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Section: Doctrine of Salvation (Soteriology)

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**HANDOUT NOTES**

* **Introduction**

There is a tendency *in our flesh* to lean too hard on human rationale or feelings *instead* of the authority of the eternal holy word of God.

If we are to be faithful Christians, we need to acknowledge the full authority of the Bible—the full authority of what God has said about all things—and submit to God, conforming to His image, *not* trying to make Him conform to our ideas.

A right view of Soteriology shapes so much about how we view and worship God and testify of His life-changing gospel to others.

**Q77. Why did God ordain creation and the plan of salvation?**

God ordained creation and the plan of salvation for the display of His glory, highlighting especially His grace and power.

Scripture teaches the primary reason that God is, and acts, and saves is in accordance with His will and *ultimately* for His sake and His glory, and not ours.

**Romans 11:36** For from him and through him and to him are all things. To him be glory forever. Amen.

**Ezekiel 36:22**“…Thus says the Lord God: It is not for your sake, O house of Israel, that I am about to act, but for the sake of my holy name…”

Creation is God’s creation. God owns everything and as Owner-Creator, He may do what He wills with creation.

Everything that exists, including our lives, exists ultimately for the glory of God.

**Romans 9:16-17a** So then it depends not on human will or exertion, but on God, who has mercy. For the Scripture says to Pharaoh, “For this very purpose I have raised you up…

**Romans 9:17b**…that I might show my power in you, and that my name might be proclaimed in all the earth.”

**Romans 9:19-23**

**Q78. Who will be saved?**

Only those whom God has chosen for salvation—the elect—will be saved.

**Q79. When did God choose individuals for salvation?**

Based on His will alone, in love, God chose and predestined each of the elect before creation.

* **Election and Predestination**

**Unconditional Individual Election:** Before creation existed, God chose which individual human beings would receive salvation from sin, death, and God’s eternal wrath. This choice to redeem certain ones is not based on any so-called goodness, will, or work in them; rather, it is based on the freedom and grace of God in Christ Jesus alone.

**Predestination**: In love, based on the perfect will of the Triune God, the destiny of salvation unto eternal life for God’s chosen people was planned and ordained from start to end before creation began. Predestination is not based on foreseen deeds or faith in anyone; it is based on God’s will alone.

Before creation, God chose *who* specifically He would save from all of humanity, and this choice was *unto salvation*; the choice was made in such a way that *destined* these individuals for sure salvation: eternal life in blessed communion with God.

Unconditional Individual Election highlights *the choosing of specific persons* based on *God’s will alone*.

Predestination highlights that the *destiny of salvation unto eternal life* was planned and ordained for this elected—chosen— people *before time began*.

Unconditional means there are no conditions and were no conditions **in a person** that influenced or caused this choice of God.

Individual is in our term because God sovereignly choses *specific individuals*, loving them *in a personal way*. The elect are **not** a particular group (such as a national or ethnic group) and they are not haphazardly or indifferently chosen. The elect consist of actual persons from all tribes, tongues, and nations, who were known by God, and in time, sought, *and brought into the unified body of Christ* because of God’s eternal love for each of them individually and them being individually chosen by God before time began.

**Romans 9:6-8**

**Romans 9:9-13**

To argue against God’s right to elect, His right to choose, is to argue against God! It is to try to fit God into our box and to reason in our finite minds how it works or should be. This is arrogance at its best. Instead, may we humble ourselves and submit to God’s revealed will as to how He has chosen to do these things with His creation!

* **Examples of Election in the Old Testament**

**Psalm 105:43 …his chosen ones…**

**Deuteronomy 7:6** “For you are a people holy to the LORD your God. The LORD your God has chosen you to be a people for his treasured possession, out of all the peoples who are on the face of the earth. **(cf. Deut. 14:2)**

* **Examples of Election in the New Testament**

**Luke 1:15c**

The redeemed are those who were **“chosen of God”** (Col. 3:12; cf. 1 Cor. 1:27; 2 Thess. 2:13; 2 Tim. 2:10; Titus 1:1; 1 Pet. 1:1; 2:9; 5:13; Rev. 17:14)

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

**1 Thessalonians 1:4** For we know, brothers loved by God, that he has chosen you

**2 Thessalonians 2:13** But we ought always to give thanks to God for you, brothers beloved by the Lord, because God chose you as the first fruits to be saved, through sanctification by the Spirit and belief in the truth.

**2 Timothy 2:10** Therefore I endure everything for the sake of the elect, that they also may obtain the salvation that is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory.

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

**Matthew 22:14** For many are called, but few are chosen.

**Romans 8:33 (NASB 1995)** “Who will bring a charge against God's elect?"…

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

**Ephesians 1:4** even as he [God] **chose** us [the elect] in him **before the foundation of the world** that we should be holy and blameless before him…

**Ephesians 1:4c-5** In love he [God] **predestined** us for adoption as sons through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of his will

**Ephesians 1:6** to the praise of his glorious grace…

**Ephesians 1:7-11**

**2 Timothy 1:8-9 (NASB)**Therefore do not be ashamed of the testimony of our Lord or of me His prisoner, but join with me in suffering for the gospel according to the power of God,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*

**Revelation 13:7-8 (NIV)** It was given power to wage war against God’s holy people and to conquer them. And it was given authority over every tribe, people, language and nation. All inhabitants of the earth will worship the beast—**all whose names have not been written in the Lamb’s book of life, the Lamb who was slain from the creation of the world.**

**Revelation 17:8** The beast that you saw was, and is not, and is about to rise from the bottomless pit and go to destruction. And the dwellers on earth whose names have not been written in the book of life from the foundation of the world will marvel to see the beast, because it was and is not and is to come.

