

The *ordo salutis* or order of salvation.

When considering what the Bible teaches about salvation, one important consideration is the **order** in which the **Biblical terms** for salvation occur. Theologians have called this the “*ordo salutis*” which is simply *latin* for the **“order of salvation.”** Formulations of the *ordo salutis* attempt to express the way by which God through Christ imparts salvation to sinners from inception to consummation or from eternity past to eternity future. Anytime we speak of the salvation that we receive from God **by grace through faith in Christ alone**, we use terms that the Bible uses to describe this salvation. The terms that the Bible uses describe different aspects or facets of the whole work of salvation. These biblical terms are, but not limited to;

- **Foreknowledge (election)**
- **Predestination**
- **Calling**
- **Regeneration**
- **Conversion (Repentance and Faith)**
- **Justification**
- **Adoption**
- **Sanctification**
- **Perseverance (Preservation)**
- **Glorification**

Now concerning these terms, many times **the Bible gives them in an order, or sequence.** Some aspects of salvation are consequences of earlier things that happen or that God has done. For example, the biblical and logical consequence of **faith** in Christ is **Justification.**

Romans 3:28 - 28 For we maintain that **a man is justified by faith** apart from works of the Law. NASB

All of the facets of salvation relate to one another in a unique way, and some are more closely related than others. **Much of the process of salvation happens progressively as we experience it in time.** This happens of course for those aspects of salvation that happen in time, verses those aspects that happen outside of time like, election and predestination (which happened in eternity past). Wayne Grudem points out that many of these aspects happen simultaneously or are involved in “**becoming a Christian.**” For an example, it appears that regeneration, repentance, faith, justification and adoption happen all **simultaneously**. Even though one or more may be a consequence of others, they nevertheless in our experience happen at the same time. Although this be true, the **Bible speaks of them happening in a sequence, and a logical order**, one being the result or working together with another to a further result. For example **repentance** and **faith** are “twin sisters,” both of them like two sides of the coin of **conversion**,

since both are essential parts of converting or “**becoming a Christian.**” Another consideration, pointed out by Bruce Demarest, is that the terms may “*involve what God purposes or what he actually accomplishes and also may include things that God does or that humans do, or both. It may include things that are declarative and instantaneous, or things that are experiential and progressive.*” Well, to be sure, salvation is a highly dynamic thing that God has written into the course of redemptive history and His plan for the ages. John Murray comments, “*So when we think about salvation we should not think of it as one simple indivisible act. It comprises a series of acts and processes.*” I agree wholeheartedly, and the most obvious reason is that Scripture presents salvation as a whole series of glorious works and acts of God that operate through the course of life to bring us into His glory and makes us sharers in His own very character and image. The glorious and wonderful works of God in salvation are not trifles, but treasures to be cherished and lauded!

Why should we consider the order of salvation?

- 1) Because **Scripture plainly presents both logical and chronological sequence and order to the events of salvation.** It is important to consider that if God speaks of these matters in this logical or chronological way, these things have happened according to God’s divine wisdom and by divine appointment. God has revealed these matters in this way for a specific and important reason.

John 3:3-6 - 3 Jesus answered and said to him, "Truly, truly, I say to you, **unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.**" 4 Nicodemus said to Him, "How can a man be born when he is old? He cannot enter a second time into his mother's womb and be born, can he?" 5 Jesus answered, "Truly, truly, I say to you, **unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.**" NASB

Seeing and entering the Kingdom of God are results of regeneration. The most elementary reading of this passage makes this clear. Let us see God’s wisdom in arranging such matters this way to more fully display His glory.

- 2) We **experience them in a specific order** in the succession of time. Some aspects are invisible and even mysterious, others are obvious and clearly perceived. We may experience repentance and faith, these being obvious and perceptible, but these are simply the outworking of our calling and regeneration, which are unseen and mysterious.

Acts 13:48 - 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.** NASB
As bright as the sun, appointment to eternal life (election) precedes faith.

- 3) So that we can **appreciate the beauty of the glory of God** in saving grace. Each of the elements of salvation are expressed in concepts and biblical words which are specific and facets of the beauty of the gem of salvation

which radiate the glory of God and His attributes. These aspects compel us to praise and thanksgiving for the benefit of His free grace to us in Christ. **Ephesians 1:4-6** - 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. NASB
You see in this passage that election, sanctification, predestination, and adoption are all acts of God's kindness designed by God for **the glory of God's grace to be praised** by men and angels alike.

- 4) So that we will **grow in our knowledge** and **experience of God** and His saving grace to us. As we grow in this knowledge we are further conformed into the image of Christ and are progressively being transformed into His likeness.

2 Corinthians 3:18 - 18 But we all, with unveiled face beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, **are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory**, just as from the Lord, the Spirit. NASB

When Moses was read, the people were fearful so that he had to put a veil on his face. But the veil has been lifted in Christ's salvation, and the full glory of salvation in the New Testament is beaming like the sun and revealing the glories of salvation in all its manifold works. This Paul says, **is transforming us from one degree of glory to another!**

- 5) So that we can become a **more effective disciplemaker** and **witness** for Christ. The knowledge of salvation, its process and differing functions equip us to teach others about the greatness of it, and it motivates and equips us to better explain the Christian faith to the unbelieving.

John 1:12-13 - 12 But as many **as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in His name**, 13 who were born not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God. NASB

Who cannot see that adoption is the result of faith. The order here then is faith, then adoption. Here is an example of a truth we learn and teach to others, that God will adopt us into His family and treat us like His kids when we believe upon Christ. Thus a knowledge of salvation equips us to be better witnesses and disciplemakers.

Now if these things be true, and God has arranged the great acts of salvation in a **logical order** and **process, revealing each one is a sequence**, let us not think that we can just mix them up any way we like. No rather we must **learn the order** and sequence according to the divine revelation to us, then we will know the truth in clarity and will be good students in the school of Christ. This intimate knowledge of salvation will cause us to grow in our appreciation of God and all that He has done for us in Christ, and will in fact, increase our devotion and thanksgiving to Him in greater degree over time.

With this background in mind let us briefly define what these terms mean in their context, and then we will be able to examine them in relation to one another in the context of Scripture.

Foreknowledge (election)

Now here we have what really is the **very first** and **foundational element** in **salvation**. It is God in eternity past **willing salvation to happen** for those whom He chooses. This of course we call **election**. This is not to be confused with God's knowing of all things from eternity, although it is related to that, **in the context of salvation, foreknowledge is God's deliberate setting of His electing love on those whom He chooses**, from eternity past. The Nelson's Bible Dictionary makes this simple and clear.

FOREKNOWLEDGE- The unique knowledge of God which enables Him to know all events, including the free acts of man, before they happen.

God's foreknowledge is much more than foresight. God does not know future events and the actions of men because He foresees them; He knows them because He wills them to happen (Job 14:5; Ps 139:15-16). Thus God's foreknowledge is an act of His will (Isa 41:4; Rev 1:8,17; 21:6).

In Rom 8:29 and 11:2, the apostle Paul's use of the word foreknew means "to choose" or "to set special affection on." The electing love of God, not foresight of human action, is the basis of His predestination and salvation (Rom 8:29-30,33). This same idea is used to express the nation of Israel's special relationship to God (Acts 2:23; Rom 11:2; 1 Peter 1:2,20).

(from Nelson's Illustrated Bible Dictionary, Copyright © 1986, Thomas Nelson Publishers)

Now see the distinction between God knowing things beforehand (prescience), and God's **deliberately acting to choose** and **set special affection upon beforehand** (His willing and decreeing of them). This is clearly revealed in Scripture for example with the nation of Israel, whom God chose to be His special people, and also the Church whom Israel foreshadows in type. These are chosen to be God's own people, a kingdom of priests unto God (1 Pet 2:9-10, Rev 1:6). To see this even more clearly, let us look at the passages where the word **foreknowledge** is used in the context of salvation.

Romans 8:28-30 - 28 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; 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**. NASB

See here how calling, predestination, justification, and glorification are all **acts of God's will**, and consequences of His foreknowledge. But here God foreknows,

that is deliberately acts in His eternal counsel to bring about calling, predestination, justification, and glorification. God had a **purpose** in calling us (v-28), that is to save us (v-29-30). That salvation of us is called in this passage by **five** (foreknowledge, predestination, calling, justification, and glorification) **different logically ordered terms, given in a sequence**. Now all of these fall out in the sequence of time **beginning with foreknowledge and ending in glorification**. Here it is abundantly clear that foreknowledge is the first and foundational element, which brings about the others, ending in the consummation of his **purpose**, glorification with Him. This also is an obvious key from the knowledge of God, things happen not because God knows them, but because He wills them to happen, His decree. Therefore, all of these savings acts, are acts of God's will beginning with the **willing itself** which is here called **foreknowledge**.

Let's also consider Romans 11:1-4.

Romans 11:1-4 - 11 I say then, God has not rejected His people, has He? May it never be! For I too am an Israelite, a descendant of Abraham, of the tribe of Benjamin. 2 **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? 3 "Lord, they have killed Thy prophets, they have torn down Thine altars, and I alone am left, and they are seeking my life." 4 But what is the divine response to him? "**I have kept for Myself seven thousand** men who have not bowed the knee to Baal." NASB

Here again Paul speaks of God's willing in His eternal counsel to know a people, that is to set His special electing love upon them. Consider how Deuteronomy makes God's fore-loving, or foreknowledge of Israel crystal clear. Moreover, the consequences of His willing in His eternal counsel coming to pass in a real salvation in the course of history.

Deuteronomy 4:32-40 - 32 "Indeed, ask now concerning the former days which were before you, **since the day that God created man on the earth**, and inquire from one end of the heavens to the other. **Has anything been done like this great thing**, or has anything been heard like it? 33 "Has any people heard the voice of God speaking from the midst of the fire, as you have heard it, and survived? 34 "**Or has a god tried to go to take for himself a nation from within another nation by trials, by signs and wonders and by war and by a mighty hand and by an outstretched arm and by great terrors, as the Lord your God did for you** in Egypt before your eyes? 35 "**To you it was shown that you might know that the Lord, He is God; there is no other besides Him**. 36 Out of the heavens He let you hear His voice to discipline you; and on earth He let you see His great fire, and you heard His words from the midst of the fire. 37 **Because He loved your fathers, therefore He chose their descendants after them. And He personally brought you from Egypt by His great power**, 38 driving out from before you nations greater and mightier than you, to bring you in and to give you their land for an inheritance, as it is today. 39 **Know therefore today, and take it to your heart**, that the Lord, He is God in heaven above and on the earth below; there is no other. NASB

Deuteronomy 7:7-9 – 7 The Lord **did not set His love on you nor choose you because you were more in number than any of the peoples**, for you were the fewest of all peoples, 8 **but because the Lord loved you** and kept the oath which He swore to your

forefathers, **the Lord brought you out by a mighty hand, and redeemed you from the house of slavery**, from the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt. NASB

See then, how this **foreknowledge** is much more than just “**prescience**”, (that’s is to know before), but an act of God’s will to deliberately love a specific people. This word **foreknowledge** is **never used** of the **wicked and unbelieving** in the Bible, it is reserved only for God’s special electing love that motivates the savings acts He performs for His own people. Consider also, 1 Peter 1:1-2;

1 Peter 1:1-2 - 1 Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, to those who reside as aliens, scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia, **who are chosen 2 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. NASB

See again hear, the Christians to whom Peter is writing are referred to as “**chosen according to the foreknowledge of God the Father.**” The word “**chosen**” here is the Greek “eklektos,” simply meaning “elect” or “chosen.” They are the ones whom He is also “**sanctifying**” by the “**work of the Spirit.**” These are said to be chosen for “**obedience**” to Jesus Christ. In the context of our study, we should just note here that, election happens according to foreknowledge, a word we have briefly discussed in other passages in the New Testament meaning God’s willing beforehand to love, or to set His love upon. See then that foreknowledge is actually the first element in election, God’s willing before hand upon certain individuals that He then chooses, or if you will, His forewilling to love is His choosing, thus Peter’s remark, “**chosen according to the foreknowledge of God the Father.**”

Now as we consider the **order of salvation**, let us say here that there is no part of it that comes before the eternal counsel of God, His eternal knowledge of whom He chooses to save. That is why we have stated that this is the **very first and foundational element in salvation.** It is God in eternity past **willing salvation to happen** for those whom He chooses. This of course we call **election**. See then it is **always first** in the *ordo salutis*.

Election

Now before moving on let us just briefly comment on the teaching of **election** to give a little more background in understanding this term, and some Scripture in context. Note here a few important things about election that are important elements in it. Bruce Demarest makes these helpful observations;

- 1) Election is according to **God’s sovereign will** and good pleasure. It involves God’s **unconditional** choice of a man or woman, the latter’s choice of God.
- 2) Election is an act of **free grace**. God is **not obligated** to save a single rebellious sinner.
- 3) Election is **not based on foreseen faith, works** or holiness. Although God knows all things in advance, foreknowledge is an act of God’s will to save

specific persons, from before the beginning of time, saving which He initiates in the course of history in calling and regeneration, resulting in faith.

- 4) Election is **absolutely certain** as to its outcome. Since the omnipotent God infallibly accomplishes His purposes, **all the elect will be saved.**

The concept of election is taught throughout the New Testament by Jesus, Luke, Paul, Peter and John. It appears in various contexts and many times appears in an ordered way along with other important elements in salvation. Here are a few;

Matthew 11:27 - 27 "All things have been handed over to Me by My Father; and no one knows the Son, except the Father; **nor does anyone know the Father, except the Son, and anyone to whom the Son wills to reveal Him.**

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

See here that Jesus Himself is seen as the electing agent, according to **His own will**, and not based on anything in the one chosen, it is **unconditional**.

Ephesians 1:3-6 - 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. NASB

See here that the election takes place "**before the foundation of the world.**" The when of election could not be clearer. But notice also election is, "**to holiness, in love, for son-ship to Himself, through Jesus, according to His kindness, to the praise of the glory of His grace.**" Wow, what a compounding of beautiful realities about God's choice of us! Notice also, 2 Timothy 1:9-11;

2 Timothy 1:9-11- 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**, 10 but now has been revealed by the appearing of our Savior Christ Jesus, who abolished death, and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel, NASB

Here we see that salvation is "**not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace.**" Salvation is granted "**from all eternity**" and **not based on foreseen works**, but is an act of God's **free grace** as **God is not obligated** to sinners in any way to save them, but wills freely to save them while they are yet sinners in rebellion against Him (Rom 5:-8-10).

Acts 13:48 - 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**. NASB

See here that **faith** is seen many times as the **consequence of election**, not the other way around. Foreseen faith is never spoken of as the preceding God's choice or a reason for it. Those who are "**appointed**" in eternity to eternal life are those who consequently "**believe.**" Election is **not based on foreseen faith, works or holiness.**

John 6:39 - 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.** NASB

Lastly, consider here that **all the elect will be saved.** Election is always certain as to its outcome. Of "**all that He has given me I lose nothing, but raise it up on the last day.**" Notice the order here, **election** and then **glorification.** All the elect will be glorified, indeed none that the Father has given to the Son will perish, but will indeed be raised in glory at the last Day (1 Cor 15:40-49, Phil 3:20-21).

Predestination

"Predestination" is a Biblical word which refers to the fact that God has set the destiny of His chosen people from before the beginning of time. This is presented in many places in Scripture.

In Acts, we read about an "**appointment**" to eternal life which results in faith.

Acts 13:48 - 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.** NASB

In 1 Corinthians it used to speak about God's purpose to deliver us to future glory.

1 Corinthians 2:6-9 - 6 Yet we do speak wisdom among those who are mature; a wisdom, however, not of this age, nor of the rulers of this age, who are passing away; 7 but we speak God's wisdom in a mystery, the hidden wisdom, **which God predestined before the ages to our glory;** 8 the wisdom which none of the rulers of this age has understood; for if they had understood it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory; 9 but just as it is written, "Things which eye has not seen and ear has not heard, And which have not entered the heart of man, **All that God has prepared for those who love Him.**" NASB

In Romans we read that salvation occurs "**to those who are called according to His purpose.**" Paul reasons then from election, that God predestines, calls, justifies, and glorifies finally. Here the destination of the predestination is that we should be "**conformed to the image of His Son,**" an obvious reference to our future glory.

