).

So, there is no doubt, from a biblical point of view, salvation is produced by believing, and God desires for people to believe. Yet we must evaluate our ability to believe. Are we, in our natural state, our fallen nature, capable of believing? Is the unbeliever capable of believing, if he so chooses? Does God need to help us believe? These queries take us to our third principal question. We will also, at a later time, return to the issue of "all."

3. Is salvation by election? To answer this we must consider God's work before time began. Paul writes, "Blessed *be* the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly *places* in Christ, just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before Him. In love He predestined us to adoption as sons through Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the kind intention of His will..." (Ephesians 1:5 NASB). Luke records this statement, "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" (Acts 13:48 NASB). Please note the identity of those who were believing. "As many as had been appointed to eternal life believed." When writing to the Thessalonians, Paul explained, "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" (2 Thessalonians 2:13 NASB). Finally, we come to the words of Jesus in 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.**" So, we must answer our question by saying, Yes, salvation is by election. God initiates our salvation; He chooses us before we choose Him.

Now we are ready to face the core issue. **How do these truths relate?** Is salvation brought about by believing? Our answer is, "Yes!" Does God desire men to be saved? Again, our answer is, "Yes!" Is salvation by election; does God choose people for salvation? Again, we must answer with an affirmative response. However, how can we understand these truths in light of one another?

Our temptation is to emphasize one of these truths over the others. We will camp out on the issue of belief and forget the truth that God chooses. We could call it "cafeteria style" theology. We may emphasize God's work of election and ignore man's responsibility of belief. We will accept the fact that God wants all people to be saved and ignore the fact that the Bible says that He chooses some for salvation. While these tendencies are very human, they are also very dangerous. We'll see why later. Our goal remains the same, to allow the Bible to be our sole authority for establishing our faith and practice. That means we must accept that all three of these principles are equally true and important. We are saved by believing in Jesus. God desires people to be saved. God chooses some for salvation. How can we reconcile seemingly contradictory

principles? This, of course, is the question that serious Bible students must seek to answer.

Searching For Understanding in Church History

In the sixteenth century, two men, John Calvin and Jacob Arminius, grappled with these questions and devised ways of understanding these issues. While our objective is not to derive our faith from them, they do offer insight to guide us. We will do well to understand what they said and the ramifications of their doctrinal systems.

Jacob Arminius' teaching was rooted in a fourth-century heresy advanced by Palagius. *Palagianism* is the belief that man is saved by his works. This is still taught by several groups today, including Roman Catholics and Mormons.

John Calvin's teaching is summarized by five primary principles. They are the total depravity of man, unconditional election, limited atonement, irresistible grace and the perseverance of the saints. We'll briefly review the meaning of these later.

Theologians and denominations will lean toward one of these poles. That isn't to say that we must totally accept either extreme. I certainly don't. However, serious Bible students will definitely find themselves in one of the two camps.

What did John Calvin believe and teach? Calvin was one of the two most important figures in the Protestant Reformation. His famous work, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, is considered a truly groundbreaking theology, still enjoying a wide readership and admiration today. In fairly recent times, five points of his theology have been summarized into the acronym TULIP. TULIP stands for the principles of **T**otal depravity, **U**nconditional election, **L**imited atonement, **I**rrresistible grace, and **P**erseverance of the saints.

It is one thing to read these theological terms; it is something else to understand them. So, let's consider a surface meaning of each.

Total depravity is the view that humanity is so sinful that we cannot and will not seek God. Romans 3:10-11 says, "as it is written, 'there is none righteous, not even one;

there is none who understands, there is none who seeks for God; all have turned aside, together they have become useless; there is none who does good, there is not even one.” Thus, the Bible teaches that man is totally unable to seek a relationship with God. This is an important element in understanding Calvin’s view of election.

Unconditional election means God chose people for salvation, irrespective of merit or demerit. In other words, God chooses because he chooses. This is taken from a number of passages including, 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 9:11-12 says, “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, it was said to her, ‘The older will serve the younger.’” Romans 9:15-16 says, “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.” Ephesians 1:3-6 states, “Blessed *be* the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly *places* in Christ, {4} just 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.”

Limited atonement is the belief that Christ died for the elect. In Romans 3:25-26 Paul says of Christ,

whom 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; for 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.

Another way to say this is that Christ died for everyone, but His death is only effective for those God calls to Himself for salvation. This modification is given credence by Revelation 5:9, “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.” You will note here that Christ’s blood ransomed people from every tribe, He didn’t ransom every one of every tribe.

However, I find this aspect of Calvinism troubling. The Bible does teach that Christ died for the world. John 3:16 is the most well-known reference to this fact, as it says, “**For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish, but have eternal life.”**

Then we have the reverence of 2 Peter 2:1, “But false prophets also arose among the people, just as there will also be false teachers among you, who will secretly introduce destructive heresies, even denying the Master who bought them, bringing swift destruction upon themselves.” This passage refers to lost people and “the Master who bought them.” So we see Christ’s death for even the lost heretic.

Finally, we have 1 John 2:2 which says, “and He Himself is the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for *those of the whole world.*”

More **moderate Calvinists** believe that Christ potentially died for all, but the effect of His death is only upon those who believe, that is, on the elect. This seems to be a reasonable interpretation, and is in keeping with my personal convictions. One might object to this by asking, “If Christ died for everyone, how could anyone go to hell?” The answer to this is that God has provided atonement for all, but He has ordered that salvation becomes effective only for those who exercise faith in Jesus Christ. Deliverance from hell depends upon the atoning work of Christ, and on the reception of it. A person could starve to death in the middle of a grocery store. While the food was there, and plentiful, it must be taken and eaten to provide life.