If you are of God’s chosen ones, your name was unchangeably written in Christ’s book of salvation before the foundation of the world!

**2 Timothy 1:9 (NIV)** He has saved us and called us to a holy life—not because of anything we have done but because of his own purpose and grace. This grace was given us in Christ Jesus before the beginning of time,

* **God Had Paul Address the Objection of Our Flesh**

**Romans 9:19**You will say to me then, “Why does he [God] still find fault? For who can resist his [God’s] will?”

**Romans 9:20-21** But who are you, O man, to answer back to God? Will what is molded say to its molder, “Why have you made me like this?” Has the potter no right over the clay, to make out of the same lump one vessel for honorable use and another for dishonorable use?

God’s position and ways should never be questioned.

**Romans 8:28** And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose.

**Romans 8:29-30** For those whom he [God] foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the firstborn among many brothers. And those whom he predestined he also called, and those whom he called he also justified, and those whom he justified he also glorified.

* **Rightly Understanding “Foreknew”**

In Scripture, the words "know/knew" and "foreknow/foreknew" *sometimes* mean "choose" or "set favor upon" or "intimately loved."

Based on how the words "know/knew" and "foreknow/foreknew" are sometimes used in Scripture and based on who God is, how He makes decrees, and how He works, we know that the word foreknew here means: *chose (elected) in love*. God has had eternal love for specific individuals, and this is an *electing love* that equaled them being *predestined unto salvation*.

This election was decreed before creation and was **not** based on any foreseen faith or so-called good deeds in any humans, rather it is based on God’s will alone.

For further study: Romans 11:1–2; Amos 3:1–2; Genesis 18:17–19; Hosea 13:4–5; Matthew 7:23; 1 Corinthians 8:3; 2 Timothy 2:16–19

The misunderstanding of the word asserts that God looked into the future to observe the actions of humans, saw and learned who would choose Him, and in response to that He affirmed who would be saved and decreed such things to happen.

This unbiblical idea means the choice wasn’t first or truly God’s to make; the choice to elect persons was *dependent* upon God learning about the future actions of humans and basing His decree and actions upon that information.

**1689 Confession of Faith:** “[God’s] decree of anything is not based on foreseeing it in the future.”

God is eternally omniscient.

In Himself, God has always had pure and complete knowledge. The unbiblical idea of God looking into the future before creation to see who would choose Him requires God to learn something. This is categorically impossible.

A person can only have saving faith in Jesus because God first chose him/her (before time began) and then, in time, God causes him/her to have this faith. Biblically, this order cannot be altered.

God is eternally sovereign.

**Isaiah 46:9-10**

**1689 Confession of Faith:** “God has decreed in himself, from all eternity, by the most wise and holy counsel of his own will, freely and unchangeably, all things, whatsoever comes to pass.”

Therefore, the reality of someone believing is because God decreed it *apart from any foreseen faith or so-called good deeds in any humans*.

God is eternally immutable. God, in His being, perfections, purposes, ordinations, and promises, does not change in any way. He has always been and will always be exactly the same.

God’s eternal choice in eternity past didn’t come about by learning or seeing something outside of Him. He made His eternal choice based on His omniscience, wisdom, sovereignty, etc., and this choice is unchanging. It cannot change because God cannot change.

We cannot reject who God is, how He makes decrees, and how He works in order to accept an idea that seems more palatable to us or others.

* **Application**
* **How do we rest in the fact that God chooses some to be saved by His grace unto eternal life and others to remain in their sin guilt to receive his eternal wrath, especially when it comes to people we dearly love like parents, siblings or children?**

All of this creation belongs to Him and exists for His glory. That means, my life and my dearly beloved family’s life exists to glorify God.

God will be glorified for His grace for those whom He has saved to glory and God will be glorified for His justice and His wrath over people who are guilty in their sin.

**Romans 9:20-23**

* **How do I know if I am Elect?**

You know who the elect are because they have saving faith in Jesus! True saving faith only exists in those God has chosen, and subsequently gifted saving faith to.

**John 6:39** “And this is the will of him who sent me, that I should lose nothing of all that he has given me, but raise it up on the last day.”

* **How does the fact that God chooses affect our efforts of Evangelism?**

**1689 Confession of Faith:** By God’s decree, and for the demonstration of his glory, some human beings and angels are predestined (or foreordained) to eternal life through Jesus Christ, to the praise of his glorious grace. Others are left to live in their sin, leading to their just condemnation, to the praise of his glorious justice.

These predestined and foreordained angels and people are individually and unchangeably designated, and their number is so certain and definite that it cannot be either increased or decreased.

Those people who are predestined to life were chosen by God before the foundation of the world, according to His eternal and unchangeable purpose and the secret counsel and good pleasure of His will. He chose them in Christ for eternal glory, purely as a result of His free grace and love, without anything else about them serving as a condition or cause moving him to do so.

Just as God has appointed the elect to glory, so He has by the eternal and completely free purpose of His will foreordained all the means. Therefore, those who are elected, being fallen in Adam, are redeemed by Christ and effectually called to faith in Christ by his Spirit working at the appropriate time. They are justified, adopted, sanctified, and kept by His power through faith to salvation. No one but the elect are redeemed by Christ, or effectually called, justified, adopted, sanctified, and saved.

The doctrine of the high mystery of predestination is to be handled with special prudence and care so that those heeding the will of God revealed in His Word and obeying Him may be assured of their eternal election by the certainty of their effectual calling. In this way this doctrine will give reasons for praise, reverence, and admiration of God, as well as humility, diligence, and rich comfort to all who sincerely obey the gospel.