Romans 8:28-30 - 28 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; 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.** NASB

See in these verses God working everything after a predetermined purpose, which results in glory. God has "**predestined**" His people unto final glory. This predestination is spoken of as God's "**preparing beforehand for glory,**" those whom He "**calls.**"

Romans 9:22-25 - 22 What if God, although willing to demonstrate His wrath and to make His power known, endured with much patience vessels of wrath prepared for destruction? 23 And He did so in order that He might make known the riches of His glory upon vessels of mercy, **which He prepared beforehand for glory, 24 even us, whom He also called,** not from among Jews only, but also from among Gentiles. NASB

In Ephesians we are said to be “**predestined**” unto “**adoption as sons**,” having been chosen “**from before the foundation of the world**.” See here the exact meaning of predestination, it is God willing in eternity past for a certain future destiny (**to destine**) **from before (pre)**. This is again tied to the **glory** of God as Paul explains that He predestined us for a purpose, and the destination of the predestination is the “**praise of the glory of His grace**.”

Ephesians 1:4-6, 11-14,18 - 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. NASB

Ephesians 1:11 - In Him 11 also we have obtained an inheritance, **having been predestined according to His purpose who works all things after the counsel of His will, 12 to the end** that we who were the first to hope in Christ **should be to the praise of His glory**. NASB

It is also used in Acts to speak about God’s predestined purpose for Christ to be crucified at the hands of sinful men in order to accomplish His “**predetermined plan**.”

Acts 2:22-23 - 22 "Men of Israel, listen to these words: Jesus the Nazarene, a man attested to you by God with miracles and wonders and signs which God performed through Him in your midst, just as you yourselves know — 23 this Man, **delivered up by the predetermined plan and foreknowledge of God**, you nailed to a cross by the hands of godless men and put Him to death. NASB

Acts 4:27-28 - 27 "For truly in this city there were gathered together against Thy holy servant Jesus, whom Thou didst anoint, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, along with the Gentiles and the peoples of Israel, **28 to do whatever Thy hand and Thy purpose predestined to occur**. NASB

See then the Bible clearly setting forth the idea of God willing in eternity past, according to a specific purpose, the destiny of creatures in time and space, and specifically willing salvation to happen for His elect people.

Easton’s Bible Dictionary gives a succinct definition of Predestination.

PREDESTINATION - This word is properly used only with reference to God's plan or purpose of salvation. The Greek word rendered "predestinate" is found only in these six passages, **Acts 4:28; Rom 8:29,30; 1 Cor 2:7; Eph 1:5,11**; and in all of them it has the same meaning. They teach that the eternal, sovereign, immutable, and unconditional decree or "determinate purpose" of God governs all events. (from Easton's Bible Dictionary. All rights reserved.)

Calling

Salvation is actually a supernatural work of God which is accomplished by the regenerating work of the Holy Spirit. This is because mankind has a Natural Inability to see, hear or even understand the Gospel. More than this, God

unconditionally elects those who will be saved, and He does this from before the beginning of time, as we have seen in Foreknowledge, Election, and Predestination. This is to say that election is not conditioned upon any response in man but happens because of the free electing grace of God. People get saved in time and space, because God has chosen them in eternity past and regenerates them in the course of their life.

John 3:3 - 3 Jesus answered and said to him, "Truly, truly, I say to you, **unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.**" NASB

2 Thessalonians 2:13 - 13 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. NASB

Therefore it is necessary, since Salvation is a supernatural work which is initiated by God in election and brought to pass by the new birth, that the outworking of this election have, **some point in time and space when it comes to fruition (Regeneration).** Not only this, but when speaking of the Church and those who are the recipients of salvation, the Bible plainly declares that they are "**called**" by Him at some point in their life. This obviously gives light to the fact that **God is the initiator** in the process of salvation.

Romans 8:28 - 28 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.** NASB

Romans 1:5-7 - 5 through whom we have received grace and apostleship to bring about the obedience of faith among all the Gentiles, for His name's sake, 6 among whom **you also are the called of Jesus Christ;** 7 to all who are beloved of God in Rome, **called as saints:** Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. NASB

Romans 9:23-24 - 23 And He did so in order that He might make known the riches of His glory upon vessels of mercy, **which He prepared beforehand for glory, 24 even us, whom He also called**, not from among Jews only, but also from among Gentiles. NASB

1 Corinthians 1:9 - 9 God is faithful, through whom **you were called into fellowship with His Son,** Jesus Christ our Lord. NASB

1 Corinthians 1:23-24 - 23 but we preach Christ crucified, to Jews a stumbling block, and to Gentiles foolishness, 24 **but to those who are the called,** both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God. NASB

2 Thessalonians 2:14 - 14 And it was for this **He called you through our gospel,** that you may gain the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ. NASB

1 Timothy 6:12 - 12 Fight the good fight of faith; **take hold of the eternal life to which you were called,** and you made the good confession in the presence of many witnesses. NASB

2 Timothy 1:9 - 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, NASB

Hebrews 9:15 - 15 And for this reason He is the mediator of a new covenant, in order that since a death has taken place for the redemption of the transgressions that were committed under the first covenant, **those who have been called may receive the promise of the eternal inheritance.** NASB

1 Peter 5:10 - 10 And after you have suffered for a little while, the God of all grace, **who called you to His eternal glory in Christ**, will Himself perfect, confirm, strengthen and establish you. NASB

And more than this, our salvation is spoken of as a “*calling*” by God. This speaks of a divine favor or privilege which has been given to all the saints.

Romans 11:28-29 - 28 From the standpoint of the gospel they are enemies for your sake, but from the standpoint of God's choice they are beloved for the sake of the fathers; 29 for **the gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable**. NASB

1 Corinthians 1:2 - 2 to the church of God which is at Corinth, to those who have been sanctified in Christ Jesus, **saints by calling**, with all who in every place call upon the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, their Lord and ours: NASB

1 Corinthians 1:26 - 26 For **consider your calling, brethren**, that there were not many wise according to the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble; NASB

Ephesians 1:18 - 18 I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened, so that you may know what is the **hope of His calling**, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, NASB

Hebrews 3:1 - 3:1 Therefore, **holy brethren, partakers of a heavenly calling**, consider Jesus, the Apostle and High Priest of our confession. NASB

Consider in Romans 8:30, a brief order of the process of salvation are brought to light in verse 30.

Romans 8:30 - 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**. NASB

See here that those whom have been predestined, are **called** and that **these are brought to Justification** because the **calling** by the Spirit “effects” salvation in them. Thus it is an “Effectual Calling.” Through the revelation of the Spirit, those who are called are brought to a place of **willing response** to the Gospel, by the enabling of the Holy Spirit in regeneration. Jesus speaks of this in John Chapter 6....

John 6:65 - 65 And He was saying, "For this reason I have said to you, that **no one can come to Me, unless it has been granted him from the Father**." NASB

We also see this “Effectual Calling” at work in many who were saved in the narrative passages in the Book of Acts. Paul, Lydia and Cornelius are a few examples.

Regeneration

When we think about the biblical word “*regeneration*”, we must consider first its nature. Regeneration is a word derived from its root, “genesis” or “generate” meaning beginning or create. It is “re” or “again generation.” Plainly said by the apostle Paul.....

2 Corinthians 5:17 - 17 Therefore if any man is in Christ, **he is a new creature**; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come. NASB

When anyone is born again by the Holy Spirit, he/she becomes a “*new creation*” of God. They are **recreated by the supernatural creative power of God**. This is

why Paul says in Galatians 6:15 that the true substance of saving faith is not a human work, but the work of the creative power of God.

Galatians 6:15 - 15 For neither is circumcision anything, nor uncircumcision, but a **new creation**. NASB

Salvation, then and therefore is **supernatural**. It is a work performed by God, transcending the earthly abilities of any man. So we see then that salvation is first the work of God, and it then results in many diverse blessings and benefits of which mankind is a partaker. Let us then consider the following definition of Regeneration.....

*"A sovereign act of God, performed by the Holy Spirit, in which the sinner is given the capacities needed to understand, believe, and enter the Kingdom of God by God given faith and granted eternal life. His/her mind and will are **divinely enabled** to comprehend sin and righteousness and judgment.*

His/her spirit is resurrected from its natural dead state, restoring communion with God who is Spirit. It is a fundamental change in the nature of mankind having the very nature and eternal life of God implanted into the human soul. At this time the Holy Spirit enters into the being of mankind performing this transformation eternally."

Let us consider the nature of regeneration from biblical texts. As we survey these Bible texts, consider how they are all pointing to the supernatural and Sovereign work of God in salvation.

Regeneration is the *act of God*, not of human doing –

1 Peter 1:3 - 3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His great mercy has **caused us to be born again** to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead,

1 Peter 1:23 - 23 for you **have been born again** not of seed which is perishable but imperishable, that is, through the living and abiding word of God. NASB

James 1:18 - 18 **In the exercise of His will He brought us forth** by the word of truth, so that we might be, as it were, the first fruits among His creatures. NASB

Ezekiel 11:19-21 - 19 "And **I shall give them one heart, and shall put a new spirit within them**. And **I shall take the heart of stone out of their flesh and give them a heart of flesh**, 20 that they may walk in My statutes and keep My ordinances, and do them. Then they will be My people, and I shall be their God.

Regeneration changes the *mind and will*

Ezekiel 36:26-27 - 26 "Moreover, **I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you**; and I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. 27 "And **I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes**, and **you will be careful to observe** My ordinances.

1 John 3:9 - 9 No **one who is born of God practices sin**, because His seed abides in him; and **he cannot sin, because he is born of God**. NASB

1 John 5:18-21 - 18 We know that **no one who is born of God sins**; but He who was born of God keeps him and the evil one does not touch him. 19 We know that we are of God, and the whole world lies in the power of the evil one. 20 And we know that the Son of God has come, and **has given us understanding, in order that we might know Him**

who is true, and we are in Him who is true, in His Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God and eternal life. NASB

1 John 5:4 - 4 For **whatever is born of God overcomes the world**; and this is the victory that has overcome the world — our faith. NASB

1 Corinthians 2:12-16 - 12 Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but **the Spirit who is from God, that we might know the things freely given to us by God**, 13 which things we also speak, not in words taught by human wisdom, but in those **taught by the Spirit**, combining spiritual thoughts with spiritual words. 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. 15 But he who is spiritual appraises all things, yet he himself is appraised by no man. 16 For who has known the mind of the Lord, that he should instruct Him? **But we have the mind of Christ.** NASB

Regeneration raises mankind's dead spirit to **eternal life** and implants God's nature into him/her

Colossians 2:13 - 13 And when **you were dead in your transgressions and the uncircumcision of your flesh, He made you alive together with Him**, having forgiven us all our transgressions, NASB

Ephesians 2:5-9 - 5 even when we were dead in our transgressions, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), 6 and raised us up with Him, and seated us with Him in the heavenly places, in Christ Jesus, 7 in order that in the ages to come He might show the surpassing riches of His grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. 8 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. NASB

Ephesians 4:24 - 24 and put on the new self, which **in the likeness of God has been created in righteousness and holiness** of the truth. NASB

John 5:24 - 24 "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. NASB

Regeneration then, is the very nature of salvation itself. It is the *saving act* of salvation, performed by God, whereby **salvation is applied to the elect in time and space**. It is the point in time when the called of God are supernaturally transformed by God. This is why the Bible says we were saved "**by the washing of regeneration.**"

Titus 3:5 - 5 He saved us, not on the basis of deeds which we have done in righteousness, but according to His mercy, by the **washing of regeneration and renewing by the Holy Spirit**, NAS

Furthermore, this is the very reason why Jesus emphatically stressed, "**You must be born again**" to "**enter the Kingdom of God.**" The **Bible plainly declares** that no one can see or enter the Kingdom of God apart from the supernatural creative power of God in Regeneration.

John 3:3-7 - 3 Jesus answered and said to him, "Truly, truly, I say to you, **unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.**" 4 Nicodemus said to Him, "How can a man be born when he is old? He cannot enter a second time into his mother's womb and be born, can he?" 5 Jesus answered, "Truly, truly, I say to you, **unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.**" 6 "That which is born

of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. 7 "Do not marvel that I said to you, '**You must be born again.**' NASB

A. Jesus answered and said to him, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." - Here we may see , God Himself, in the flesh, speaking to man about how to see His Kingdom. Here is where Christianity becomes very exclusive, "**unless**" Jesus declares. That is, in no other way but this way, can you "**see the Kingdom of God.**" The word "**cannot**" speaks of man's inability, not His unwillingness. Mankind has an **inability to see the Kingdom of God without the supernatural creative power of God in the new birth.** People who are dead in trespasses and sins have no capacity of sight, hearing, or understanding of the Gospel. (**1 Cor 2:10-14, 2 Cor 4:3-4, John 8:43, Matt 13:10-13, Romans 3:9-12, 18, 6:16, 7:14**)

B. he cannot enter the Kingdom of God – The kingdom of God is here rightly understood as God's salvation wherein one enters into a justified state of being having one's sins forgiven and satisfied upon the merits of Christ alone. One "**cannot enter**" or possess this saving work of Christ apart from the divine grace of Regeneration.

C. You must be born again – Consider, God has come in the flesh and given us understanding. Here he says to us, "You must be born again if you want to see or enter the Kingdom of God." Here then the repetition by which the Savior speaks this very important word, "**you MUST**" says He, be "**born again.**"

The analogy of birth and new life

Consider that Jesus uses the analogy of birth. A person no more had some choice in the matter of their natural birth as they do their spiritual birth. We did not choose to be physically alive, and we did not choose to be born, it is something that happened to us. This Sovereign work of God is performed by God before any person has capacities to even see, hear or understand the Gospel, being dead in sin. A person's ability to receive Christ as Savior and believe the Gospel are granted by the Sovereign choice and resurrecting ability of God.

John 1:12-13 - 12 But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in His name, 13 **who were born** not of blood, **nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.** NASB

John 6:44 - 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. NASB

John 6:65 - 65 And He was saying, "For this reason I have said to you, that **no one can come to Me, unless it has been granted him from the Father.**" NASB

Lazarus had no capacities to raise himself from the dead, nor did he possess the ability to resist the powerful Word of God to be resurrected (John 11:43). This is clearly portrayed in the prophecy of Ezekiel where the nation of Israel will corporately be raised from their spiritual death and brought into the glorious Kingdom of God in the Day of their restoration.

Ezekiel 37:11-14 - 11 Then He said to me, "Son of man, these bones are the whole house of Israel; behold, they say, 'Our bones are dried up, and our hope has perished. **We are completely cut off!**' 12 "Therefore prophesy, and say to them, 'Thus says the Lord GOD,' Behold, **I will open your graves and cause you to come up out of your graves, My people;** and I will bring you into the land of Israel. 13 "Then you will know that I am the LORD, when I have opened your graves and caused you to come up out of your graves, My people. 14 **"And I will put My Spirit within you, and you will come to life,** and I will place you on your own land. Then you will know that I, the LORD, have spoken and done it," declares the LORD.' NASB

Do babies resist being born? Do people being raised from the dead resist the free gift of life? Have they even the ability to do so? The answers is of course, no! People do not resist this regenerating work of God because it is this work whereby God overcomes the resistance of the fallen human nature by giving them the capacities to understand their dreadful state of death and their great need to be saved by God's power and free grace.

Acts 10:44-45 - 44 While Peter was still speaking these words, **the Holy Spirit fell upon all those who were listening to the message.** 45 And all the circumcised believers who had come with Peter were amazed, because the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out upon the Gentiles also. NASB

Regeneration is an invisible work of which we only see the results over time
When someone is born again, we are not always immediately aware of it because we only see what happens after someone gets saved. There is an obvious change that happens in the life as we see God's power changing us(sanctification). But we were not aware when the secret power of God actually resurrects someone from spiritual death and grants them new life.