Irresistible grace means those who God has called to Himself, will not resist that call. This does not mean that at a given point they won’t resist. We do resist, sometimes almost to the end of life. But irresistible grace means that when the final word is said, the chosen will accept Christ. Grace is the undeserved favor and acceptance of God. Irresistible means that God accomplishes the work of changing people that He sets out to do.

We see this concept in several passages. John 6:37 records Jesus as He says, “All that the Father gives Me shall come to Me, and the one who comes to Me I will certainly not cast out.” In John 6:44 He says, “No one can come to Me, unless the Father who sent Me draws him; and I will raise him up on the last day.” In John 10:16 He says, “And I have other sheep, which are not of this fold; I must bring them also, and they shall hear My voice; and they shall become one flock with one shepherd.” Paul writes, in Ephesians 2:10, “For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.” One must embrace the concept of irresistible grace if one believes in the total depravity of man. How else would a person desire God and believe?

Perseverance of the saints means once a person is truly saved, that person will always be saved, because salvation is the work of God, not the work of man. The Bible clearly teaches this in several ways. First, it teaches that we receive eternal life in Christ. Eternal means everlasting. John 3:16 says, “For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish, but have eternal life.” In John 3:36 it is written, “He who believes in the Son has eternal life; but he who does not obey the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him.” In John 5:24 Jesus says, “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.” 1 John 5:13 records these words, “These things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, in order that you may know that you have eternal life.” The gift of eternal life means just that, God gives you a life that will never end.

We also can accept the perseverance of the saints on the basis of 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.” Our salvation is really not “ours,” it is Christ’s. He will not lose what is His.

In John 10:28-29 Jesus said, “and I give eternal life to them, and they shall never perish; and no one shall snatch them out of My hand. {29} “My Father, who has given *them* to Me, is greater than all; and no one is able to snatch *them* out of the Father's hand.” So, here we find that, not only will He not lose them, no one will take those who belong to Christ.

Ephesians 1:13-14 says, “In 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.” Paul is saying here that we have security in our relationship with God because the Holy Spirit protects that relationship. These are but a few of the biblical references that teach the perseverance of the saints.

To recap, we are looking at the statements of John Calvin and Jacob Arminius, to seek help in understanding how three principal issues fit together: (a) Belief is necessary for salvation, (b) God desires all to be saved,(c) God elects some to salvation. We’ve seen what Calvin said on the subject; what about Arminius?

In the late sixteenth century Jacob Arminius rejected his Calvinistic training and established his own theology. *Arminianism* is just the opposite of Calvinism in each of the five key points. Rather than recognizing the total depravity of man, Arminianism believes that men cooperate with God in salvation. That is to say, we have a capacity to desire God and believe in Him, apart from God preparing us to do so. Arminius believed that man’s desire for God is the basis for becoming the elect of God. In other words, rather than unconditional election, Arminianism holds to the idea that God chooses because man believes. As for limited atonement, Arminius believed Christ died for all people, of all time and all places, rather than for the elect. The opposite of irresistible grace is the idea that God’s grace and call can be resisted by anyone. This is a firm belief of Arminius. Finally, Arminianism believes that we can loose our salvation. When the first four tenants of Arminianism are in place, the fifth must follow.

I find the Armenian doctrine of man’s free will the most disturbing. Armenians believe that man is not totally depraved. They feel that man’s free will enables him to cooperate with God in salvation by an act of man’s personal desire. While it is true that we have a responsibility to respond to the gospel message, it is fallacious to believe that we can do this out of our own will. Acts 13:48 says, “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.” Salvation doesn’t originate in our will; it begins with God. Acts 16:14 reads “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.” Lydia’s response was the work of God,

not her own will. In the hallmark teaching of Paul on this subject he writes, “For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; {9} not as a result of works, that no one should boast.” (Ephesians 2:8-9 NASB).

Equally concerning is the Armenian belief that God’s foreknowledge of man’s actions is the basis of election. They say that God looked down the corridor of time, saw who would believe and chose them to be saved. This teaching denies several important facts. First, it denies that God is omniscient. God doesn’t need to “look down the corridor of time,” nor does He need to find out who would believe. He already knows everything! Secondly, this Armenian belief denies the Greek lexical meaning of foreknowledge. Prognosis, that is foreknowledge, has to do with advanced planning, not advance information. Romans 11:2 says “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?” We clearly see here that God’s foreknowledge dealt with His plan regarding Israel. In 1 Peter 1:20 we read, “For He was foreknown before the foundation of the world, but has appeared in these last times for the sake of you.” This speaks of God’s eternal plan to send Jesus as the Savior. God’s foreknowledge deals with the design for the future, not investigative interests. Thus, Arminianism misses the mark in its attempt to reconcile the place of belief in salvation, the expressed will of God for people to be saved and the Doctrine of Election.

