

Salvation: The Amazing Grace of God (part 2)

"Life Foundations: Christian Faith Essentials", Part 14

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THE BIG IDEA: SALVATION IS THE AMAZING WORK OF GOD'S GRACE ON BEHALF OF A SINNER WHO TURNS TO HIM IN GENUINE FAITH!

Studying The Deeper Aspects Of Salvation

I) THE EVENTS (OR ORDER) OF SALVATION: WHAT TOOK PLACE IN SALVATION

1st) **CONVICTION**: God's work in showing us our sin through.

"When he comes, he will convict the world of guilt in regard to sin and righteousness and judgment: in regard to sin, because men do not believe in me; in regard to righteousness, because I am going to the Father, where you can see me no longer; and in regard to judgment, because the prince of this world now stands condemned."

(John 16:8-11, NIV)

2nd) **CALLING**: God's work in offering us His life through.

"For many are called, but few are chosen."

(Matthew 22:14, NASB)

"To the church of God in Corinth, to those sanctified in Christ Jesus and called to be holy, together with all those everywhere who call on the name of our Lord Jesus Christ – their Lord and ours..." (1 Corinthians 1:2, NIV)

3rd) **FAITH**: God's work in saving us from sin through.

"For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith— and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God."

(Ephesians 2:8, NIV)

4th) **REGENERATION**: God's work in making us new inside through.

"...he saved us, not because of righteous things we had done, but because of his mercy. He saved us through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit..."

(Titus 3:5, NIV)

II) THE DOCTRINE OF ELECTION: HOW SALVATION TOOK PLACE

1) The major terms:

a) **"Election"**: God's free choice of individuals to receive salvation based on His own good pleasure.

b) **"Predestination"**: God's work of pre-planning or prearranging a specific destiny in advance.

c) **"Foreknowledge"**: God's advance knowledge of what will happen, yet tied to predestination.

2) The historical background: “Calvinism” vs. “Arminianism”

a) **“Calvinism”**: Named after John Calvin (1509-1564) the French protestant reformer.

b) **“Arminianism”**: Named after Jacob Arminius (1560-1609) a former Calvinist.

c) Comparing the “five points” of each:

Arminianism	Calvinism
Free will or Human ability: Man has a free will that is able to believe	Total depravity: Man is unable of himself to “savingly” believe
Conditional election: God elects based on foreseeing who’d believe	Unconditional election: God in His wisdom chose certain individuals for salvation
General atonement: Christ died to pay for the world’s sins	Limited atonement: Christ died to pay for the sins of the elect only
Effectual call resistible: The Holy Spirit’s inward call can be resisted	Irresistible grace: The Holy Spirit irresistibly and inevitably draws the elect
Fall from grace: Believers can lose their salvation thru failing	Perseverance of the Saints: The elect are eternally saved and kept by God’s power
Summary: Salvation is accomplished through combined efforts of God’s initiative and man’s response with man’s response as the deciding factor	Summary: Salvation is accomplished wholly through the work of God by His grace alone and is not determined by man in any initiatory way
Result: Rejected by the Synod of Dort in 1619	Result: Reaffirmed by the Synod of Dort in 1619

d) **“Amyraldianism” or “four point”/moderate Calvinism**: Named after Moses Amyraldus (1596-1664)

The “L” of “TULIP” is qualified: Christ died for all people, but the payment of sin is made only for the elect. *(that is, Christ’s death was “unlimited” in its scope, but “limited” in its application to only the elect)*

3) The major views:

a) **“Foresight election”**: God knew who would accept Him and chose in response to this foresight.

***Problem**: In what way is this really an election if it is just God’s response to man’s choice?

b) **“Corporate election”**: God chose the church (the group) that makes up the “elect”.

***Problem**: What about passages that speak about God’s election of individuals?

c) **“Individual/ Unconditional/ Pretemporal election”**: God chose individuals according to His good pleasure and divine choice (not based foreseen merit in people) before the foundation of the world.

Proof texts for individual election:

Jesus: "You did not choose me but I chose you..."

(John 15:16a, NIV)

"For those God foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the likeness of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brothers."

(Romans 8:29, NIV)

"...Rebekah's children had one and the same father, our father Isaac. Yet, before the twins were born or had done anything good or bad – in order that God's purpose in election might stand: not by works but by him who calls – she was told, 'The older will serve the younger. Just as it is written: 'Jacob I loved, but Esau I hated.' What then shall we say? Is God unjust? Not at all! For he says to Moses, 'I will have mercy on whom I have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I have compassion.' It does not, therefore, depend on man's desire or effort, but on God's mercy. For the Scripture says to Pharaoh: 'I raised you up for this very purpose, that I might display my power in you and that my name might be proclaimed in all the earth.' Therefore God has mercy on whom he wants to have mercy, and he hardens whom he wants to harden. One of you will say to me: 'Then why does God still blame us? For who resists his will?' But who are you, O man, to talk back to God? Shall what is formed say to him who formed it, 'Why did you make me like this?' Does not the potter have the right to make out of the same lump of clay some pottery for noble purposes and some for common use?"