John 3:8 - 8 "The wind blows where it wishes and **you hear the sound of it, but do not know where it comes from and where it is going;** so is everyone who is born of the Spirit." NASB

Wayne Grudem explains this very clearly in chapter 34 of his Systematic Theology....

"Exactly what happens in regeneration is mysterious to us. We know that somehow we who were spiritually dead (Eph. 2:1) have been made alive to God and in a very real sense we have been "born again" (John 3:3, 7; Eph. 2:5; Col. 2:13). But we don't understand how this happens or what exactly God does to us to give us this new spiritual life.....

Because regeneration is a work of God within us in which he gives us new life it is right to conclude that it is an instantaneous event. It happens only once. At one moment we are spiritually dead, and then at the next moment we have new spiritual life from God. Nevertheless, we do not always know exactly when this instantaneous change occurs. Especially for children growing up in a Christian home, or for people who attend an evangelical church or Bible study over a period of time and grow gradually in their understanding of the gospel, there may not be a dramatic crisis with a radical change of behavior from "hardened sinner" to "holy saint," but there will be an instantaneous change nonetheless, when God through the Holy Spirit, in an unseen, invisible way, awakens spiritual life within. The change will become evident over time in patterns of behavior and desires that are pleasing to God.

In other cases (in fact, probably most cases when adults become Christians) regeneration takes place at a clearly recognizable time at which the person realizes that previously he or she was separated from God and spiritually dead, but immediately afterward there was clearly new spiritual life within. The

results can usually be seen at once—a heartfelt trusting in Christ for salvation, an assurance of sins forgiven, a desire to read the Bible and pray (and a sense that these are meaningful spiritual activities), a delight in worship, a desire for Christian fellowship, a sincere desire to be obedient to God's Word in Scripture, and a desire to tell others about Christ. People may say something like this: "I don't know exactly what happened, but before that moment I did not trust in Christ for salvation. I was still wondering and questioning in my mind. But after that moment I realized that I did trust in Christ and he was my Savior. Something happened in my heart." Yet even in these cases we are not quite sure exactly what has happened in our hearts. It is just as Jesus said with respect to the wind—we hear its sound and we see the result, but we cannot actually see the wind itself. So it is with the working of the Holy Spirit in our hearts."

Regeneration precedes faith

Many times we fail to understand the Bible about this because of how the experience happened to us. Again Grudem explains...

"The idea that regeneration comes before saving faith is not always understood by evangelicals today. Sometimes people will even say something like, If you believe in Christ as your Savior, then (after you believe) you will be born again." But Scripture itself never says anything like that. This new birth is viewed by Scripture as something that God does within us in order to enable us to believe.

The reason that evangelicals often think that regeneration comes after saving faith is that they see the results (love for God and his Word, and turning from sin) after people come to faith, and they think that regeneration must therefore have come after saving faith. Yet here we must decide on the basis of what Scripture tells us, because regeneration itself is not something we see or know about directly:"

We heard the Gospel and then we believed, at least it seemed like that is what happened. But we were not aware that our belief was the granting of faith to us by God's Sovereign choice and the regenerating work of the Holy Spirit in the new birth. But that is in fact what happened. We only learn of this great truth after we examine Holy Scripture and understand the process of salvation. Jesus made this very clear.....

John 6:63-65 - 63 "**It is the Spirit who gives life**; the flesh profits nothing; the words that I have spoken to you are spirit and are life. 64 "But there are some of you who do not believe." For Jesus knew from the beginning who they were who did not believe, and who it was that would betray Him. 65 And He was saying, "**For this reason I have said to you, that no one can come to Me, unless it has been granted him from the Father.**" 66 As a result of this many of His disciples withdrew, and were not walking with Him anymore. NASB

Here Jesus explains that the reason many people do not believe. This is why he says in verse 65 "**for this reason I have said to you**", referring to verse 64 where he says "**some of you do not believe.**" The **Bible plainly declares** that the reason people do not believe is because saving faith has not been granted to them by God.

Matthew 13:11 - 11 And He answered and said to them, "**To you it has been granted to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it has not been granted.**
NASB

And to those who believe the **Bible plainly declares** it is because it has been granted to them by God.

Philippians 1:29 - 29 For **to you it has been granted for Christ's sake, not only to believe in Him**, but also to suffer for His sake, NASB

Conversion (Repentance and Faith)

Conversion is that actual point in time and space when salvation takes the form of a **human response** to the **divine work of regeneration and calling**, as a **result** of God's **foreknowledge, election and predestination**. In the work of regeneration, God gives the **gift of penitent faith** through a revelatory act showing the depth of sin and depravity and the certainty and power of Christ to save from such a state. **Conversion** is what happens when we take that **faith** and trust Christ to save us, and **repent** by turning from our sins in obedience to God. Thus **conversion** is really a **two part** response, which is an act of the human will which has been enabled by God in regeneration, to the Gospel calling, including both **repentance** and **faith**. It is the time when we see the effects of the divine work of regeneration as when respond to the calling of God with the willing acts of repentance and faith. **Repentance** is turning from that state that we **were in** and **faith** is the **future life** of obedience that we turn to as we trust in and come to Jesus to follow him. Paul defined His Gospel ministry in these terms.

Acts 20:21 - 21 solemnly testifying to both Jews and Greeks of **repentance toward God and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ**. NASB

Repentance is where we were and **faith** is **where we are going**. Both repentance and faith are **responses** that are **called for in the Gospel**.

Hebrews 6:1 - 1 Therefore leaving the elementary teaching about the Christ, let us press on to maturity, not laying again a foundation **of repentance from dead works and of faith toward God**, NASB

Faith

Now faith is made up of **three essential elements** which are **knowledge, agreement, and trust**. Faith is not only knowledge about the truth of the person and the work of Jesus, but such knowledge is certainly required to be saved. In other words, one must have an understanding of the fact that they are alienated from God, and that God has provided Christ as a means to be reconciled through His sacrifice of atonement for the forgiveness of sins. This basic knowledge is **required** and it is these facts that one assents to in faith. But mere knowledge of these facts is not sufficient to save as one **must certainly agree** with the facts and have some level of **approval** with them. The must sincerely believe them to be true and **give hearty approval** that they are good and necessary. But even such a sincere intellectual consent is not enough to meet biblical faith. For example, even the demons know and understand that God is real and know the facts about the person and work of Jesus, yet they have not given their allegiance to God.

James 2:19 - 19 You believe that God is one. You do well; **the demons also believe, and shudder**. NASB

What is still lacking with knowledge and agreement is the element of trust. The element of **trust** is that essential and third part of faith that makes it real and genuine, vowing the **allegiance of one's will** unto God. This is clearly seen in

places where people are given the Gospel, and may know and agree with the facts, but are unwilling to give the allegiance of their will in trust. The rich young ruler is an example of this.

Luke 18:22-23 - 22 And when Jesus heard this, He said to him, "One thing you still lack; sell all that you possess, and distribute it to the poor, and you shall have treasure in heaven; and come, follow Me." 23 **But when he had heard these things, he became very sad; for he was extremely rich.** NASB

He knew the facts about Jesus and agreed that they were good, but was unwilling to part with that which the Lord required of him. He did not give the **allegiance of his will to Christ** above his allegiance to his possessions. Further, Jesus requires that we come unto Him in **personal relationship** with Him, **trusting in His saving work** for salvation and forgiveness.

John 6:37 - 37 "All that the Father gives Me shall **come to Me**, and the one who comes to Me I will certainly not cast out. NASB

John 5:39-40 - 39 "You search the Scriptures, because you think that in them you have eternal life; and it is these that bear witness of Me; 40 and **you are unwilling to come to Me, that you may have life.** NASB

These passages give the **intensely personal picture** of what is involved in saving faith and coming to Jesus for the life He offers in salvation. Lastly, **faith produces obedience** in the life and continues throughout life as a way of life.

Galatians 2:20 - 20 "I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and **the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God**, who loved me, and delivered Himself up for me. NASB

Paul says, the life he lives he **lives by faith**. And this faith is a faith that is "**zealous for good deeds**," and produces a life of **good "works"** as a result.

Titus 2:11-14 - 11 For the grace of God has appeared, **bringing salvation to all men**, 12 **instructing us to deny ungodliness and worldly desires and to live sensibly, righteously and godly** in the present age, 13 looking for the blessed hope and the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Christ Jesus; 14 who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from every lawless deed and purify for Himself a people for His own possession, **zealous for good deeds.** NASB

Titus 3:8-9 - 8 This is a trustworthy statement; and concerning these things I want you to speak confidently, so that **those who have believed God may be careful to engage in good deeds.** These things are good and profitable for men. NASB

James 2:14-17 - 14 **What use is it, my brethren, if a man says he has faith, but he has no works? Can that faith save him?** 15 If a brother or sister is without clothing and in need of daily food, 16 and one of you says to them, "Go in peace, be warmed and be filled," and yet you do not give them what is necessary for their body, what use is that? 17 **Even so faith, if it has no works, is dead, being by itself.** NASB

This faith is a persevering faith that **continues throughout life** until the end.

Hebrews 3:13-15 - 13 But encourage one another day after day, as long as it is still called "Today," lest any one of you be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin. 14 For **we have become partakers of Christ, if we hold fast the beginning of our assurance firm until the end;** 15 while it is said, "Today if you hear His voice, Do not harden your hearts, as when they provoked Me." NASB

Repentance

Now **repentance** is that **quality of God given faith** that moves the will to obedience to God. Therefore **repentance** must happen **together with faith**. The two are inseparable. The Gospel calls us to **turn from sin** (repentance) unto **trust in Christ** (faith).

Acts 20:21 - 21 solemnly **testifying** to both Jews and Greeks of **repentance toward God and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ.** NASB

Because it is the **character** of God given **faith**, **repentance** itself is a **divine gift** (John 15:5, Acts 5:31, Acts 11:18, 2 Tim 2:25).

Acts 11:18 - 18 And when they heard this, they quieted down, and glorified God, saying, "Well then, **God has granted to the Gentiles also the repentance** that leads to life."

NASB

And since it is **part** of the character of **faith** itself, (for God given faith is of itself a **penitent faith**), it occurs in the **order of salvation simultaneously** with **faith**.

Faith and repentance, if you will, are in a sense, two sides of the same coin.

Repentance is an essential part therefore of salvation. It is a **sincere sorrow** for personal **sin**, an **earnest forsaking** of **sin**, and an **ardent commitment to amend personal sins** and **live in obedience** to God. Notice how these qualities were all present in the repentance of the Corinthians which Paul commends in 2 Corinthians....

2 Corinthians 7:9-11 - 9 I now rejoice, not that you were made sorrowful, but that you were made **sorrowful to the point of repentance**; for you were made sorrowful according to the will of God, in order that you might not suffer loss in anything through us. 10 For the sorrow that is according to the will of God produces **a repentance without regret, leading to salvation**; but the sorrow of the world produces death. 11 For behold **what earnestness** this very thing, this godly sorrow, **has produced in you: what vindication of yourselves, what indignation, what fear, what longing, what zeal, what avenging of wrong!** In everything you demonstrated yourselves to be innocent in the matter. NASB

You see they were sorrowful in a “**godly**” way, and Paul says, “**sorrowful to the point of repentance.**” See that **repentance** possesses a **sincere sorrow** over **sin**. This repentance also had “**indignation**” of its wrongdoing, it zealously **hated** and **forsook** its **own sin**. Further, Paul writes, it had an “**earnestness**” with it to “**vindicate**” or amend its sinfulness and to “**avenge**” its own wrongdoing. It possessed a **zeal and longing** for **obedience**. See how the Corinthians **mind** and **will** was **completely reversed** and **changed** in this **repentance** from an allegiance to its own sinfulness to an **allegiance** to the **will of God**. And this is what **repentance** is at its heart, **a turning from sin unto God**. It will often produce a **confession of sins** as well.

Proverbs 28:13 - 13 He who conceals his transgressions will not prosper, But **he who confesses and forsakes them** will find compassion. NASB

Bruce Demarest states that **repentance** has “**three essential aspects.** (1) an **intellectual** element, (2) an **emotional** element, (3) a **volutional** element.” I concur that this boils it down to its essence. **Repentance** clearly is....

- 1) **Intellectual** – knows/understands it has sinned against God & righteousness
- 2) **Emotional** - feels remorse and sorrow to the point of forsaking personal sin
- 3) **Volutional** - commits itself to amend its wrong and walk in obedience

Now because repentance is actually part of the character of saving faith it is also seen in the Scripture as an **essential element in salvation.**

Acts 11:18 - 18 And when they heard this, they quieted down, and glorified God, saying, “Well then, **God has granted to the Gentiles also the repentance** that leads to life.” NASB

2 Corinthians 7:10 - 10 For the sorrow that is according to the will of God produces **a repentance without regret, leading to salvation;** but the sorrow of the world produces death. NASB

Repentance says Paul, “**leads to salvation.**” It is a **necessary** and **essential** part of salvation, for what would the human response to God’s grace be if it were not a **heartfelt** and **sincere** turning from sin unto God. And knowing that regeneration is the very saving act of God whereby He grants saving faith, and that faith is of its essence repentant, we see that whenever **true salvation** has taken place, it always accompanies a **sincere repentance**. Moreover, this sincere repentance, being part of the character of saving faith, will **continue throughout life** as our abiding **attitude toward sin.** It is a hearty state of living in that sorrow for and forsaking of personal sin, being also committed unto obedience to God.

1 John 1:6-10 - 6 If we say that we have fellowship with Him and **yet walk in the darkness**, we lie and do not practice the truth; 7 but if we walk in the light as He Himself is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and **the blood of Jesus His Son cleanses us from all sin.** 8 If we say that we have no sin, we are deceiving ourselves, and the truth is not in us. 9 If **we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.** 10 If we say that we have not sinned, we make Him a liar, and His word is not in us. NASB

See here that for the true believer the **ongoing acknowledgement of sin**, even to the point of **confession**, and the practice of obedience “**walking in the light,**” is that abiding state of right-standing with God that we live in, and the “**blood of Jesus His Son cleanses us from all sin.**” The repentant believer is therefore not only trusting in the righteousness of Christ for His salvation, but lives in a heartfelt commitment to obedience to God. We see this clearly in the Thessalonians repentance. They not only “**turned to God from their idols,**” but that repentance produces a life of service to God.

1 Thessalonians 1:9 - 9 For they themselves report about us what kind of a reception we had with you, and **how you turned to God from idols to serve** a living and true God NASB This when Paul would preach the Gospel, He would call people not just to **repentance and faith, but also to a life of obedience.**

Acts 26:20 - 20 but kept declaring both to those of Damascus first, and also at Jerusalem and then throughout all the region of Judea, and even to the Gentiles, that **they should repent and turn to God, performing deeds appropriate to repentance.** NASB

Justification

As we consider Justification, let us consider the Westminster catechism question number 32 which defines Justification quite well.

Q. What is Justification.

A. Justification is an act of God's free grace, wherein he pardons all our sins, (Rom 3:24, Eph 1:7) and accepts us as righteous in His sight (2 Cor 5:21) only for the righteousness of Christ imputed to us, (Rom 5:19) and received by faith alone. (Gal 2:16, Phil 3:9)

Now this statement gets right to the heart of what Justification in the biblical sense really is. It is broken down into four parts as follows....

- **Justification is an act of God's free grace** - God's work, given freely(at no cost to the beneficiary, flowing from the gracious character of God)
- **wherein he pardons all our sins** – It is a legal (forensic) term dealing with Law and includes pardon from sin, God is pictured as Judge
- **and accepts us as righteous in His sight only for the righteousness of Christ imputed to us** – Righteousness is also a legal (forensic) matter which comes by imputation
- **and received by faith alone** – Faith is seen as the means of reception or appropriation

This description of Justification speaks to us clearly about the basic *elements* of Justification. It tells us of the nature of Justification, of what it is like and how it functions in God's plan of Redemption. With these elements in mind, let us look a little closer and understand how these are described in the Bible.