Today, entire denominations fall within the umbrellas of these two views. On the Arminianism side we have Methodists, Lutherans, Charismatics and Pentecostals. On the Calvinism side we find most Baptists, Evangelical Free Churches, most Bible Churches and many other evangelicals. Southern Baptist roots are certainly buried deep within the ground of Calvinism. W. B. Johnson, the first president of the SBC often spoke on the side of Calvinism. He was joined by R.B.C. Howell and Richard Fuller, the second and third presidents. The distinguished Southern Baptist theologians J. L. Dagg, J. P. Boyce, founder and first president of Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, and John Broadus, who was a highly revered professor of New Testament interpretation, all were clearly Calvinistic. B. H. Carroll, first president of Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary was a Calvinist. W.T. Conner, was a theology professor at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary. Few men were more beloved or more quoted. Conner wrote in *Christian Doctrine*:

But the Scriptures teach, not only that God has a general plan that is being carried out in human history, but also that God's purpose applies to the individual. When a man is saved he is not saved as a matter of chance or accident or fate; he is saved in pursuance of an eternal purpose of God. God saves men because he intends to. He saves a particular man, at a particular time, under a given set of circumstances, because he intends to. Election does not mean that God instituted a general plan of salvation and decreed that whosoever would should be saved and therefore the man who wills to be saved is elected in that he brings himself within the scope of God's plan. It is true God has decreed that whosoever will, shall be saved but election is something more specific and personal than that. It means that God has decreed to bring certain ones, upon whom his heart has been eternally set, who are the objects of his eternal love, to faith in Jesus as Savior. ¹

In more recent days, Southern Baptists created a general doctrinal statement known as *The Baptist Faith and Message*. Concerning salvation, the document states, "Election is the gracious purpose of God, according to which He regenerates, sanctifies and glorifies sinners."

This statement actually grows out of a document known as the *Fundamental Laws of the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary*, written into the seminary charter on April 30, 1858. This, too, is a doctrinal statement which says, regarding Providence, "God from eternity, decrees or permits all things that come to pass, and perpetually upholds, directs, and governs all creatures and all events; yet so as not in any wise to be the author or approver of sin nor to destroy the free will and responsibility of intelligent creatures." Concerning Election it reads, "Election is God's eternal choice of some persons unto everlasting life-not because of foreseen merit in them, but of his mere mercy in Christ-in consequence of which choice they are called, justified and glorified." In other words, in these documents we see the doctrines of the Total Depravity of Man, Unconditional Election and Irresistible Grace.

A Further Investigation into Biblical Application

Is salvation brought about by believing? Our answer is, “Yes!” Does God desire men to be saved? Again, our answer is, “Yes!” Is salvation by election; does God choose people for salvation? Again, we must answer with an affirmative response. We are discovering that the real issue is not so much if these three questions are true, but it is an issue of understanding how they fit together. So far in this study we have considered the biblical materials related to the truth of these questions. We’ve also investigated the historical teachings of Calvin and Arminius, to see their interpretations. Additionally, we’ve considered how denominational groups line up on the subject. Perhaps this would be a good time to return to the Bible itself. What further light can we find in it? Let’s consider Paul’s preaching; in it we will find application.

When we read the messages of Paul, we come to a glaring reality. Paul did not preach election, he preached the gospel. However, we should also understand that while Paul preached the gospel, he taught election. A study of Paul’s messages in Acts shows this truth. Paul never went into a town saying, “God elected only certain people to salvation.” When he went into a new city he preached that they should come to Christ. An example of this is found in Acts 13:38-39, “Therefore let it be known to you, brethren, that through Him forgiveness of sins is proclaimed to you, {39} and through Him everyone who believes is freed from all things, from which you could not be freed through the Law of Moses.” Paul continues this in Acts 14:21, “And after they had preached the gospel to that city and had made many disciples, they returned to Lystra and to Iconium and to Antioch...” Does this negate all the teaching Paul did, which is referenced above, on the subject of election? Of course not! Paul preached the gospel because we cannot know who will believe. Every person must be given the opportunity to accept or to reject the gospel.

Drawing Early Conclusions

The responsibility to believe, and the Doctrine of Election, are copiously taught in Scripture, with no indication of tension between the two. There may be tension in our minds, but not in the mind of God. This should be very helpful to us, in our desire to reconcile the fact that God wants people to believe and He chooses people for salvation. The work of God, and response of man, to salvation is often illustrated as walking

through a door. Over the door it says, “Whosoever Will May Come.” When you walk through the door, you turn around and see another sign, on the opposite side. It says, “Called Before The Foundation Of The World.” God gives to all the invitation to walk through the door, and gives, to the called, the faith to open the door. When we do, we realize that it was His eternal plan to see us through that door safely. This is the essence of Paul’s teaching on the subject.

Crucial Words Involved in the Doctrine of Election

Let’s consider now the biblical Greek terms that are used to support the above mentioned principles.