(Romans 9:10-21, NIV)

"For he chose us in him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight. In love he predestined us to be adopted as his sons through Jesus Christ, in accordance with his pleasure and will."

(Ephesians 1:4-5, NIV)

"For we know, brothers loved by God, that he has chosen you..."

(1 Thessalonians 1:4, NIV)

"...who have been chosen according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through the sanctifying work of the Spirit, for obedience to Jesus Christ and sprinkling of his blood: Grace and peace be yours in abundance."

(1 Peter 1:2, NIV)

Proof texts for unlimited atonement (supporting four point" or "moderate" Calvinism):

"For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life."

(John 3:16, NIV)

"In the past God overlooked such ignorance, but now he commands all people everywhere to repent."

(Acts 17:30, NIV)

"...[God] wants all men to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth...we have put our hope in the living God, who is the Savior of all men, and especially of those who believe." (1 Timothy 2:4 & 4:10b, NIV)

"But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels, now crowned with glory and honor because he suffered death, so that by the grace of God he might taste death for everyone." (Hebrews 2:9, NIV)

"He is the atoning sacrifice for our sins, and not only for ours but also for the sins of the whole world."

(1 John 2:2, NIV)

4) The alleged objections:

a) Doesn't predestination and election lead to fatalism?

b) Doesn't predestination and election contradict human freedom? Is that fair?

c) Doesn't predestination and election make God the author of sin?

III) THE DOCTRINE OF ETERNAL SECURITY: HOW SALVATION LASTS

1) Definition of “eternal security” (or “once saved, always saved”):

“Anyone who has truly placed a saving faith in Jesus Christ is eternally and forever saved and kept as a Christian by God, based solely on the same grace that originally led them to faith.”

2) Biblical basis of eternal security:

“And this is from heaven not to do my will but to do the will of him who sent me. And this is the will of him who sent me, that I shall lose none of all that he has given me, but raise them up at the last day. For my Father’s will is that everyone who looks to the Son and believes in him shall have eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day.”
(John 6:39-40)

“I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; no one can snatch them out of my hand. My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all; no one can snatch them out of my Father’s hand.”
(John 10:28-29, NIV)

“Who will bring any charge against those whom God has chosen? It is God who justifies. Who is he that condemns? Christ Jesus, who died – more than that, who was raised to life – is at the right hand of God and is also interceding for us. Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall trouble or hardship or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword? As it is written: ‘For your sake we face death all day long; we are considered as sheep to be slaughtered.’ No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.”
(Romans 8:33-39, NIV)

“...who is a deposit guaranteeing our inheritance seal, the promised Holy Spirit...” (Ephesians 1:14, NIV)

“To him who is able to keep you from falling and to present you before his glorious presence without fault and with great joy...”
(Jude 24, NIV)

“I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God so that you may know that you have eternal life.”
(1 John 5:13, NIV)

3) Alleged problem passages for eternal security:

a) **What about the warning passages?** (see Heb. 6:4-8, 10:26-31, Gal. 5:4, but 1Cor. 5:1-5)

b) **What about removal from the Book of Life?**

c) **What about those who live so waywardly after they say they believe? Two options:**

“Here is a trustworthy saying: If we died with him, we will also live with him; if we endure, we will also reign with him. If we disown him, he will also disown us; if we are faithless, he will remain faithful, for he cannot disown himself.”
(2 Timothy 2:11-13, NIV)

“They went out from us, but they did not really belong to us. For if they had belonged to us, they would have remained with us; but their going showed that none of them belonged to us.”
(1 John 2:19-20, NIV)

IV) THE PRACTICAL VALUE OF THESE DOCTRINES

- 1) Unconditional election should HUMBLE us since God chose us by His grace.
- 2) Unconditional election should MOTIVATE us to actively sharing our faith.
- 3) Eternal security should provide us with CONFIDENCE to live for God.

SUMMARY THOUGHT: WE SHOULD LIVE A LIFE OF GOOD WORKS FOR GOD TO SAY "THANK YOU" IN RESPONSE TO HIS AMAZING GRACE IN SALVATION!

V) QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION IN GROUPS OR FOR PERSONAL REFLECTION

- 1) What did you learn about Calvinism and Arminianism in this session that you didn't know before? What is the basic difference between the two views?
- 2) Since the doctrine of God's sovereign election of all Christians is clearly taught, how do we balance this out with human responsibility? Are we still obligated by God to share the gospel with others? (see Romans 10:14)
- 3) Is eternal security an important doctrine or just a point of argument in Christianity? What does eternal security do for a Christian's outlook on life and on God?
- 4) What are some things you learned about the deeper matters of salvation in this study? Find two or three ways in which you can personally apply this session to your life.