Justification is an act of God's free grace – The Scripture clearly ascribes justification as being an act of God.

Romans 8:33 - 33 Who will bring a charge against God's elect? **God is the one who justifies;**
NASB

Galatians 3:8 - 8 And the Scripture, foreseeing that **God would justify the Gentiles by faith**,
preached the gospel beforehand to Abraham, saying, "All the nations shall be blessed in you."
NASB

As the Scripture describes this act, it also clearly describes it as flowing from God's gracious character and identifies it as a **free gift** (at no cost) given to the beneficiary. **Justification** in the Bible is always **free** and always associated with **God's grace**.

Romans 3:24-26 - 24 **being justified as a gift by His grace** through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus; 25 **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; 26 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. NASB

Romans 5:16-17 - 16 And **the gift** is not like that which came through the one who sinned; for on the one hand the judgment arose from one transgression resulting in condemnation, but on the other hand **the free gift arose from many transgressions resulting in justification**. 17 For if by the transgression of the one, death reigned through the one, much more those who receive **the**

abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness will reign in life through the One, Jesus Christ. NASB

Titus 3:5-7 - 5 He saved us, not on the basis of deeds which we have done in righteousness, **but according to His mercy**, by the washing of regeneration and renewing by the Holy Spirit, 6 whom He poured out upon us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior, 7 **that being justified by His grace** we might be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life. NASB

wherein he pardons all our sins – Justification consists first in **God pardoning** our sins. It is a **legal** (forensic) term dealing with **Law** and God is pictured as the **Judge**. One of God's attributes is **Justice** as He is seen as holy and just, ruling over the world with justice! Throughout the Scripture God is seen as the only Lawgiver and Judge.

Genesis 18:25 - 25 "Far be it from Thee to do such a thing, to slay the righteous with the wicked, so that the righteous and the wicked are treated alike. Far be it from Thee! **Shall not the Judge of all the earth deal justly?"** NASB

Isaiah 33:20 - 2 For **the Lord is our judge, The Lord is our lawgiver**, The Lord is our king; He will save us NASB

James 4:12 - 12 **There is only one Lawgiver and Judge, the One** who is able to save and to destroy; but who are you who judge your neighbor? NASB

In this sense, **our sins** are brought ultimately and finally to the authority of the **Judge** of all the earth to be dealt with in finality. **Justification** concerning our **sins** before God then is a legal or forensic proceeding in **God's tribunal**. It is here where we receive a **pardon from God** which means a release from the **penalty** of our offenses, a **free remission** of the penalty or **consequences** of sin. We are therefore set free from the bondage or **power** of **sin**, because the consequences of the Law have been foregone by the Lawgiver and Judge.

1 Corinthians 15:56-57 - 56 The sting of death is sin, and **the power of sin is the law**; 57 but thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. NASB

Romans 8:1-2 - 1 There is therefore now **no condemnation** for those who are in Christ Jesus. 2 For **the law of the Spirit of life** in Christ Jesus has set you free from **the law of sin and of death**. NASB

This **does not mean** we are **not guilty**, but that the consequences of our guilt have been foregone or remitted, **paid in full** by our **Redeemer**. This is called **expiation**. Our guilt then can remain no longer, it is removed by way of its **penalties** and **consequences** being **pardoned** by the **Judge**, on the basis of Christ being punished in our place as a substitute. This pardon of justification is a **declarative act** on the part of God. It is a *final* pronouncement of the commuting of the sentence of death.

John 8:36 - 36 "If therefore the Son shall make you free, **you shall be free indeed**. NASB
and accepts us as righteous in His sight only for the righteousness of Christ imputed to us – Apart from the removal of the consequences and subsequently our guilt, we are also credited with a positive righteousness in this Justification. We are said to now possess the righteousness of God. This righteousness means, **right-standing** with God or acceptable in His sight. Because the **penalties** of **sin** have been **satisfied** by **Christ's payment** at Calvary, **we are free** from any accusation or blemish of any kind.

Colossians 1:21-22 - 22 But now he has reconciled you by Christ's physical body through death to **present you holy in his sight, without blemish and free from accusation-**

Now this righteousness is the righteousness that **God** both *requires* and *provides* in Christ.

1 Corinthians 1:30-31 - 30 But by His doing you are in Christ Jesus, **who became to us wisdom from God, and righteousness and sanctification, and redemption**, 31 that, just as it is written, "Let him who boasts, boast in the Lord." NASB

Romans 5:19 - 19 For as through the one man's disobedience the many were made sinners, even so **through the obedience of the One the many will be made righteous**. NASB

2 Corinthians 5:21 - 21 He made Him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, **that we might become the righteousness of God in Him**. NASB

Because of Christ's obedience and fulfillment of the Law, we are now **reckoned** or **counted as righteous in God's sight**. Our righteousness is "**in Him**" (2 Cor 5:21) and "**through Him**" (Rom 5:19). Christ Himself is our Righteousness (1 Cor 1:30). This righteousness that we possess before God then, is not our own inherent righteousness, but the **righteousness of Christ** Himself.

Philippians 3:9-10 - 9 and may be found **in Him, not having a righteousness of my own** derived from the Law, but that which is through faith in **Christ, the righteousness which comes from God** on the basis of faith, NASB

and received by faith alone – This righteousness then becomes ours by simply trusting in or looking to Christ for it. This believing or trusting is what the Bible calls faith. It is through this faith that this righteousness is imputed or reckoned to us.

Romans 4:5 - 5 But to the one who does not work, but believes in Him who justifies the ungodly, **his faith is reckoned as righteousness**, NASB

Romans 3:21-24 - 21 But now apart from the Law **the righteousness of God** has been manifested, being witnessed by the Law and the Prophets, 22 even **the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all those who believe**; for there is no distinction; 23 for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, 24 being **justified** as a **gift by His grace** through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus; NASB

This very simple concept is portrayed very clearly in Scripture and provides for us, through the merits of Christ, both righteousness (right-standing with God) and justification (declared righteous in His sight).

Romans 10:4 - 4 For Christ is the end of the law **for righteousness to everyone who believes**.
NASB

Romans 3:28 - 28 For we maintain that **a man is justified by faith** apart from works of the Law.
NASB

The Basis of Justification

But how and on what basis can God pardon freely? How is the justice of God actually met if we do not pay the penalty for our own sins? This is an important question to which the Scripture says much and gives clear answers. As we have discussed, justification is a legal term describing the act whereby God *declares* us righteous based on the merits of Christ. This justification is a complete work of God whereby He fully meets all the requirements of divine justice and then on that basis declares the sinner righteous. In this work God.....

- satisfies and appeases the divine requirements of justice - **Propitiation**
- completely removes the guilt of our sins, - **Expiation**

- credits the righteousness and merit of Christ to the believer – **Imputation**
- restores relationship and right-standing with God - **Reconciliation**

It is clear from scripture that in the death of Christ upon the cross, that God's wrath because of sin has been satisfied by Christ's payment of death. This is called "**propitiation.**" Because Jesus was without sin, His was qualified to pay **the debt for all sin** by His death. He died as a substitute or in place of sinners, and bore the wrath of God Himself, not dying for His own sins but for the sins of all who would trust him. This sacrifice of atonement, that is, the death of Christ, affected a real and fundamental change in our relationship to God by taking our place and bearing the guilt of our sins as an offering to appease the holy wrath of God.

Hebrews 2:17 - 17 Therefore, He had to be made like His brethren in all things, that He might become a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, **to make propitiation for the sins of the people.** NASB

It is in this "**propitiation**" that God, in His requirement of divine justice is actually propitiated. Because God has instituted the sacrificial system as a means of atonement, he has therefore been pleased to have a sacrifice appease or satisfy His wrath. Propitiation is an "**appeasement**" or "**satisfaction.**" The holy anger and wrath of God toward sin demands a satisfaction of justice, and His vengeance is enraged toward sin and must have a subject to inflict the good and righteous penalty of death.

Romans 6:23 - 23 **For the wages of sin is death,** but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord. NASB

Therefore we must have a substitute to satisfy God's wrath or be consumed ourselves. This is what sets Christianity apart from every other world religion. Jesus Christ is the only sufficient substitute who can meet the just requirements of God's law (divine justice) in order to die vicariously (for us) as a substitute (in our place). Jesus becomes then this propitiation *Himself* to appease the wrath of God.

1 John 4:10 - 10 In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and **sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins.** NASB

Notice here, that this propitiation is not only what Christ did (the work of Christ), but that Jesus Christ Himself (the person of Christ) is the propitiation for our sins. The New Testament words normally translated as "**propitiation**" are the Greek [hilasterion 2435] and [hilasmos 2434], and carry with them the idea of "**expiation**" (to remove offense or guilt) or to "**cover over.**" In fact, these Greek terms actually hold a more personal meaning to the means of expiation, namely that of "**an atoning victim**" or the actual sacrifice of atonement, an expiator. This idea, that Jesus is the "**atoning victim,**" the propitiatory sacrifice, means that Jesus paid a very real price. He literally bore the penalty for our sins! Our chastisement became His! He carried our griefs....and our sorrows! This was beautifully expressed by Isaiah's prophecy, in chapter 53.

Isaiah 53:4-6, 11-12 - 4 Surely **our griefs He Himself bore, And our sorrows He carried;** Yet we ourselves esteemed Him stricken, Smitten of God, and afflicted. 5 But He **was pierced through for our transgressions, He was crushed for our iniquities; The chastening for our**

well-being fell upon Him, And by His scourging we are healed. 6 All of us like sheep have gone astray, Each of us has turned to his own way; But the **LORD has caused the iniquity of us all To fall on Him.** 11 As a result of the anguish of His soul, He will see it and be satisfied; By His knowledge the Righteous One, **My Servant, will justify the many, As He will bear their iniquities.** 12 Therefore, I will allot Him a portion with the great, And He will divide the booty with the strong; Because He poured out Himself to death, And was numbered with the transgressors; Yet **He Himself bore the sin of many, And interceded for the transgressors.**

NASB

Therefore, the atonement does in fact *satisfy* God's holy wrath toward sin because it is God's own work, graciously creating the means for us to be justified and His holy wrath to be appeased. All of this was designed in eternity by God and implemented by Him in the course of History because of the great love that He wished to express to us in Christ Jesus our Lord.

1 Peter 1:18-20 – 18 knowing that you were not redeemed with perishable things like silver or gold from your futile way of life inherited from your forefathers, 19 but with precious blood, as of a lamb unblemished and spotless, the blood of Christ. 20 For **He was foreknown before the foundation of the world,** but has appeared in these last times **for the sake of you** NASB

But propitiation is not the only thing that justification is. Not only has God's wrath been appeased but, the actual guilt of sinners has been removed by Christ's payment, because He paid the full price of that guilt. This is called "**“expiation.”**" Jesus removed our guilt having paid the full price of redemption for our sins. Christ made a fundamental change in our relationship with God by *expiating* our guilt. In expiation, our guilt has been removed by meeting the demands of holy justice for sin on our behalf. The offense of our sins has been absorbed by the *sacrifice* of the body of Jesus for us, and the requirements of God's justice for sin have been "**“cancelled out.”**"

Colossians 2:13-14 - 13 And when you were dead in your transgressions and the uncircumcision of your flesh, He made you alive together with Him, having forgiven us all our transgressions, 14 **having canceled out the certificate of debt consisting of decrees against us** and which was hostile to us; and **He has taken it out of the way,** having nailed it to the cross. NASB

The penalty deserved in our guilt, has been paid in full by the sacrifice of Christ. This is to say then that the atonement is *redemptive*, that it pays the price required by justice. Jesus death on the cross is seen as a ransom price paid to redeem us from the penalties of the law, "**the certificate of debt consisting in decrees against us**" that we owed to God because of sin.

1 Timothy 2:5-7 - 5 For there is one God, and one mediator also between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, 6 **who gave Himself as a ransom for all**, the testimony borne at the proper time. NASB

This is why the scripture can say, there is now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus. Having our guilt cancelled, the corresponding condemnation for our sins has been removed.

Romans 8:1-2 - 8:1 There is **therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.** 2 For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set you free from the law of sin and of death. NASB

Jesus death is the full payment price demanded by the law because of our violations of it. He redeemed us from the *curse* of the law.

Galatians 3:13 - 13 Christ redeemed us from the curse of the Law, having become a curse for us — for it is written, "CURSED IS EVERYONE WHO HANGS ON A TREE" NASB

All of this was done by God, who justifies, and this has removed our guilt and condemnation.

Romans 8:33-34 - 33 Who will bring any charge against those whom God has chosen? **It is God who justifies.** 34 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.

However there is still yet more to the **basis of justification** than propitiation and expiation. Having our guilt removed and God's wrath because of our sins satisfied, we still lack the positive righteousness required of us by God's Law. You may recall that there are two kinds of sin. There is the transgression of the negative aspects of the Law we call *penal sanctions*. These transgressions or violations have been fully paid for by Christ's sacrifice. But the Law also has *preceptive requirements* whereby God expects us to fulfill certain precepts such as "**love your neighbor as yourself.**" We have sinned by failing to do this again and again.

Therefore it is necessary for God to provide for us a righteousness of fulfilled *preceptive requirements* because we have failed to fulfill them in order to have this positive righteousness before God. We have need of a foreign righteousness that is not our own, but is rather being afforded to us by other means because we do not possess it in and of ourselves. In justification, God provides this righteousness to us by "**imputation.**" In this imputation God credits the righteousness of Christ to us. Jesus' perfect righteousness has become ours through faith in Him. It is the merits of Christ perfectly fulfilling the preceptive requirements of the Law that becomes ours in justification through imputation. This gives us positive righteousness in the sight of God. We can stand in God's presence therefore, with the imputed righteousness and holiness of Christ.

1 Corinthians 1:30-31 - 30 But by His doing you are in Christ Jesus, **who became to us wisdom from God, and righteousness and sanctification, and redemption,** 31 that, just as it is written, "Let him who boasts, boast in the Lord." NASB

Romans 5:18-19 - 18 So then as through one transgression there resulted condemnation to all men, even so **through one act of righteousness there resulted justification** of life to all men. 19 For as through the one man's disobedience the many were made sinners, even so **through the obedience of the One the many will be made righteous.** NASB

2 Corinthians 5:21 - 21 He made Him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, **that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.** NASB

Therefore when we say that the sinner is "**declared righteous**" by God it is because the sinner is not actually righteous in himself but in Christ has received a foreign righteousness which is not his own, but is from God in Christ. Since Jesus' life was one of sinless perfection, this righteousness which is received is also therefore perfect.

Philippians 3:9-10 - 9 and may be found in Him, **not having a righteousness of my own derived from the Law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which comes from God** on the basis of faith, NASB

Romans 3:21-24 - 21 But now apart from the Law **the righteousness of God** has been manifested, being witnessed by the Law and the Prophets, 22 even **the righteousness of God**

through faith in Jesus Christ for all those who believe; for there is no distinction; 23 for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, 24 being justified as a **gift by His grace** through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus; NASB

Christ's righteousness is now ours and this has then fully met all the requirements of God's Law for us so that before His seat as our righteous Judge, we can be declared righteous on **this basis of propitiation, expiation and imputation.** And all of this has brought about Justification before God.

Romans 5:9- 9 Much more then, **having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from the wrath of God through Him.** NASB

Now because the requirements of divine justice have been fully met and we are now declared righteous in the sight of God, this has restored the relationship with God that was damaged because of sin. In the Bible, this is called "**reconciliation.**" We have been reconciled to God through Christ! God took the initiative, and sent His Son Jesus to reconcile us to Himself.