Eklegomai (εχλεγωμαι). This word appears twenty-three times in the New Testament. It is normally translated as “chosen” or “elect.” A few examples of the usage of this word include, 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.**”); John 13:18 (“**I do not speak of all of you. I know the ones I have chosen; but *it is* that the Scripture may be fulfilled, 'he who eats my bread has lifted up his heel against me.'”); Ephesians 1:4 (“Just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before Him. In love”). *Eklegomai* means to choose, select and to choose for oneself.² It always means selection from others, and implies choice for a purpose. God chooses us to save us, we do not choose Him. This choice happened prior to the creation of the world.**

Proginosko (προγινωσκω) is another crucial term regarding election. Translated “foreknowledge” it is used in Romans 8:28-29 in this way, “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. {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...” The important thing to note about this word is that it refers to more than the fact that God knows everything before it happens. It also speaks of God’s consent to and ordination of people. It is never used of what God foreknew; it is used only to speak of who He foreknew. We see this in, Matthew 7:23 “**And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from me, you who practice lawlessness.'”** The issue here is not that God was unfamiliar with this person, but rather that God did

not call them to salvation. In John 10:14, Jesus said, “**I am the good shepherd; and I know My own, and My own know Me....**” In this statement Jesus is saying that He not only knew them before their salvation but called them prior to their salvation. The Apostle Paul writes in 1 Corinthians 8:3, “but if anyone loves God, he is known by Him.” Again, *proginosko* means God “favorably, deliberately and freely chose and ordained.”³ As the great biblical linguist Gerhard Kittel puts it, the foreknowledge of God “means ‘advance knowledge.’”⁴ So, God didn’t discover who would accept Him and then elect them to salvation. Instead, the Bible teaches us that God chose and ordained people for Himself before time began. We see this even in our own experience. Can we say that we really know something without the ability to control it? Can I accurately say, “I know I’ll preach next Sunday morning?” Of course not. I’m scheduled to preach. I want to preach. However, I could get sick or hurt. So, I don’t really know that I’ll preach next Sunday. When the Bible says that God foreknew something, it is saying He has the ability to control what will happen. Anything short of that is, in effect, a denial of the Sovereignty of God over His universe, and His omniscience.

Prothesis (προθεσις) is a word relating to election. It refers to a determined plan or will. “It involves purpose, resolve and design.”⁵ Biblically, election has to do with the “plan, purpose, resolve, will...” of divine design.⁶ Paul uses it in 2 Timothy 1:9, “who has saved us, and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace which was granted us in Christ Jesus from all eternity...” This is a key verse for understanding election. Paul is saying the Lord saved us (past tense) and called us (past tense), not because of our own faith or good works, but because it was his resolve to do so. When did He do this? Paul says, “from all eternity” meaning in eternity past. This is indeed a very clear passage dealing with the Doctrine of Election, as set forth in this study.

Proorizo (προοριζω) describes God’s work of election in that it means “to determine or decree beforehand.” The word is sometimes translated in some form of “predestination.” We see this in, Romans 8:29-30, “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.” Here we are told that God decreed beforehand to call, that is to elect, individuals to salvation. In Ephesians 1:5 it says, “He predestined us to adoption as sons through Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the kind intention of His will...” Again we find that God

decreed beforehand that individuals would experience the “adoption as sons” and this would be because of “the kind intentions of His will.” Paul is saying that it is the work of God to will our salvation. He didn’t choose us because we are good, or because we would believe in Him. This was a matter of His own personal will.

Election: An Antinomy

I would suggest that the Bible undeniably teaches God’s election results in belief, yielding salvation. Yet, while these facts are established as biblical truth, we struggle with what seems to be an inconsistency. Our logic says that they can’t stand as equally true. How can salvation be by election and yet man has the responsibility to believe? How can God want man to be saved, yet elect only some to salvation. There seems to be a discrepancy here.

In reality, we do not have an inconsistency, we have an antinomy. An antinomy is an apparent conflict between clearly established biblical truths. The root of this conflict is human logic, not divine revelation. An example of this is the Doctrine of the Trinity. The Bible teaches that God the Father is God; God the Son is God and God the Spirit is God. The Bible also teaches that when you put them all together, they are not three Gods, they are one. Each is fully God, yet there is but one God. This is an antinomy. In human logic we may try to understand this through Tri-theism. However, if we do this, we are ignoring all the passages that say God is one. To achieve biblical balance, we must say, “God is one.” We must also agree that God the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit are distinct, yet one. We don’t try to promote either of these truths over another.

This is very important when we come to the Doctrine of Salvation. Does salvation occur by believing? Yes. Is man responsible for believing? Yes. Does God desire men to be saved? Yes. Does God elect some to salvation? Yes. Can we fully work this all out within the limits of our human logic? No. However, we must not promote one of these truths over another. If we do, we will achieve biblical imbalance. This is a dangerous state! It creates wrong beliefs and disunity.

Answers to Frequently Asked Questions

1. If this view of salvation is correct, doesn't it mean that even if you wanted to be saved, you couldn't if you're not chosen by God?

Answer: This question shows an inadequate understanding of the Doctrine of Total Depravity. Man, in his fallen nature, does not desire God and will not search for Him. The fact that a person wants to be saved shows that God has called him.

2. How can a God elect only some people to salvation?

Answer: It is harder to understand why He elects any! According to Ephesians 2:3 all people deserve eternal separation from God. God doesn't choose certain people to go to hell, that was their decision when they started rebelling against Him. The fact that God makes sure some people spend eternity with Him is a marvelous fact of grace.

3. If God is a God of love how could He elect only certain people to salvation?

Answer: God is also a God of righteous judgment. Unless you believe in Universalism, the belief that every human being is saved, then you believe that God's love is incredibly remarkable, but it does not limit His judgment of sin. It is not inconsistent with the character of God to enable people to receive Him and enjoy eternal life, because God's character includes righteousness and judgment. I should mention here that Universalism is heresy and completely without biblical justification.