2 Corinthians 5:18 - 18 Now **all these things are from God, who reconciled us to Himself through Christ,** and gave us the ministry of reconciliation, NASB

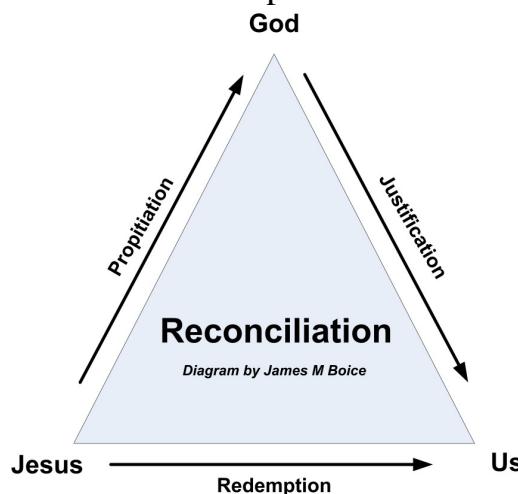
In this reconciliation we now exult in God. This means we are overwhelmed with joy because the most fundamental problem that mankind faces (estrangement from God because of sin), has been corrected and we can now rejoice that we have been brought back into right-standing with Him through our Lord Jesus Christ.

Romans 5:10-11 - 10 For if while we were enemies, **we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son,** much more, **having been reconciled,** we shall be saved by His life. 11 And not only this, but we also exult in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, **through whom we have now received the reconciliation.** NASB

On this basis then we can now fellowship with God once again. We are free to love Him because He has freely loved us, even when we were at enmity with Him.

1 Peter 1:8-9 - and though you have not seen Him, **you love Him,** and though you do not see Him now, but believe in Him, **you greatly rejoice with joy inexpressible and full of glory,** 9 obtaining as the outcome of your faith the salvation of your souls. NASB

The below diagram by James Boice is helpful in understanding reconciliation.



Adoption

Another astounding word for salvation used in the New Testament is **adoption**. **Adoption is an act of God whereby He makes us members of His family** (Grudem's Systematic Theology page 736). When we speak of being members of God's family, we are speaking of our **status** or **standing** now that has come as a result of our **faith in Christ**. This has become our right and privilege.

John 1:12-13 - 12 But **as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God**, even to those **who believe in His name**, 13 who were born not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God. NASB

When we speak about adoption in regard to the **order of salvation**, it is clear that **adoption follows faith** and is a **direct result of faith**. Although this adoption has included us in the Old Testament blessing of being called "children of Abraham" (Rom 9:7-8, Gal 4:28), it did not reach its full status until Christ came and merited this blessing for us in its fullness.

Galatians 3:23-26 - 23 But **before faith came, we were kept in custody under the law, being shut up to the faith which was later to be revealed**. 24 Therefore the Law has become our tutor to lead us to Christ, that we may be justified by faith. 25 But **now that faith has come, we are no longer under a tutor**. 26 **For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus**. NASB

We see then that our **adoption** is a **status** and **privilege** that is ours because of our faith in Christ. In contrast we see that those who **do not believe in Christ**, or live a life of love and obedience to Him do not possess this blessing but in fact are "**children of wrath**" and "**sons of disobedience**" (Eph 2:3). Jesus explained to the unbelieving Jews that they were in fact **sons of the devil** himself, **not of God**, because of their rejection of Christ.

John 8:41-45 - 41 "**You are doing the deeds of your father.**" They said to Him, "We were not born of fornication; we have one Father, even God." 42 Jesus said to them, "**If God were your Father, you would love Me**; for I proceeded forth and have come from God, for I have not even come on My own initiative, but He sent Me. 43 "Why do you not understand what I am saying? It is because you cannot hear My word. 44 "**You are of your father the devil**, and you want to do the desires of your father. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. Whenever he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own nature; for he is a liar, and the father of lies. NASB

And John clarifies that a **life of disobedience** is a sure **sign** that one is **not** a child of God.

1 John 3:9-10 - 9 No one who is born of God practices sin, because His seed abides in him; and he cannot sin, because he is born of God. 10 **By this the children of God and the children of the devil are obvious: anyone who does not practice righteousness is not of God**, nor the one who does not love his brother. NASB

But those who are children of God have received the blessing of the **Holy Spirit** to have come to live inside of them. We are said to have received the "**spirit of adoption**," and He "**bears witness with our spirit**" that we are indeed His very own children.

Romans 8:14-17 - 14 For all who are being led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God. 15 For you have not received a spirit of slavery leading to fear again, **but you have received a spirit of adoption as sons by which we cry out, "Abba! Father!" 16 The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God,** 17 and if children, heirs also, heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him in order that we may also be glorified with Him. NASB

The terms “**Abba! Father!**” are used to describe that **intimacy of relations** that we now experience with God by His Spirit within us. It is a cry of **dependence** and **adoration** that each one of us has received as a result of Him taking up residence within us.

Galatians 4:6-7 - 6 And because you are sons, **God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into our hearts, crying, "Abba! Father!"** 7 Therefore you are no longer a slave, but a son; and if a son, then an heir through God. NASB

Now since we have become **members of His family**, we are therefore together with **all Christian believers** in a new and heavenly relation to them as our beloved family. And we have experienced this blessing as we have met so many Christians whom we hardly know, yet that Spirit within us bears witness of the profundity of our life together in Christ, and having God as our blessed Father! Often times the relationships that we now experience with fellow Christians, even run deeper than they do with our own blood relatives. And so we speak as fellow Christians as brothers and sisters, members of our own dear family.

1 Timothy 5:1-2 – 1 Do not sharply rebuke an older man, but rather **appeal to him as a father, to the younger men as brothers, 2 the older women as mothers, and the younger women as sisters**, in all purity. NASB

Moreover, having God as our Father, and we being His children, is in fact the highest privilege we could possess. Consider, what higher place of honor do you have to anyone except to be a member of the family. Consider John’s profound words;

1 John 3:1 – 1 See how **great a love the Father has bestowed upon us, that we should be called children of God; and such we are**. For this reason the world does not know us, because it did not know Him. NASB

It is the **great love of God** that motivated Him to **adopt us!** Indeed the God who is love that has lavished His love upon us to such degree that He has made us His very own kids! And “**such we are,**” repeats the Apostle, as if to solidify in our understanding the certainty of this high privilege. And this privilege brings with it innumerable blessings that we experience everyday of our lives. Indeed that Lord God Almighty, having become our Father, is now disposed to **meet all of our needs** and to **care for us with lovingkindness and compassion.**

Psalm 103:13 - 13 Just as a father has compassion on his children, **So the Lord has compassion on those who fear Him.** NASB

Matthew 6:30-32 - 30 "But if God so arrays the grass of the field, which is alive today and tomorrow is thrown into the furnace, **will He not much more do so for you, O men of little faith?** 31 "Do not be anxious then, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we

drink?' or 'With what shall we clothe ourselves?' 32 "For all these things the Gentiles eagerly seek; **for your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things.** NASB And we have the blessing and benefit of being led by God, guided by Him so that we walk in the path of blessing and privilege.

Romans 8:14 - 14 For all who are being **led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God.** NASB

And He fills us with the **good fruit of His Spirit** so that we experience and enjoy the beauty and **goodness** of His own **virtue** in our persons as He fashions us into His own likeness.

Galatians 5:22 - 22 But the **fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, 23 gentleness, self-control;** against such things there is no law. NASB

And He has yet laid up for us an **eternal inheritance, “kept in Heaven”** for us, that we will experience the blessing of forever and ever, world without end.

1 Peter 1:3-5 - 3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His great mercy has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, 4 **to obtain an inheritance which is imperishable and undefiled and will not fade away, reserved in heaven for you,** 5 who are protected by the power of God through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. NASB

How could words describe the **abundance** of this blessing that endures forever to be enjoyed without end in the coming ages. We are said to be "**heirs with Christ,**" who of course is the "**heir of all things**" (Heb 1:2).

Romans 8:16-17 - 16 The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that **we are children of God, 17 and if children, heirs also, heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ,** if indeed we suffer with Him in order that we may also be glorified with Him.

Galatians 4:6-7 - 6 And because you are sons, **God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into our hearts, crying, "Abba! Father!"** 7 Therefore you are no longer a slave, but a son; and if a son, then an heir through God. NASB

1 Corinthians 3:21-23 - 21 So then let no one boast in men. For **all things belong to you, 22 whether Paul or Apollos or Cephas or the world or life or death or things present or things to come; all things belong to you,** 23 and you belong to Christ; and Christ belongs to God. NASB

Adoption is also spoken of in Scripture as a yet **future** event, when it is fully **consummated** by the glorification of our bodies when Christ returns.

Romans 8:23 - 23 And not only this, but also we ourselves, having the first fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, **waiting eagerly for our adoption as sons, the redemption of our body.** NASB

Let us see in all of these wonderful blessings of **adoption** that God has **conferred** upon us the **highest privilege** indeed, so much so that we have even been brought into the **most intimate relation** with God, as a result of His free grace to us in Christ. Let this be a great motivating factor for us to live in a manner worthy of His great love, both **glorifying** and **enjoying** Him as we live out our Christian life, eagerly awaiting that day when our redemption shall reach its fullness at the resurrection, and we are glorified together with all those who love His appearing!

Sanctification

In the “*ordo salutis*” or **order of salvation**, **sanctification** is that part of **salvation** that begins at **regeneration** and continues until the resurrection, being terminated by **glorification**. It follows **conversion** (faith and repentance), **justification**, and **adoption**, all of which are birthed by regeneration and happened apparently simultaneously. Sanctification then issues forth until death. **Sanctification is that work of God conforming us into the image of Christ progressively over time.** In this process God by the Word and the Spirit, molds us more and more in our whole person so that we take on His very character in greater degree over time. We are said to “*become partakers of the divine nature*” by “*His magnificent and precious promises*.” Through this divinely ordered process, God “*multiplies His grace and peace*” to us “*through the true knowledge of God*.” God **increases His virtue** in us as we come to truly know Him.

2 Peter 1:2-4 - 2 Grace and peace be multiplied to you in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord; 3 seeing that His divine power has granted to us **everything pertaining to life and godliness, through the true knowledge of Him** who called us by His own glory and excellence. 4 For by these He has granted to us His precious and magnificent promises, **in order that by them you might become partakers of the divine nature**, having escaped the corruption that is in the world by lust. NASB

Not only this, but as a result of God working by the Word and the Spirit in us, He calls us to “*work out our salvation*,” making every **effort** by faith, or “*applying all diligence in your faith*,” cooperating with God because God is at work in you to do His will and pleasure.

Philippians 2:12-13 - 12 So then, my beloved, just as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, **work out your salvation** with fear and trembling; 13 **for it is God who is at work in you, both to will and to work for His good pleasure.** NASB

2 Peter 1:5-8 - 5 Now for this very reason also, **applying all diligence, in your faith supply moral excellence**, and in your moral excellence, knowledge; 6 and in your knowledge, self-control, and in your self-control, perseverance, and in your perseverance, godliness; 7 and in your godliness, brotherly kindness, and in your brotherly kindness, love. 8 For **if these qualities are yours and are increasing, they render you neither useless nor unfruitful in the true knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.** NASB

And this sanctification **affects the whole person** throughout our life, until when we die, when we are ultimately **glorified** in His presence (see page 12). John Murray comments; “*When we speak of sanctification we generally think of it as that process by which the believer is gradually transformed in heart, mind, will, and conduct and conformed more and more to the will of God and to the image of Christ until at death the disembodied spirit is made perfect in holiness and at the resurrection his body likewise will be conformed to the likeness of the body of Christ's glory. It is biblical to apply the term “sanctification” to this process of transformation and conformation.*” **John Murray – Definitive Sanctification**

Positional and Practical Sanctification - “*Sanctification*,” writes Wayne Grudem, “*is a progressive work of God and man that makes us more and more free from sin and like Christ in our actual lives.*” This of course is a biblically accurate definition of the part of salvation we call **sanctification**. Much of the language of the New Testament speaks of **sanctification** as this **progressive process**. However, it also speaks of sanctification, in certain texts, as a **completed work** which has **already taken place**. This is what we call the “**Positional**” aspect of sanctification, or **Positional Sanctification**. This is because God’s people have been cleansed **in the sight of God or before Him**, having been made **holy** or **sanctified** by the work of Christ. In other words, we hold a **position before God**, which is “**in Christ**” and therefore we have been cleansed, washed, made holy, and purified by the work of Christ alone, and this has been appropriated to us by faith in Him. The New Testament makes reference to this **Positional Sanctification** in several places.

Hebrews 10:10, 14 - 10 By this will **we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all..... 14 For by one offering He has perfected for all time those who are sanctified.** NASB

1 Corinthians 1:30-31 - 30 But by His doing you are in Christ Jesus, **who became to us wisdom from God, and righteousness and sanctification, and redemption,** 31 that, just as it is written, "Let him who boasts, boast in the Lord." NASB

Colossians 1:21-22 - 22 But now he has reconciled you **by Christ's physical body through death to present you holy in his sight, without blemish and free from accusation** NASB

1 Corinthians 6:11 - 11 And such were some of you; **but you were washed, but you were sanctified**, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, and in the Spirit of our God. NASB

See in these Scriptures that there is an **aspect** of **sanctification** which is **already accomplished**. In fact, what Christ accomplished for us was a **perfect righteousness** before God by His perfect life and death, which is applied to us **by faith** when we believe. We were in fact completely **purified** and **cleansed** from our sins, **past, present and future** by what Christ accomplished. This **Positional Sanctification** is **very much like Justification** and **differs** from **Practical or Progressive Sanctification** in its nature. The following chart is depicting Grudem’s view of the differences between Justification and Progressive Sanctification.

Justification & Positional Sanctification	Sanctification Practical or Progressive
Legal Standing	Internal Condition
Once for all time	Continuous throughout life
Entirely God’s work	We cooperate with God
Perfect in this life	Not perfect in this life
The same in all Christians	Greater in some than others

In summary, because **Positional Sanctification** has already been completed by Christ, it is therefore **perfect** and **complete**.

However, the Bible also speaks about **Sanctification** as an **ongoing process**. This is the common use of the word sanctification (and doctrine) which speaks of the Practical or Progressive and ongoing process which continues in our life until the resurrection. As we said earlier, **Sanctification is that work of God conforming us into the image of Christ progressively over time**. But as we have said, it is a **cooperative process** where we are also called to exert effort and diligence to see it come to fruition. Concerning the fact that **sanctification** is a “**cooperative**” and/or “**synergistic**” process, consider this quote by JI Packer; *In sanctification, the Holy Spirit "works in you to will and to act" according to God's purpose; what he does is prompt you to "work out your salvation" (i.e., express it in action) by fulfilling these new desires (Phil. 2:12-13).* **Sanctification**, however, is in one sense synergistic – it is an ongoing cooperative process in which regenerate persons, alive to God and freed from sin's dominion (Rom. 6:11, 14-18), are required to exert themselves in sustained obedience. God's method of sanctification is neither activism (self-reliant activity) nor apathy (God-reliant passivity), **but God-dependent effort** (2 Cor. 7:1; Phil. 3:10-14; Heb. 12:14). **Sanctification** –

Consider how Packer explains how the synergism works. He says that **God prompts us** by the Spirit, having already freed us from the dominion of sin and made alive to God in regeneration, we put forth God-dependent effort. See then that **God is the primary agent and our effort is secondary**. John Murray comments about this cooperation with God. “While we are constantly dependent upon the supernatural agency of the Holy Spirit, we must also take account of the fact that **sanctification is a process** that draws within its scope the conscious life of the believer.... Neither is the relation **strictly one of co-operation as if God did his part and we did ours** so that the conjunction or co-ordination of both produced the required result. **God works in us and we also work.** But the relation is that **because God works we work.**” *Redemption Accomplished and Applied page 148*... Now see how both Packer and Murray are very careful to describe **God** as the **primary worker** in this **cooperative process**. The truth is without God first giving us the Spirit and regenerating us, freeing us from sin's dominion, and Christ having brought about reconciliation through His active and passive obedience, we would be hopelessly lost, remaining dead in our transgression and sin. Let us acknowledge then that God is indeed primary, even in sanctification, and because of this fact, He gets the glory for it. In fact all three members of the Godhead play a role in sanctification (1 Thes 5:23-24, Heb 12:5-11, Heb 13:20-12, 1 Cor 1:30, 1 Pet 2:21) although the Holy Spirit has the specific ministry of applying redemption to us in sanctification. This is why we say that **sanctification is wholly the work of God**, because He is the **primary cause** of it and the one who determines to what

degree we will be practically sanctified in this life (Rom 12:3-6). The Bible explicitly states that God is so sovereignly in control in sanctification that He “***is at work in you, both to will and to work for His good pleasure.***”

Philippians 2:12-13 - 12 So then, my beloved, just as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, **work out your salvation** with fear and trembling; 13 **for it is God who is at work in you, both to will and to work for His good pleasure.** NASB

In fact **God’s role** in Sanctification is emphasized in several places in the New Testament. Peter and Paul both tell us that our being “**chosen for salvation**” is **wrought by the Holy Spirit in sanctification**, that is, that our **election** is **applied** by the **sanctification of the Spirit** in the course of life.