4. How should we understand, "I will draw all men to myself" (John 12:32)?

Answer: As mentioned on page one, "all" almost always means "all of a class" or "all of a type" not "all humanity." The context of these few verses reveal that the "all" is referring to those people God has called to Himself.

5. Doesn't the Doctrine of Irresistible Grace conflict with man's free will?

Answer: The Bible never says that man's will is free of outside influences. A person is only as free as his nature is free. His will is limited to that which is within his nature. Paul writes in 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." Does that sound like "free will"? No, we can't will to know, or believe, spiritual things. These things must be revealed to us, changing our natures, and then we are empowered to believe. Thus, the unsaved person can only choose what his lost nature allows him to choose. Since we, in our fallen natures, are totally incapable of desiring God, we have no free will to do so. The fact that God moves within our will, and creates a desire for Him, is not a violation of free will, it is a reprieve from a depraved will.

6. Who does the work of election?

Answer: "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." (2 Thessalonians 2:13 NASB). God performs the work of election.

7. When was the election done?

Answer: "Just 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...." (Ephesians 1:4-5 NASB). "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." (John 17:24 NASB). "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." (2 Thessalonians 2:13 NASB). "And all who dwell on the earth will worship him, *everyone* whose name has not been written from the foundation of the

world in the book of life of the Lamb who has been slain.” (Revelation 13:8 NASB).
Election occurred prior to creation.

8. Why was the electing done?

Answer: It is done because of the desires of God. “He predestined us to adoption as sons through Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the kind intention of His will.” (Ephesians 1:5 NASB). Paul again writes, “also we have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to His purpose who works all things after the counsel of His will.” (Ephesians 1:11 NASB).

9. Who are the “whoever” of John 3:16? “For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that **whoever** believes in Him should not perish, but have eternal life.”

Answer: As we’ve already discovered, when the Bible uses the term “all” (pas, pasa, pan), or as it is sometimes translated, “whoever” or “whosoever,” it almost always is speaking of everyone in a group, class or category. When “all” the people of Jerusalem came out to be baptized John the Baptist, the Bible is saying all the different kinds of people came, not every human being came. The “whoever” of John 3:16, refers to everyone in the category described in the rest of the New Testament as able to believe. They are, “All that the Father gives Me shall come to Me, and the one who comes to Me I will certainly not cast out.” (John 6:37 NASB). “But you do not believe, because you are not of My sheep. {27} ‘My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me...’ (John 10:26-27 NASB). “Even as Thou gavest Him authority over all mankind, that to all whom Thou hast given Him, He may give eternal life.” (John 17:2 NASB). “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...” (John 17:9 NASB). “I do not ask in behalf of these alone, but for those also who believe in Me through their word...” (John 17:20 NASB). “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.” (John 17:24 NASB).

10. What did Peter mean when he said, “The Lord is not slow about His promise, as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing for any to perish but for all to come to repentance” (2 Peter 3:9 NASB).

Answer: He meant the same thing Paul did in 1 Timothy 2:4, “who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.” Paul said something similar in Romans 11:32, “For God has shut up all in disobedience that He might show mercy to all.” These verses can be understood in three ways. Some accept the teaching of Universalism, the false belief that every human being is saved by Christ’s death, burial and resurrection. How do we know this is a false belief? Because the Bible is most clear about the fact that we must accept Christ personally, to receive salvation. Others believe these verses teach that the references to “all” means every human being can accept Christ if they will just choose to do so. How do we know this cannot be the correct interpretation? Because the huge number of passages that say God enables and empowers people to believe, and then calls them to Himself. We also reject this teaching because man has a fallen will, which must be enabled by God to choose Christ. The third option is that these verses refer to all those whom God has elected. In this case, the “all” again refers to all of those God calls to Himself. If you look at the teaching of the New Testament as a whole, you are drawn to this third meaning. Additionally, we can tell from the context of the passages that this is the meaning. Both of the epistles of Peter were written to, “...those who reside as aliens, scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia, who are chosen 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” (1 Peter 1:1-2 NASB). The fact that God doesn’t desire for any of His elect to perish should give us great security.

11. If election is sure, does this mean that Christians have no need to witness?

Answer: This question must be addressed on two levels. First, we must not develop our theology around pragmatism. Even if election destroyed evangelism, which it does not, the doctrine still must be accepted. Second, as mentioned above, Paul believed in election, but was fervent in his evangelistic efforts. He said,

Therefore if any man is in Christ, *he is* a new creature; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come. Now all *these* things are

from God, who reconciled us to Himself through Christ, and gave us the ministry of reconciliation, namely, 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. Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were entreating through us; we beg you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God. He made Him who knew no sin *to be* sin on our behalf, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him (2 Corinthians 5:17-21 NASB).

No one knows who will come to Christ, so we must passionately share the Gospel with all people. Remember, Paul did not preach election, he preached Christ.

Illustrating God's Work of Salvation

And they passed through the Phrygian and Galatian region, having been forbidden by the Holy Spirit to speak the word in Asia; and when they had come to Mysia, they were trying to go into Bithynia, and the Spirit of Jesus did not permit them; and passing by Mysia, they came down to Troas. 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." And 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. Therefore putting out to sea from Troas, we ran a straight course to Samothrace, and on the day following to Neapolis; and from there to Philippi, which is a leading city of the district of Macedonia, a *Roman* colony; and we were staying in this city for some days. And on the Sabbath day we went outside the gate to a riverside, where we were supposing that there would be a place of prayer; and we sat down and began speaking to the women who had assembled. 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. And 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 (Acts 16:6-15 NASB).