2 Thessalonians 2:13-15 - 13 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. 14 And it was for this He called you through our gospel, that you may gain the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ. 15 So then, brethren, stand firm and hold to the traditions which you were taught, whether by word of mouth or by letter from us. NASB

1 Peter 1:1-2 - 1 Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, to those who reside as aliens, scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia, **who are chosen** 2 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. NASB

And God’s role in sanctification is seen in large degree in the book of Hebrews. In chapter 12 God is seen as a **disciplining Father** working His righteousness in us through the trials and hardships of life, “***that we might share in His holiness.***”

Hebrews 12:5-12 - 5 and you have forgotten the exhortation which is addressed to you as sons, “My son, do not regard lightly the discipline of the Lord, Nor faint when you are reproved by Him; 6 **For those whom the Lord loves He disciplines, And He scourges every son whom He receives.**” 7 It is for discipline that you endure; God deals with you as with sons; for what son is there whom his father does not discipline? 8 But if you are without discipline, of which all have become partakers, then you are illegitimate children and not sons. 9 Furthermore, we had earthly fathers to discipline us, and we respected them; **shall we not much rather be subject to the Father of spirits, and live?** 10 For they disciplined us for a short time as seemed best to them, but **He disciplines us for our good, that we may share His holiness.** 11 All discipline for the moment seems not to be joyful, but sorrowful; yet to those who have been trained by it, afterwards it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness. NASB

And in chapter 13 we are told that God both “**equips**” us to do His will and is “**working in us.**”

Hebrews 13:20-21 - 20 Now the God of peace, who brought up from the dead the great Shepherd of the sheep through the blood of the eternal covenant, even Jesus our Lord, 21 **equip you in every good thing to do His will, working in us that which is pleasing in His sight,** through Jesus Christ, to whom be the glory forever and ever. Amen. NASB

Of course we have statements that explicitly tell us that sanctification is wholly of God and entirely brought about by Him.

2 Corinthians 3:18 - 18 But **we all**, with unveiled face beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, **are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as from the Lord, the Spirit.** NASB

1 Thessalonians 5:23-24 - 23 Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you entirely; and may your spirit and soul and body be preserved complete, without blame at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. 24 **Faithful is He who calls you, and He also will bring it to pass.** NASB

See then that **God** is the **primary cause** and **agent** in Sanctification, He makes us holy.

Our Role – Active and Passive - However, as we have seen, **God works in sanctification and we work**. It is an ongoing cooperative process. God's work is primary and **our effort is secondary**. Therefore we are called to **God-dependent effort** throughout the New Testament. This can be seen in several places. Consider that we are "**led by the Spirit**" indicating that our very lives are directed by the Holy Spirit as we progress toward Christlikeness.

Romans 8:12-14 - 12 So then, brethren, we are under obligation, not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh — 13 for if you are living according to the flesh, you must die; **but if by the Spirit you are putting to death the deeds of the body, you will live. 14 For all who are being led by the Spirit of God**, these are sons of God. NASB

Galatians 5:16-18 - 16 But I say, **walk by the Spirit**, and you will not carry out the desire of the flesh. 17 For **the flesh sets its desire against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; for these are in opposition to one another**, so that you may not do the things that you please. **18 But if you are led by the Spirit**, you are not under the Law. NASB

Moreover, we are commanded by God to "**work out**" our "**salvation**" and in a very ardent and reverent way he says, "**with fear and trembling**"(Phil 2:12).

Philippians 2:12-13 - 12 So then, my beloved, just as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, **work out your salvation** with fear and trembling; 13 **for it is God who is at work in you, both to will and to work for His good pleasure.** NASB

And when Paul says "**work out your salvation**" he uses the term **salvation** here **NOT** as the **initial justification** that occurred when we believed, but **as the ongoing process** of further realizing the blessings and benefits of salvation (or sanctification) in our daily lives. We are **to exert God-dependent effort** to press on toward Christlikeness, thus **bearing His image** in greater degree, and experiencing the enjoyment of Christ's virtue more and more as a result.

2 Corinthians 7:1 - Therefore, having these promises, beloved, **let us cleanse ourselves from all defilement of flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness** in the fear of God. NASB

Philippians 3:10-14 - 10 that I may know Him, and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death; 11 in order that I may attain to the resurrection from the dead. 12 **Not that I have already obtained it, or have already become perfect, but I press on in order that I may lay hold of that for which also I was laid hold of by Christ Jesus.** 13 Brethren, I do not regard myself as having laid hold of it yet; but one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and **reaching forward to what lies ahead, 14 I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.** NASB

Hebrews 12:14 - **Pursue** peace with all men, **and the sanctification** without which no one will see the Lord. NASB

Notice here in these Scriptures that we are to "**cleanse ourselves**" and to "**press on toward the goal**" and to "**pursue...sanctification,**" clearly showing that we are called to exert effort by the Spirit to "**perfect holiness**" in this life. Many

passages in the Bible describe different aspects of our role and explain it as an **active role** on our part.

Romans 8:12-13 - 12 So then, brethren, **we are under obligation**, not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh — 13 for if you are living according to the flesh, you must die; but if **by the Spirit you are putting to death the deeds of the body**, you will live. NASB

1 Thessalonians 4:3-8 - 3 For **this is the will of God, your sanctification**; that is, that you abstain from sexual immorality; 4 that **each of you know how to possess his own vessel in sanctification and honor**, 5 not in lustful passion, like the Gentiles who do not know God; 6 and that no man transgress and defraud his brother in the matter because the Lord is the avenger in all these things, just as we also told you before and solemnly warned you. 7 For **God has not called us for the purpose of impurity, but in sanctification**. 8 Consequently, he who rejects this is not rejecting man but the God who gives His Holy Spirit to you. NASB

1 John 3:2-3 - 2 Beloved, now we are children of God, and it has not appeared as yet what we shall be. We know that, when He appears, we shall be like Him, because we shall see Him just as He is. 3 And **everyone who has this hope fixed on Him purifies himself, just as He is pure**.

NASB

1 Corinthians 6:18-20 - 18 **Flee immorality**. Every other sin that a man commits is outside the body, but the immoral man sins against his own body. 19 Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and that you are not your own? 20 For you have been bought with a price: **therefore glorify God in your body**. NASB

Further, this **active role** that we play is also seen with hearty images in the New Testament which show the **Christian maturing process** as one of **great difficulty**. These images are but not limited to:

- **Struggle/Race –**

1 Timothy 4:10-11 - 10 For it is **for this we labor and strive**, because we have fixed our hope on the living God, who is the Savior of all men, especially of believers. NASB

1 Corinthians 9:24-27 - 24 Do you not know that **those who run in a race all run, but only one receives the prize? Run in such a way that you may win**. 25 And everyone who competes in the games exercises self-control in all things. They then do it to receive a perishable wreath, but we an imperishable. 26 Therefore I run in such a way, as not without aim; I box in such a way, as not beating the air; 27 but **I buffet my body and make it my slave**, lest possibly, after I have preached to others, I myself should be disqualified. NASB

Hebrews 12:1-2 - Therefore, since we have so great a cloud of witnesses surrounding us, let us also lay aside every encumbrance, and the sin which so easily entangles us, and **let us run with endurance the race that is set before us**, 2 fixing our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of faith, who for the joy set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. NASB

- **Conflict/Tension –**

Romans 7:15-23 - 15 For that which I am doing, I do not understand; for **I am not practicing what I would like to do, but I am doing the very thing I hate**. 16 But if I do the very thing I do not wish to do, I agree with the Law, confessing that it is good. 17 So now, no longer am I the one doing it, but sin which indwells me. 18 For I know that nothing good dwells in me, that is, in my flesh; for **the wishing is present in me, but the doing of the good is not. 19 For the good that I wish, I do not do; but I practice the very evil that I do not wish**. 20 But if I am doing the very thing I do not wish, **I am no longer the one doing it, but sin which dwells in me**. 21 I find then the principle that evil is present in me, the one who wishes to do good. 22 For I joyfully concur with the law of God in the inner man, 23 but I see a different law in the members of my body, **waging war against the law of my mind**, and making me a prisoner of the law of sin which is in my members. NASB

Galatians 5:17 - 17 For **the flesh sets its desire against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; for these are in opposition to one another**, so that you may not do the things that you please. NASB

- **Battle/Warfare –**

Ephesians 6:10-13 - 10 Finally, be strong in the Lord, and in the strength of His might. 11 **Put on the full armor of God**, that you may be able to stand firm against the schemes of the devil. 12 **For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of wickedness** in the heavenly places. 13 Therefore, **take up the full armor of God, that you may be able to resist in the evil day**, and having done everything, to stand firm. NASB

1 Timothy 6:12 - 12 **Fight the good fight of faith**; take hold of the eternal life to which you were called, and you made the good confession in the presence of many witnesses. NASB

2 Timothy 2:3-4 - 3 **Suffer hardship with me, as a good soldier of Christ Jesus**. 4 No soldier in active service entangles himself in the affairs of everyday life, so that he may please the one who enlisted him as a soldier. NASB

- **Chastening/Suffering -**

Philippians 1:29-30 - 29 For to you it has been granted for Christ's sake, not only to believe in Him, **but also to suffer for His sake, 30 experiencing the same conflict which you saw in me**, and now hear to be in me. NASB

Hebrews 12:10-11 - For they disciplined us for a short time as seemed best to them, but **He disciplines us for our good, that we may share His holiness**. 11 All discipline for the moment seems not to be joyful, but sorrowful; **yet to those who have been trained by it**, afterwards it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness. NASB

1 Peter 4:15-19 - 15 By no means let any of you suffer as a murderer, or thief, or evildoer, or a troublesome meddler; 16 but **if anyone suffers as a Christian, let him not feel ashamed, but in that name let him glorify God**. 17 For it is time for judgment to begin with the household of God; and if it begins with us first, what will be the outcome for those who do not obey the gospel of God? 18 And if it is with difficulty that the righteous is saved, what will become of the godless man and the sinner? 19 Therefore, **let those also who suffer according to the will of God entrust their souls to a faithful Creator** in doing what is right. NASB

And so we are called to **strive and exert God dependent effort** to see the battle or race won and the process of becoming like Christ completed to greater and greater degree.

2 Peter 1:5-8 - 5 Now for this very reason also, **applying all diligence, in your faith supply moral excellence**, and in your moral excellence, knowledge; 6 and in your knowledge, self-control, and in your self-control, perseverance, and in your perseverance, godliness; 7 and in your godliness, brotherly kindness, and in your brotherly kindness, love. 8 For **if these qualities are yours and are increasing, they render you neither useless nor unfruitful in the true knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ**. NASB

Hebrews 6:9-12 - 9 But, beloved, we are convinced of better things concerning you, and **things that accompany salvation**, though we are speaking in this way. 10 For God is not unjust so as to forget **your work and the love which you have shown** toward His name, in **having ministered and in still ministering to the saints**. 11 And we desire that each one of you show the same diligence so as to realize the full assurance of hope until the end, 12 **that you may not be sluggish, but imitators** of those who through faith and patience inherit the promises. NASB

Our role is very much active and this **active role** is the **major goal of Christian life**. This of course is because God's chief purpose in our salvation is to manifest His own glory and excellence as God, and **He does this in us through sanctification, causing us to bear His image in greater degree** throughout the Christian life. This is emphasized again and again in large sections of the New

Testament such as Romans 12:14, Ephesians 4:17-6:20, Phil 4:4-9, Col 3:1-4:6. 1 Pet 2:11-5:11, 2 Pet 1:5-8, 1 John 2-3). Since this is the major goal of Christian life, see then how important it is that **we continue to actively pursue holiness** in our lives until we achieve the goal, Christlikeness.

Now there is also a **passive role in sanctification** that we play and it is a very important part of the process. This passive role is seen in texts that encourage us to **yield ourselves in faith or trust in God, and looking to Him in prayer** for strength and in **dependence upon Him** for the grace and help that we need to become like Him and obey Him. In fact, most everything we do in Christian life, if it is to be done to the glory of God is an **act of faith and trust in God's strength** to accomplish. This is surely true about the process of mortifying sin and behaving in a godly righteous way.

Romans 6:11-14 - 11 Even so **consider yourselves to be dead to sin**, but alive to God in Christ Jesus. 12 Therefore **do not let sin reign** in your mortal body that you should obey its lusts, 13 and **do not go on presenting the members of your body to sin** as instruments of unrighteousness; but present yourselves to God as those alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness to God. 14 For sin shall not be master over you, for you are not under law, but under grace. NASB

Colossians 3:5 - 5 Therefore **consider the members of your earthly body as dead** to immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, and greed, which amounts to idolatry. NASB

We are **dependent** on the Holy Spirit's work to grow in sanctification, and this can be clearly seen in texts like Phil 2:13-13 and Romans 8:12-13.

Romans 8:12-13 - 12 So then, brethren, we are under obligation, not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh — 13 for if you are living according to the flesh, you must die; but if **by the Spirit you are putting to death the deeds of the body**, you will live. NASB

Grudem comments on this passive role in sanctification; "*Unfortunately today, this "passive" role in sanctification, this idea of yielding to God and trusting him to work in us "to will and to work for his good pleasure" (Phil 2:13), is sometimes so strongly emphasized that it is the only thing people are told about the path of sanctification. Sometimes the popular phrase "let go and let God" is given as a summary of how to live the Christian life. But this is a tragic distortion of the doctrine of sanctification, for it only speaks of one half of the part we must play, and, by itself, will lead Christians to become lazy and to neglect the active role that Scripture commands them to play in their own sanctification.*" (from Systematic Theology by Wayne Grudem)

Nevertheless we not only yield and submit ourselves to His divine will, but we are called to **exert God-dependent effort** to **press on** toward Christlikeness, as He molds and fashions us, thus **bearing His image** in greater degree.

Enjoying Christ and the goal of sanctification - Let us consider that as we **exert God-dependent effort** to **press on** toward **Christlikeness**, we will in fact by the Spirit's transforming power attain ever increasing degrees of holiness and

experience His virtue in our character. In this striving after Christlikeness we glorify God and have a **sure goal** that is always before us calling us heavenward to **progress in bearing His image**. We must actively fix our eyes on Jesus and seek to imitate His likeness.

Ephesians 5:1-2 - Therefore **be imitators of God, as beloved children; 2 and walk in love, just as Christ also loved you**, and gave Himself up for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God as a fragrant aroma. NASB

We are called to pursue this character actively in our Christian life, for it is God's purpose to conform into Christ's image. The New Testament puts this forward as an **imperative** again and again. Putting on Christ's virtue is **not optional** but **mandated** by Jesus and the Apostles.

John 15:10-12 - 10 "If you keep My commandments, you will abide in My love; just as I have kept My Father's commandments, and abide in His love. 11 "These things I have spoken to you, that **My joy may be in you**, and that your joy may be made full. 12 "**This is My commandment, that you love one another, just as I have loved you.**"
NASB

Colossians 3:12-15 - 12 And so, as those who have been chosen of God, holy and beloved, **put on a heart of compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience; 13 bearing with one another, and forgiving each other**, whoever has a complaint against anyone; just as the Lord forgave you, so also should you. 14 And **beyond all these things put on love**, which is the perfect bond of unity. 15 And **let the peace of Christ rule** in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in one body; and **be thankful**. NASB

As we **look to God in faith** in seeking these virtues, and seek the **filling** of the **Holy Spirit**, we receive power from God both to put off the old nature and to put on the new. God's Word calls us to **careful** and **calculated God dependent effort** to accomplish this.