Here we have a wonderful story of God bringing a person to salvation. Those who object to the Doctrine of Election are concerned about how God could reach all those He has chosen. They ask, “Is it not our responsibility to spread the Gospel?” Paul answers this question by saying,

And they passed through the Phrygian and Galatian region, having been forbidden by the Holy Spirit to speak the word in Asia; and when they had come to Mysia, they were trying to go into Bithynia, and the Spirit of Jesus did not permit them; and passing by Mysia, they came down to Troas. 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” (Acts 16:6-9).

Paul and Timothy were “forbidden by the Holy Spirit to speak the word in Asia.” While that might seem strange to us, we must realize that God delivers the message of salvation in an intentional way. At times, God will obstruct the message. To further develop this idea, again Luke says, “and when they had come to Mysia, they were trying to go into Bithynia, and the Spirit of Jesus did not permit them.” We very clearly see here that God works behind the scenes, bringing the Gospel to those whom He has planned to hear it.

How did God get Paul and Timothy where God wanted them to go? Luke writes, “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’” (Acts 16:9 NASB). Of course, God does not always lead in such a dramatic way. However, this was a most unique moment in the history of the world. The paradigm was about to experience a major shift. Never before had the Gospel been taken to Europe. To open this continent to the message of salvation, God gave Paul a vision of a Macedonian man, who was literally pleading for help. What happened then? Luke continues the narrative, “And 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 16:10 NASB). Paul understood God’s leadership and obeyed Him.

So far in this illustration we have observed three principles of God’s work in salvation. First, God placed the desire to preach the message of salvation in Paul and Timothy’s hearts. Second, God would not allow them to share the Gospel in two locations. He is

the one who initiates the effective delivery of the Gospel. Third, God brought them to the place He planned for them to proclaim the message.

But what does God do in the life of those who receive Christ? What part does He play in their salvation? Luke says,

Therefore putting out to sea from Troas, we ran a straight course to Samothrace, and on the day following to Neapolis; and from there to Philippi, which is a leading city of the district of Macedonia, a *Roman* colony; and we were staying in this city for some days. And on the Sabbath day we went outside the gate to a riverside, where we were supposing that there would be a place of prayer; and we sat down and began speaking to the women who had assembled. 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 (Acts 16:11-14 NASB).

This passage is a wonderful example of election. When Paul reached Philippi, God brought him into contact with a business woman named Lydia. God had already been working in Lydia's heart. Luke calls her "a worshiper of God." That means she had a reverence for God, however she was not yet a Christian. But God had chosen Lydia, before the foundation of the world, so He empowered Paul to preach the message of salvation to her. Then, Luke writes, "and the Lord opened her heart to respond to the things spoken by Paul..." (Acts 16:14). Lydia didn't open her own heart to respond. She didn't make some sovereign choice to come to Christ. God opened her heart to respond, and she received what she had already been given.

Is salvation a work of God or of man? Salvation is of God! Lydia's case is a microcosm of every salvation experience. God works behind the scenes to bring the Gospel to us. God also moves in our hearts to respond to the message, however it is delivered. Before the foundation of the world God planned our salvation. Some 2,000 years ago, Christ died to provide our salvation. Then the Holy Spirit brings us the message, anoints the delivery of the message and convicts us to respond to the message. Salvation is truly the work of God, from beginning to end.

Final Considerations

Every person has the responsibility to believe in Christ. Some will; unfortunately, some will not. God desires for people to receive Christ and experience the joys of eternal life. Some will; unfortunately, some will not. We, in our fallen, unregenerate natures do not have the capacity to desire God. We are totally depraved! Yet God, out of inconceivable love, has chosen a people for Himself. Why? Not because they deserved it, desired it, earned it or ought to receive it. This was the sovereign choice of an omniscient God. The death of Christ atoned for the sins of the world, but the results of that atonement are realized by those God has called to Himself. When they, through God's grace, His awesome work of empowering faith, receive Christ, they receive the forgiveness of sin and an everlasting relationship with Him. Could they resist God's choice? They won't, because they will not desire to resist. God enters an eternally secure relationship with those who believe. Salvation is the work of God. Isn't it amazing that He never fails to show up for work! Can any person fully appreciate all of this, or understand it all? No; but God does.

Amazing grace! how sweet the sound,
That saved a wretch like me!
I once was lost, but now am found,
Was blind, but now I see.

'Twas grace that taught my heart to fear,
And grace my fears relieved:
How precious did that grace appear,
The hour I first believed!

Through many dangers, toils and snares,
I have already come:
'Tis grace has brought me safe thus far,
And grace will lead me home.

The Lord has promised good to me,
His word my hope secures:
He will my shield and portion be,
As long as life endures.

when this heart and flesh shall fail,
And mortal life shall cease:
I shall possess, within the vale,
A life of joy and peace.

The earth shall soon dissolve like snow,
The sun forbear to shine:
But God who called me here below,
Will be forever mine.