Ephesians 5:15-19 - 15 Therefore **be careful how you walk**, not as unwise men, but as wise, 16 **making the most of your time**, because the days are evil. 17 So then do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is. 18 And do not get drunk with wine, for that is dissipation, but **be filled with the Spirit**, 19 speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody with your heart to the Lord;
NASB

As we experience the **daily renewal** of the filling of the Holy Spirit, these virtues increase in our character and we come to enjoy the very **goodness of God** in our own selves and relations, and become nourished by the good fruit of His Spirit in our daily lives. In this transforming process we experience the **beauty of Christlikeness** in a rich and powerful way as it seasons our life with the very character of Christ and we fulfill our **chief end of glorifying and enjoying God**.

Galatians 5:22-25 - 22 But **the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, 23 gentleness, self-control**; against such things there is no law. 24 Now those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. 25 **If we live by the Spirit**, let us also walk by the Spirit. NASB

This **fruit of the Holy Spirit** becomes the very experience of our days, filling our life with the beauty of God's nature. Bruce Demarest points out that these 9 rich

and powerful virtues (which are the **single** fruit of the Spirit) are given to us in three **triads**, each expressing a different relation to our lives. These are to be actively cultivated in us by **God dependent effort**.

- **Love, Joy Peace** – These virtues affect our **basic disposition** or if you will the foundation of our **attitude, demeanor** and **mindset** in daily life. **Love** here is the *agape* love of God which is self-giving, sacrificial and supernatural (**John 15:13,1 Cor 13:4-8,1 John 3:16-18,4:7-11**). **Joy** is that inner delight and felicity in the heart that, being focused in faith on God's goodness to us in Christ, is immovable and constant regardless of negative circumstances (**Psa 31:7,Neh 8:10,Acts 13:52,1 Pet 1:6-9**). **Peace** is that abiding calmness, serenity and rest in the heart and mind which results from reconciliation with God in Christ, and provides us with freedom from anxiety and distress in daily circumstances (**John 14:27, Rom 5:1,15:13, Phil 4:7,Col 3:15,2 Thess 3:16**,).
- **Patience, kindness, goodness** – These graces concern our **relationship to others**. **Patience** is that forbearing temperance of attitude that suffers long or endures with difficult circumstances or troublesome people (**Rom 15:1, Eph 4:2,Col 3:13,1 Thes 5:14**). **Kindness** is a charitable and generous disposition toward others that manifests in gracious acts of free benevolence to others (**Luke 6:35,Eph 4:32,Col 3:12-13**). **Goodness** is not sinlessness but an integrity and uprightness of heart and mind that reflects God's goodness (His righteousness, holiness, justice, kindness, grace, mercy, and love) in our relationships with others (**Luke 6:35,Gal 6:10,1 Thes 5:15,Heb 13:16,3 John 11**).
- **Faithfulness, gentleness, self-control** – These qualities regard our **individual selves**. **Faithfulness** is a steadfast and reliable integrity and loyalty to others in our word, priorities and commitments (**Luke 21:16-19,1 Cor 4:2,2 Tim 4:7-8**). **Gentleness** is a humble consideration toward others which gives preference in honor (**Rom 12:16,1 Thes 2:7,Tit 3:2**). **Self-control** is that self-discipline or self-restraint which is temperate under temptation and emotional duress or excitement (**Acts 24:25,1 Cor 7:5,9:25-27,2 Pet 1:6**).

Let us then **actively cultivate** these virtues and to the degree that we do, we will **enjoy Christ!**

2 Corinthians 13:11 - 11 Finally, brethren, **rejoice**, be made complete, be comforted, be like-minded, **live in peace**; and the **God of love and peace shall be with you**. NASB

Perseverance (Preservation) – also called Eternal Security

Someone may ask, “is my salvation secure, or can I lose it.” As you read on we will answer this question in detail, but for now let us say that if it depended on us, or our ability to “remain faithful” to God, we would be hopelessly lost. Who is it that possesses such mighty strength in themselves as to never fall away or sin against God? Which one of us stands in the great hour of temptation except by the

keeping power of God? The truth is that Christians stand in the faith not by their own strength, but by the power of God. Your salvation is secure not because you have great faith, but because your faith is in the One who is Great! If you belong to Christ, He will not leave you or forsake you, rather being the Good Shepherd, He will “*lose none of all that the Father has given*” him. He will see to it that you make it to Heaven’s door, and you can rest *assured* that you have eternal life if you have been born again as He commanded. The **Bible plainly declares** that those who truly believe will in fact Persevere to the end by Christ’s power.

Colossians 3:3-4 - 3 For you have died and **your life is hidden with Christ in God**. 4

When Christ, who is our life, is revealed, then you also will be revealed with Him in glory. NASB

1 Peter 1:3-5 - 3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His great mercy has **caused us to be born again to a living hope** through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, 4 **to obtain an inheritance** which is imperishable and undefiled and will not fade away, reserved in heaven for you, 5 **who are protected by the power of God through faith** for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. NASB

Consider these words of Peter. He says that God has “**caused us to be born again to a living hope**” and that this was to “**obtain an inheritance**.” Here is seen a twofold purpose of God in saving us, that we would have a “**living hope**” and that we would “**obtain an inheritance**.” This means that God expects us to have a hope in the future inheritance in Heaven which is alive, and sure, because of the One who has caused it. But so as to make the ground of this hope solid, he tells us, “**who are protected by the power of God through faith**.” Now here we have living hope and are assured that this inheritance is ours! Who shall thwart the mighty power and purpose of God to protect us through faith, so that we will, in the end, receive the promised inheritance? None indeed! Could there be words which describe a more secure foundation of our hope? Note well dear Christian who it is that keeps you in the day of doubt and trouble.

They Shall Never Perish - In teaching of Jesus, he has very clearly designed to encourage us that we shall not fall away, but be kept by Him until the day of safety. Consider the heavenly words of John 10.....

John 10:27-29 - 27 "My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me; 28 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**." NASB

What Jesus is dealing with here is the infallible security of those whom the Father has given to Him (v-29), “**they shall never perish**.” Here the Lord makes some astounding statements about the security of the believer and their final perseverance. Here Jesus makes an emphatic statement that “**His sheep, shall never perish**” and that because He has given them “**eternal**” life. What else could the Lord have designed to say here except that our salvation is secure and that we

“***shall***” live forever? However, in order to emphasize the strong nature of His statement he says, “***no one shall snatch them out of my hand.***” Here we see that His hand is what keeps us, and His point is **He will keep us** unto Himself and none shall pull us away or snatch us away. If this were not enough to convince us of this security, He says, “***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.***” Learn, the guarantee of the final perseverance of Christ’s sheep is secured not by human power, but in the **hands of the Father and the Son**, and because of the great power of God, none shall be lost but rather kept forever, having eternal life. The **Bible plainly declares** that the final perseverance of the saints is not in human hands, but in the hands of God. This is common in the teaching Jesus. Consider what He said in John 6 about “***those whom the Father had given Him.***”

John 6:39-40 - 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.** 40 "For this is the will of My Father, that everyone who beholds the Son and believes in Him, may have eternal life; and **I Myself will raise him up on the last day.**" NASB

Here Jesus clearly says of everyone “***given to Him by the Father,***” that He will “***lose nothing,***” and will in “***raise them up at the last day.***” Again He makes emphatic statements about the security of the one who “***believes in Him***” (v-40). The point here is “***He will lose nothing,***” it is in “***His***” hands. And what is more, they will be resurrected and live forever, “***I will raise it up on the last day.***” He also describes the quality of the life He gives as “***eternal***” and repeats for emphasis, “***I myself will raise him up on the last day.***” Those who pervert this text to say something other than the clear infallible nature of the security of the believer discourage the saints and lie about the truth of their security. Dear Christian, hold firmly to this promise of our Shepherd, He will see us through to the end and we shall never perish!

The Saints will Persevere

The New Testament writers made this doctrine very clear. We have already examined the teaching of Peter above, but consider some statements from the Apostle Paul and even the Apostle Jude, the brother of Jesus. In Romans chapter 8, Paul makes the security of the believer to rest wholly upon the nature and purpose of God. Consider that great statement in verse 1...

Romans 8:1-2 - 1 There is therefore now **no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.** 2 For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has **set you free from the law of sin and of death.** NASB

Here Paul speaks about the nature of Christ’s atoning work and the state of the Christian’s justification. We are “***not condemned***” by God’s Law but rather “***set free***” from that Law having the debt of sins completely paid and the matter settled. This is what it means to be a Christian! Or consider the profound truths exposed about our security and final perseverance in the Golden Chain, verses 28-30.

Romans 8:28 - 28 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. NASB

Here the saints are seen as called to God's purpose, in which He is causing all things to work together for their good. Shall God cause all things to work together for the good, and then finally fail to bring us to the end of it? Not hardly!

Romans 8:29 - 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; NASB

Is it not profoundly clear in this statement that our "*destiny*" shall be conformity to the "*image of Christ?*" It is and this is our destiny, we shall be like Him in the end and share in His glory! This is confirmed elsewhere in Paul.

Philippians 3:20-21 - 20 For our citizenship is in heaven, from which also we eagerly wait for a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ; 21 who will transform the body of our humble state into conformity with the body of His glory, by the exertion of the power that He has even to subject all things to Himself. NASB

What is more is that the calling and the foreknowledge and the predestination all have an end. This end is made crystal clear in verse 30, "glorification."

Romans 8:30 - 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. NASB

The saints whom God has called, foreknown and predestined, shall be "*glorified*." These are the ones whom He elected from all eternity, shall we now think that they will be lost? Impossible! Jude, the brother of our Lord makes a similar statement. He speaks of the keeping power of Christ and relates this to our final salvation.

Jude 24 - 24 Now to Him who is able to keep you from stumbling, and to make you stand in the presence of His glory blameless with great joy, 25 to the only God our Savior, through Jesus Christ our Lord, be glory, majesty, dominion and authority, before all time and now and forever. Amen. NASB

The Bible plainly declares that it is God who "*keeps us from stumbling*." This means that God makes us persevere so that we do not finally fall away. This is in view in the following statement, "*to make you stand in the presence of His glory blameless*." Here again we see the divine nature of our salvation, we are "*blameless*" in His presence because "*He is able*" to pardon us on the merit of Christ. We have had the guilt of all of our sins washed away by the powerful blood of Jesus so that we stand in His presence blameless! Dear saint, here is your rest, it is the shadow of the mighty cross of Jesus!

Romans 8:31-34 - 31 What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who is against us? 32 He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how will He not also with Him freely give us all things? 33 Who will bring a charge against God's elect? God is the one who justifies; 34 who is the one who condemns? NASB

Learn, the saints will persevere to the end and be glorified in the presence of God because of God's Almighty power, His immutable purpose to save His elect, and His all-sufficient sacrifice of atonement at Calvary!

Preservation... Does secure salvation depend on man or God? - We are the sheep, He is the Good Shepherd. He will lose none of all that the Father has given

Him (John 6:39). It is Christ who keeps us, and our assurance is rooted in His sovereign love and His mighty power to keep us and give us eternal life!

John 10:27-29 - 27 "My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me; 28 and **I give eternal life to them, and they shall never perish**; and **no one shall snatch them out of My hand**. NASB

Notice these works are attributed to Him, not to us. We are saved because He has caused us to be born again (1Pet 1:3), and we are protected by His power (1 Pet 1:5), sustained till the end blameless (Jude 24), and further in Hebrews 10, we are made perfect forever by His sacrifice.

Hebrews 10:14 - 14 For **by one offering He has perfected for all time those who are sanctified**. NASB

The security of our salvation does not rest on our ability, but on God's.

Perseverance is the work of God in salvation, not man. This is what is meant in the phrase, "the Sovereignty of God in salvation." We are saved by God's Sovereign electing love and power, not our human ability to keep ourselves from falling. If salvation depended on us or our ability, we would be hopelessly lost. True believers persevere by God's power. This is crystal clear in the following Pauline passage. Here Paul speaks of God's ability to "**sanctify us entirely**," and to "**preserve our whole being**," and to present us "**without blame**" at "**the coming of our Lord**."

1 Thessalonians 5:23-24 - 23 Now may the God of peace Himself **sanctify you entirely; and may your spirit and soul and body be preserved complete, without blame** at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. 24 Faithful is He who calls you, and **He also will bring it to pass**. NASB

This is emphatically clear in verse 24 which attributes all this work to God and His faithfulness. The security of salvation rests firmly on the faithfulness of God, not man. This is exactly Paul's point. He makes a very similar statement in 1 Corinthians. Here he says God shall "**confirm us to the end, blameless**."

1 Corinthians 1:7-9 - 7 so that you are not lacking in any gift, awaiting eagerly the revelation of **our Lord Jesus Christ, 8 who shall also confirm you to the end, blameless** in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ. 9 **God is faithful**, through whom you were called into fellowship with His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. NASB

The **Bible plainly declares** that our final perseverance is **a matter of God's faithfulness**. He makes a very similar statement in Philippians.

Philippians 1:6 - 6 For I am confident of this very thing, that **He who began a good work in you will perfect it until the day of Christ Jesus**. NASB

Dear saint, do you need more evidence that your salvation is secure? Believe God's promise! However much more is to be found. Consider that John the Apostle speaks also directly to this point when he tells us that Jesus, "**the one who is born of God, keeps us**" and "**the evil one does not touch him**."

1 John 5:18 - 18 We know that no one who is born of God sins; but **He who was born of God keeps him and the evil one does not touch him**. NASB

The Bible plainly declares that the Satan cannot cause us to habitually sin so as to fall away from the faith because Christ is the One who “*keeps him*.”

Eternal Security is evident because of Election - The primary reason that you have been saved is because God chose you for salvation from the beginning (2 Thes 2:13). If you are in Christ, you’re the “*elect*” or “*chosen*” of God. For this reason, you WILL persevere till the end of your life in faith and repentance. ***God will so work that those whom he has chosen for eternal salvation will be enabled by Him to persevere in faith to the end and fulfill, by the power of the Holy Spirit, the requirements for obedience.*** The scripture makes it clear that those whom God has predestined, He will also glorify in the end. This is the purpose of predestination. We were predestined to receive the “inheritance” in Heaven and to share in the glory of God there as well.

Romans 8:30 - 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.** NASB

Romans 9:23-24 - 23 And He did so in order that He might make known the riches of His glory upon vessels of mercy, **which He prepared beforehand for glory, 24 even us, whom He also called**, not from among Jews only, but also from among Gentiles. NASB

Ephesians 1:11-12 - In Him 11 also **we have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to His purpose** who works all things after the counsel of His will, 12 to the end that we who were the first to hope in Christ should be to the praise of His glory. NASB

Because God has chosen us from before the foundation of the world, He has also effectual called us by the Spirit, and brought us to the new birth (Regeneration). The result of this is conversion, where by the divine gift of grace we received power to repent of sin and faith to understand and lay hold of the Gospel. The result of this is a persevering sanctification of the Spirit which results in glorification, the redemption of our bodies at which time we become immortal and incorruptible. Consider the wise words of R.L. Dabney on this matter.....