—John Newton

Key Terms Related To Salvation⁷

Term	Biblical References	Definition
Election	Matt 22:14; Acts 13:48; 2 Thess 2:13	God's unconditional and loving calling of a people to Himself.
Omniscience	Ps 139:1-4; Rom 11:33; Heb 4:13	God's full knowledge of Himself and His creation.
Foreknowledge	Acts 2:23; Rom 8:29; 11:2; Eph 1:5	More than just knowing what will happen, foreknowledge includes God's work of causing things to occur.
Predestination	Rom 8:28-29	This deals with God's work among those He calls to Himself. Specifically, predestination relates to conforming believers to the image of Christ.
Calling	General: Matt 22:14; Jn 3:16-18 Effectual: Jn 6:44; Rom 8:28-31; 1 Cor 1:23-24	General: The call of God inviting all to receive Christ. Effectual: The application of the Gospel, by the Spirit, to the elect, resulting in salvation.
Salvation	Jn 3:16-17; 6:37; Acts 4:12	The result of election. Salvation is the full measure of all God's work in delivering us from sin. Salvation is the work of God, not man. (Eph 2:8-9; Romans 9:12-16.

Reprobation	Isaiah 6:9-10; Rom 9:27; 11:7	The expression of God's divine justice in condemning sinners to separation from Himself.
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At the Moment of Salvation

What has God done in providing salvation? As the believer experiences salvation, he experiences at least 37 different aspects of God's work. Understanding that work provides a solid foundation for growing in faith. The following is adapted from the writings of Lewis Sperry Chafer.⁸

1. A believer is in the **ETERNAL PLAN OF GOD**, sharing the destiny of the Lord Jesus Christ. As such the believer is:
 - a. Elected: Matthew 22:14; Romans 8:33; Colossians 3:12; 1 Thessalonians 1:4; Titus 1:1; 1 Peter 1:2; 2:4
 - b. Foreknown: Acts 2:23; Romans 8:29; 1 Peter 1:2
 - c. Predestined: Romans 8:29, 30; Ephesians 1:5,11
 - d. Called: 1 Thessalonians 5:24

2. The believer is **RECONCILED**:
 - a. By God, 2 Corinthians 5:18; Colossians 1:20
 - b. To God, Romans 5:10; 2 Corinthians 5:20; Ephesians 2:14f.

3. The believer is **REDEEMED** (purchased from the slave market of sin): Romans 3:24; Colossians 1:14; 1 Peter 1:18; Ephesians 1:7.

4. The believer is **REMOVED FROM CONDEMNATION**: John 3:18; 5:24; Romans 8:1.

5. The believer is **UNDER GRACE AND NOT UNDER JUDGMENT** (Doctrine of propitiation): Romans 3:24-28; 1 John 2:2.

6. The believer's sins are **JUDGED BY THE SPIRITUAL DEATH OF CHRIST** on the Cross: Romans 4:25; Ephesians 1:7; 1 Peter 2:24.

7. The believer is **MADE DEAD TO THE OLD LIFE AND ALIVE UNTO GOD**. He is:
 - a. Crucified with Christ: Romans 6:6; Galatians 2:20
 - b. Dead with Christ: Romans 6:8; Colossians 3:3; 1 Peter 2:24
 - c. Buried with Christ: Romans 6:4; Colossians 2:12
 - d. Risen with Christ: Romans 6:4; Colossians 3:1

 8. The believer is **FREE FROM THE LAW**: Romans 6:14; 7:4,6; 2 Corinthians 3:11; Galatians 3:25.

 9. The believer is **ADOPTED** (placed as an adult heir in the family of God): Romans 8:15; 8:23; Ephesians 1:5.

 10. The believer is **JUSTIFIED** (declared righteous): Romans 3:24; 5:1,9; 8:30; 1 Corinthians 6:11; Titus 3:7

 11. The believer is **REGENERATED** (born spiritually into the family of God): John 13:10; 1 Corinthians 6:11; Titus 3:5. In regeneration the believers are:
 - a. Born Again: John 3:7; 1 Peter 1:23
 - b. Children of God: Galatians 3:26
 - c. Sons of God: John 1:12; 2 Corinthians 6:18; 1 John 3:2
 - d. New Creations: 2 Corinthians 5:17; Galatians 6:15; Ephesians 2:10

 12. The believer is **MADE ACCEPTABLE TO GOD**: Ephesians 1:6; 1 Peter 2:5. To make a believer acceptable to Himself, God sees to it that the believer is:
 - a. Made righteous: Romans 3:22; 1 Corinthians 1:30; 2 Corinthians 5:21; Philippians 3:9
 - b. Sanctified positionally: 1 Corinthians 1:30; 6:11
 - c. Perfected forever: Hebrews 10:14
 - d. Made qualified: Colossians 1:12

 13. The believer is **FORGIVEN ALL TRESPASSES**: Ephesians 1:7; 4:32; Colossians 1:14; 2:13; 3:13

 14. The believer is **MADE "NIGH"** (heavenly citizenship based on Reconciliation): Luke 10:20; Ephesians 2:13,19; Philippians 3:20
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15. The believer is **DELIVERED FROM THE KINGDOM OF SATAN**: Colossians 1:13; 2:15
 16. The believer is **TRANSFERRED INTO GOD'S KINGDOM**: Colossians 1:13
 17. The believer is **PLACED ON A SECURE FOUNDATION**: 1 Corinthians 3:11; 10:4; Ephesians 2:20
 18. The believer is **A GIFT FROM GOD THE FATHER TO THE LORD JESUS CHRIST**: John 10:20; 17:2, 6, 9, 11, 12, 24
 19. The believer **IS DELIVERED FROM THE POWER OF THE SIN NATURE**: Romans 2:29; Philippians 3:3; Colossians 2:11
 20. The believer **IS APPOINTED AS A PRIEST, UNTO GOD**: 1 Peter 2:5,9; Revelation 1:6
 21. The believer is **UNDER THE CARE OF GOD AS A CHOSEN GENERATION** and a protected people: Titus. 2:14; 1 Peter 2:9
 22. The believer is **GIVEN ACCESS TO GOD**: Romans 5:2; Ephesians 2:18; Hebrews 4:14,16; 10:19,20
 23. The believer is **WITHIN THE "MUCH MORE" CARE OF GOD**; as such we are:
 - a. Objects of His love: Ephesians 2:4; 5:2
 - b. Objects of His Grace: for salvation, Ephesians 2:8,9; for keeping, Romans 5:2; 1 Peter 1:5; for service, John 17:18; Ephesians 4:7; for instruction, Titus 2:12
 - c. Objects of His power: Ephesians 1:19; Philippians 2:13
 - d. Objects of His faithfulness: Philippians 1:6; Hebrews 13:5
 - e. Objects of His peace: John 14:27
 - f. Objects of His consolation: 2 Thessalonians 2:16
 - g. Objects of His intercession: Romans 8:34; 7:25; 9:24
 24. The believer is **PART OF CHRIST'S INHERITANCE**: Ephesians 1:18
 25. The believer is **A BENEFICIARY OF THE INHERITANCE** from God (an heir of God and a joint-heir with the Lord Jesus Christ): Romans 8:17; Ephesians 1:14;
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Colossians 3:24; Hebrews 9:15; 1 Peter 1:4

26. The believer has a **NEW POSITION IN CHRIST**: Ephesians 2:6; Colossians 3:4; 1 Corinthians 1:9; 3:9; 2 Corinthians 3:3, 6; 5:20; 6:1,4
27. The believer is the **RECIPIENT OF ETERNAL LIFE**: John 3:15; 10:28; 20:31; 1 John 5:11, 12
28. The believer is a **MEMBER OF THE FAMILY OF GOD**: Galatians 6:10; Ephesians 2:19
29. The believer is **LIGHT IN THE LORD**: Ephesians 5:8; 1 Thessalonians 5:4
30. The believer is **UNITED WITH THE FATHER**: 1 Thessalonians 1:1, cf. Ephesians 4:6
31. The believer is **UNITED WITH CHRIST**: John 14:20, cf. Colossians 1:27
- a. A member of His Body: 1 Corinthians 12:13
 - b. A Branch in the Vine: John 15:5
 - c. A Stone in the Building: Ephesians 2:21,22
 - d. A Sheep in the Flock: Ephesians 2:21,22
 - e. A part of His Bride: Ephesians 5:25-27
 - f. A Priest in His Kingdom: 1 Peter 2:9
 - g. A Saint of the new life: 2 Corinthians 5:17
32. He is **UNITED WITH THE HOLY SPIRIT** Romans 8:9; 8:29
33. The believer is the **RECIPIENT OF THE MINISTRY OF THE HOLY SPIRIT**.
- a. Born of the Spirit: John 3:6
 - b. Baptized by the Spirit: 1 Corinthians 12:13
 - c. Indwelt by the Spirit: John 7:39; Romans 5:5; 8:9; 1 Corinthians 3:16; 6:19;
 - a. Galatians 4:6; 1 John 3:24
 - d. Sealed by the Spirit: 2 Corinthians 1:22; Ephesians 4:30
 - e. Recipient of Spiritual Gifts: 1 Corinthians 12:11; 12:27-31; 13:1,2
34. The believer is **GLORIFIED IN CHRIST**: Romans 3:20
35. The believer is made **COMPLETE IN CHRIST**: Colossians 2:10

36. The believer is the **POSSESSOR OF EVERY SPIRITUAL BLESSING**: Ephesians 1:3

37. The believer has **ACCESS TO ALL BIBLE TRUTH** through the work of the Spirit:
1 Corinthians 1-2

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Notes

¹ Conner, Walter Thomas, B.D., Ph.D., D.D. *Christian Doctrine* (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1937), p. 155.

² Zodhiates, Spiros Th.D. *The Complete Word Study Dictionary* (Chattanooga: AMG Publishers, 1994), p. 544.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 1216.

⁴ Kittel, Gerhard *Theological Dictionary Of The New Testament*, Trans. by Geoffrey W. Bromiley, D. Litt., D.D. Volume 1, (Grand Rapids: WM. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1983), p. 716.

⁵ Zodhiates, Spiros Th.D., *The Complete Word Study Dictionary* (Chattanooga: AMG Publishers, 1994), p. 1219.

⁶ Arndt, William and Gingrich, F. Wilbur, *A Greek-English Lexicon Of The New Testament* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1957), p. 713.

⁷ House, Wayne, *Charts Of Christian Theology* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1992), p. 91. (Adapted from House's excellent work.)

⁸ Chafer, Lewis Sperry, D.D., Litt. D., Th.D. *Systematic Theology*, Volume III, Soteriology (Dallas: Dallas Seminary Press), 1948, p.p. 234-265.