“The perseverance of believers follows from the free and unchangeable love of God the Father,” which was the ground of their being chosen unto salvation. The Scriptures make it plain that the reason why God ever determined to save any man was not His seeing in him anything good, attractive or extenuating, but something without, known to His wisdom, which was to God a good and wise reason to bestow His eternal love on that particular sinner (Rom. 9:11, 16). This sovereign and unmerited love is the cause of the believer’s effectual calling. (Jer. 31:3); (Rom. 8:30). Now, as the cause is unchangeable, the effect will be unchangeable. That effect is, the constant communication of grace to the believer in whom God has begun a good work. God was not induced to bestow His renewing grace in the first instance, by anything which He saw, meritorious or attractive, in the repenting sinner; and therefore the subsequent absence of everything in him would be no new motive to God for withdrawing His grace. When He first bestowed that

grace, He knew that the sinner on whom He bestowed it was totally depraved, and wholly and only hateful in himself to the divine holiness; and therefore no new instance of ingratitude or unfaithfulness, of which the sinner may become guilty after his conversion, can be any provocation to God, to change His mind, and wholly withdraw His sustaining grace. God knew all this ingratitude before. He will chastise it, by temporarily withdrawing His Holy Spirit, or His providential mercies; but if He had not intended from the first to bear with it, and to forgive it in Christ, He would not have called the sinner by His grace at first. In a word, the causes for which God determined to bestow His electing love on the sinner are wholly in God, and not at all in the believer; and hence, nothing in the believer's heart or conduct can finally change that purpose of love."

Nothing could be more clear about this matter than the statement in Romans chapter 8. Here Paul reasons from the Election of God and the Priesthood of Christ that we shall in no way ever be separated from His divine love.

Romans 8:33-35, 37-39 - 33 Who will bring a charge against God's elect? God is the one who justifies; 34 who is the one who condemns? Christ Jesus is He who died, yes, rather who was raised, **who is at the right hand of God, who also intercedes for us.** 35

Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?37 But in all these things we overwhelmingly conquer through Him who loved us. 38 For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, 39 nor height, nor depth, nor any other created thing, **shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.** NASB

Is it not abundantly clear that whole point of these above verses is the Security of the Believer? Further, is it not also clear that the strength of this security rests wholly on God's Almighty power to keep us for salvation (v-31) and because of Christ's ministry of intercession (v-34)? The true believer will never be separated from the love of God in Christ. This is because the love bestowed by God upon His chosen people is an eternal love, it is everlasting.

Jeremiah 31:3 - 3 The LORD appeared to him from afar, saying, "**I have loved you with an everlasting love;** Therefore I have drawn you with lovingkindness. NASB

This everlasting love is the meaning of the word *foreknowledge* in regard to predestination. Foreknowledge is a "loving beforehand" by God. *See lesson pgs. 4-7 above.*

What Eternal Security is Not

It is true that all who truly believe, will in fact be saved and brought safely to Heaven by God's power. But the distinguishing marks of a true believer are seen in the obedience which comes from faith and perseverance to the end. To this end, the **Bible plainly declares** that if we do not continue in faith and obedience to the end, we shall be lost.

Colossians 1:21-23 - 21 And although you were formerly alienated and hostile in mind, engaged in evil deeds, 22 yet He has now reconciled you in His fleshly body through

death, in order to present you before Him holy and blameless and beyond reproach — 23
if indeed you continue in the faith firmly established and steadfast, and not moved away from the hope of the gospel that you have heard, which was proclaimed in all creation under heaven, and of which I, Paul, was made a minister. NASB

The Bible is filled with warnings of falling away and exhortations to “**hold fast**” the faith we are professing. We should not get the notion then, that if our salvation rests firmly in Christ’s hands, then we can live any way we want to live or go about our sinful selfish way and still inherit the kingdom of God. God forbid! Did Christ die for nothing? Will you now trample the grace of God and the blood of Christ, which He so freely offered to you? **Although we are kept by God’s power, the gospel commands us to “prove our repentance by our deeds”, and warns that if we do not persevere in faith, we shall be lost.** We must endure in faith to the end if we are to be saved. Our perseverance in faith is proof positive that we have been saved. Not that we live in sinless perfection, but rather that we continue in repentance when we sin and humbly seek God’s forgiveness through Christ when we fail. There is a reality in true faith which “**holds fast**” to Christ as to give proof that it is real. We are obligated to obey Christ if we are to see Heaven.

1 Corinthians 15:1-3 - 15:1 Now I make known to you, brethren, the gospel which I preached to you, which also you received, in which also you stand, 2 **by which also you are saved, if you hold fast the word which I preached to you**, unless you believed in vain. NASB

Hebrews 3:14 - 14 For we have become partakers of Christ, **if we hold fast the beginning of our assurance firm until the end**; NASB

Mark 13:13 - 13 "And you will be hated by all on account of My name, but **the one who endures to the end, he shall be saved**. NASB

Eternal Security then is not fire insurance. It is NOT an assurance for **anyone who professes faith in Christ**, to be accepted into the fellowship of saints and be eternally secure and gain entrance into Heaven. Our Lord frequently warned His disciples of the serious consequences of departing from the faith and lapsing into a fruitless lifestyle. He taught them that the **nature of true saving faith** included **perseverance in His Word and obedience to His teaching**. Jesus gave distinguishing marks that identified **true disciples from mere professors**. This was usually in exhortation to persevere to the end in obedience and faith to the end.

John 8:31-32 - 31 Jesus therefore was saying to those Jews who had believed Him, "**If you abide in My word, then you are truly disciples of Mine**; 32 and you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." NASB

John 15:1-2 - 15:1 "I am the true vine, and My Father is the vinedresser. 2 **"Every branch in Me that does not bear fruit, He takes away**; and every branch that bears fruit, He prunes it, that it may bear more fruit. NASB

The contrast of a life of true saving faith which bears the fruit of righteousness, and a life of complacency which accompanies mere profession is seen clearly in the teaching of Jesus. His teaching is seasoned again and again with exhortations to

bear fruit and warnings against a fruitless lifestyle which is not motivated by true love and devotion to Him which only looks like faith but has no *product*. It is the *product* or *fruit* of faith which Jesus holds out as a distinguishing mark of saving faith.

John 15:5-8 - 5 "I am the vine, you are the branches; **he who abides in Me, and I in him, he bears much fruit;** for apart from Me you can do nothing. 6 "**If anyone does not abide in Me, he is thrown away as a branch, and dries up;** and they gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned. 7 "If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it shall be done for you. 8 "By this is My Father glorified, **that you bear much fruit, and so prove to be My disciples.** NASB

Another way to say this is that **perseverance is the distinguishing mark of true saving faith.** It is clear in Scripture that when one falls away from the fellowship of believers to pursue a life of sin and unbelief, and does not bring forth the fruits of righteousness and obedience that they have committed Apostasy.

What then is Apostasy?

Apostasy is generally defined as the determined, willful rejection of Christ and His teachings by a professing Christian. John Murray wisely states about this condition.... *"It is in fact possible to give all the outward signs of faith in Christ and obedience to Him, to witness for a time a good confession and show great zeal for Christ and His kingdom and then lose all interest and become indifferent, if not hostile, to the claims of Christ and of His kingdom."*

This condition is clearly seen in Scripture. Even Israel was at certain points in their history clearly portrayed as having forsaken and rejected God. In Jesus teaching it is clearly what is portrayed in the Parable of the Sower....

Matthew 13:20-21 - 20 "And the one on whom seed was sown on the rocky places, this is the man who hears the word, and **immediately receives it with joy; 21 yet he has no firm root in himself, but is only temporary, and when affliction or persecution arises because of the word, immediately he falls away.** NASB

John Murray comments on this.... *"Some people appear to be converted, they boil over with enthusiasm for a little while, and then suddenly cool off. They disappear from the fellowship of the saints. Others do not show the same enthusiasm; their attachment to the faith of Christ has never been one of very pronounced character. But in the course of time it becomes precariously tenuous and finally the tie is completely broken, they walk no more in the path of the righteous."*

Let us not underestimate the lengths and heights to which a temporary faith may carry those who have it. Consider **Judas** and his fellowship with our Lord and His disciples, how in fact none of the disciples even knew that the whole time Judas had an in genuine faith and was secretly stealing from the money bag. His lack of perseverance in the end showed his true condition and he was lost. He was a mere professor, not a true believer. This matter is also mentioned by Peter and portrayed by the writer to the Hebrews in the form of a warning not to do it.

2 Peter 2:20-22 - 20 For if after they have escaped the defilements of the world by the knowledge of the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, they are again entangled in them and are overcome, the last state has become worse for them than the first. 21

For it would be better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than having known it, to turn away from the holy commandment delivered to them. 22 It has happened to them according to the true proverb, "A dog returns to its own vomit," and, "A sow, after washing, returns to wallowing in the mire." NASB

Hebrews 6:4-6 - 4 For in the case of those who have once been enlightened and have tasted of the heavenly gift and have been made partakers of the Holy Spirit, 5 and have tasted the good word of God and the powers of the age to come, 6 and then have fallen away, it is impossible to renew them again to repentance, since they again crucify to themselves the Son of God, and put Him to open shame. NASB

John Murray again wisely concludes..... "*The Scripture itself, therefore, leads us to the conclusion that it is possible to have a very uplifting, ennobling, reforming and exhilarating experience of the power and truth of the Gospel, to come into such close contact with the supernatural forces which are operative in God's kingdom of grace that these forces produce effects in us which to human observation are hardly distinguishable from those produced by God's regenerating and sanctifying grace and yet be not partakers of Christ and heirs of eternal life.*"

It is clear then and therefore that those who "**fall away**" in a pattern of continual sin and break fellowship with the Church were never truly "**born again**." It is apparent to us that many people will confess Christ with their tongues but deny Him with their life. We may have known someone who supposedly believed and followed Christ, but at some point became disillusioned and turned there back on Christ, falling into a life of self-will and sin again. If God's Spirit has regenerated us and lives within us, we will bear the fruit of the Spirit in our lives. Good trees bear good fruit and bad trees bear bad fruit. If we have truly believed, there will be a sanctifying power at work in our lives, which will be evident and we will, by God's good grace, persevere to the end and be saved. We will not shrink back and be destroyed.

Hebrews 10:39 - 39 But we are not of those who shrink back to destruction, but of those who have faith to the preserving of the soul. NASB

Glorification

Glorification is that **final act of salvation by God** that brings us into the full capacity to enjoy God forever, in a body that is made **immortal** and **imperishable** and no longer subject to the temptation of sin. This will happen at the Second Coming of Christ when all believers of all ages will be raised from the dead, united to their souls eternally, and given glorified bodies like the body that Christ possessed post resurrection. When He is finished with the work of **progressive Sanctification**, the process of conforming us to His image practically, we shall ultimately take on His image in much fullness and be "**like Him**" at the

resurrection, on the day of Glory! We call this **glorification**. First let us acknowledge that **Glorification** is an **act of God**.

Romans 8:29 - 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; 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**. NASB

Glorification is clearly spoken of when we are said to have a destiny that shall be conformity to the “*image of Christ?*” It is and this is our destiny, we shall be like Him in the end and share in His glory! This is confirmed elsewhere in Paul.

Philippians 3:20-21 - 20 For our citizenship is in heaven, from which also we eagerly wait for a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ; 21 who will transform the body of our humble state into conformity with the body of His glory, by the exertion of the power that He has even to subject all things to Himself. NASB

See here in Philippians 3:20 that this glorification is actually ascribed to Jesus Himself as the one who does it. Clearly, Glorification in the New Testament is an act of God. But more than this, it is said to be “*into conformity with the body of His glory!*” Consider that the body we receive will be a **powerful body of glory**, which will be “like Him.”

1 John 3:2-3 - 2 Beloved, now we are children of God, and it has not appeared as yet what we shall be. We know that, when He appears, we shall be like Him, because we shall see Him just as He is. 3 And everyone who has this hope fixed on Him purifies himself, just as He is pure. NASB

Indeed this was **God’s purpose** in our **predestination** all along, that is that we would ultimately be **glorified** with **Christ** and **made like Him**.

Romans 8:29 - 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; NASB

This was **God’s purpose** in foreknowing and predestining us, that our mortal bodies might be “**swallowed up by life,**” and that **eternally and forever**.

2 Corinthians 5:1-5 - 1 For we know that if the earthly tent which is our house is torn down, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. 2 For indeed in this house we groan, longing to be clothed with our dwelling from heaven; 3 inasmuch as we, having put it on, shall not be found naked. 4 For indeed while we are in this tent, we groan, being burdened, because we do not want to be unclothed, but to be clothed, in order that **what is mortal may be swallowed up by life.** 5 Now He who prepared us for this very purpose is God, who gave to us the Spirit as a pledge. NASB

But consider that this **transformation** that will take place in us changes us into the state of **immortality**, the **inability to die**, as Paul had said, that “**what is mortal may be swallowed up by life.**” Therefore, these glorified bodies are given “**eternal life**” and will never die.

Romans 8:11 - 11 But if the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, **He who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit** who indwells you. NASB

John 11:25-26 - 5 Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life; he who believes in Me shall live even if he dies, 26 and everyone who lives and believes in Me shall never die. Do you believe this? "NASB

Let us see that it is obvious, although many more Scriptures could be quoted to describe our **life in Christ** as **eternal**. But consider also when this will happen in Scripture. This **Glorification** is said to happen at the **Second Coming**, which is also the time of **resurrection** of all of God's faithful people of all ages. This transformation is said to happen "**when He appears.**"

1 John 3:2-3 - 2 Beloved, now we are children of God, and it has not appeared as yet what we shall be. We know that, **when He appears, we shall be like Him, because we shall see Him just as He is.** 3 And everyone who has this hope fixed on Him purifies himself, just as He is pure. NASB

And this of course happens when **Christ gathers His elect people** together to **Himself at His Coming.**

Mark 13:24-27 - 24 "But in those days, after that tribulation, the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light, 25 and the stars will be falling from heaven, and the powers that are in the heavens will be shaken. 26 "And then **they will see the Son of Man coming in clouds with great power and glory.** 27 "And then He will send forth the angels, and will **gather together His elect from the four winds, from the farthest end of the earth, to the farthest end of heaven.** NASB

1 Thessalonians 4:15-18 - 15 For this we say to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive, and remain until the **coming of the Lord**, shall not precede those who have fallen asleep. 16 For **the Lord Himself will descend from heaven** with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trumpet of God; and the **dead in Christ shall rise first.** 17 **Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and thus we shall always be with the Lord.** NASB

See here that all the "**dead in Christ**" will rise at **His Coming**, and then **all living Christians** will be "**raptured**" or "**caught up**" into to the air to meet them, and will thus "always be with the Lord." It is clearly implied that if we are caught up and glorified with bodies of life that will always be with the Lord, that we will never again be subject to sin and death, having finally realized the ultimate hope of our calling, that is to be glorified eternally and with Him forever! Consider the words of 1 Corinthians 15:50-54 as it describes this transformation of glory!

1 Corinthians 15:50-54 - 50 Now I say this, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable. 51 Behold, I tell you a mystery; we shall not all sleep, but **we shall all be changed**, 52 in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet; for the trumpet will sound, and **the dead will be raised imperishable, and we shall be changed.** 53 **For this perishable must put on the imperishable, and this mortal must put on immortality.** 54 But when this perishable will have put on the imperishable, and this mortal will have put on immortality, then will come about the saying that is written, "**Death is swallowed up in victory.** NASB

See here that the Christian awaits a final day when Christ will bring us into a state of **eternal glory** where "**death will be swallowed up in victory!**"

1 Corinthians 15:40-49 - 40 There are also heavenly bodies and earthly bodies, but the glory of the heavenly is one, and the glory of the earthly is another. 41 There is one glory of the sun, and another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars; for star differs from star in glory. 42 So also is the resurrection of the dead. It is sown a perishable body, it is raised an imperishable body; 43 it is sown in dishonor, it is raised in glory; it is sown in weakness, it is raised in power; 44 it is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body. If there is a natural body, there is also a spiritual body. 45 So also it is written, "The first man, Adam, became a living soul." The last Adam became a life-giving spirit. 46 However, the spiritual is not first, but the natural; then the spiritual. 47 The first man is from the earth, earthy; the second man is from heaven. 48 As is the earthly, so also are those who are earthy; and as is the heavenly, so also are those who are heavenly. 49 And just as we have borne the image of the earthly, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly. NASB

The Order and the context of Scripture

Election, Faith, Glorification

John 6:37-39 - 37 "All that the Father gives Me shall come to Me, and the one who comes to Me I will certainly not cast out. 38 "For I have come down from heaven, not to do My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me. 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.
NASB