

## **Systematic Theology, Lesson 29: Soteriology: The Doctrine of Salvation, Part 7**

### 1. Review

#### a. *Ordo Solutis*: Order of Salvation

- i. Election
- ii. Calling
- iii. Regeneration
- iv. Repentance
- v. Faith
- vi. Justification
- vii. Adoption
- viii. Sanctification
- ix. Perseverance
- x. Glorification

#### b. Union with Christ

- i. The entirety of salvation is done in union with Christ.
- ii. Thus, salvation is not fundamentally a process but a Person.

#### c. Progressive sanctification

- i. Who? God and man.
- ii. Where? To our entire being.
- iii. How? Repentance and faith attending to the means of grace.
- iv. Why? Dying to sin and becoming like Christ, i.e., holiness.

- v. When? At the beginning of the Christian life to the end of the Christian life. Progressive sanctification is an on-going process.

## 2. Perseverance<sup>1</sup>

a. The doctrine of perseverance is two truths:

- i. True believers \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ persevere until the end.
- ii. God will preserve true believers until the end.

b. God will preserve true believers until the end.

- i. **John 5:24**: “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 (also, **John 6:51**; **11:25-26**).
- ii. **John 6:39**: 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.
- iii. **John 10:27-28**: My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me; and I give eternal life to them, and they will never perish; and no one will snatch them out of My hand.
- iv. **Rom 8:29-30**: For those whom He foreknew, He also predestined *to become* conformed to the image of His Son, so that He would be the firstborn among many brethren; and these whom He predestined, He also called; and these whom He called, He also justified; and these whom He justified, He also glorified.
- v. **Eph 1:13-14**: In Him, you also, after listening to the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation—having also believed, you were sealed in Him with the Holy Spirit of promise, who is given as a pledge of our inheritance, with a view to the redemption of *God’s own* possession, to the praise of His glory.
- vi. **Phil 1:6**: *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.

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<sup>1</sup> Perseverance is sometimes called “perseverance of the saints” because only “saints” (i.e., true believers) persevere to the end.

- vii. **2 Tim 4:18:** The Lord will rescue me from every evil deed, and will bring me safely to His heavenly kingdom; to Him *be* the glory forever and ever. Amen.
  - viii. **Heb 7:25:** Therefore He [Jesus] is able also to save forever those who draw near to God through Him, since He always lives to make intercession for them.
- c. True believers must and will persevere until the end.
- i. **Matt 10:22:** You will be hated by all because of My name, but it is the one who has endured to the end who will be saved.
  - ii. **1 Pet 1:3-5:** 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, to *obtain* an inheritance *which is* imperishable and undefiled and will not fade away, reserved in heaven for you, who are protected by the power of God through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.<sup>2</sup>
  - iii. **Heb 3:14:** For we have become partakers of Christ, if we hold fast the beginning of our assurance firm until the end.
  - iv. **Rev 2:10b:** Be faithful until death, and I will give you the crown of life.
  - v. **Rev 3:11:** I am coming quickly; hold fast what you have, so that no one will take your crown.
- d. How are these two truths related? True believers persevere because of the preservation of God. Or, God \_\_\_\_\_ true believers to persevere.
- e. **GCBC Statement of Faith:** (Under “Salvation/Security”)
- We teach that all the redeemed once saved are kept by God's power and are thus secure in Christ forever.
- We teach that it is the privilege of believers to rejoice in the assurance of their salvation through the testimony of God's Word, which, however, clearly forbids the use of Christian liberty as an occasion for sinful living and carnality.
- f. Related issues on the doctrine of perseverance:

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<sup>2</sup> For an excellent exposition on perseverance from 1 Pet 1:5, see: Jeff Rich, “Safe Keeping,” sermon available at [gracelakeville.org](http://gracelakeville.org).

- i. Is a believer eternally secure? Yes, if the believer \_\_\_\_\_ through the power of God. What if a person does not persevere? Then they were never a Christian in the first place (e.g., Judas).
- ii. Is “once saved always saved” an adequate way to frame the doctrine of perseverance? It depends on what you mean by the phrase.
  - 1. If by “once saved always saved” you mean that true believers are kept by God’s power to persevere until the end, then you are correct. However, this is not the common understanding of this phrase.
  - 2. Rather, “once saved always saved” more commonly means that a person can make a profession of faith but then go and live their life as they please. This view is unbiblical and false.
  - 3. Therefore, I prefer not to use the phrase “once saved always saved” because it generally doesn’t adequately account for the complete biblical teaching on perseverance.
- iii. Can a Christian backslide? By backslide I mean living in a state of \_\_\_\_\_ sin. Believers may certainly experience seasons of backsliding. Perseverance means, however, that a true believer will neither totally nor finally fall away from a state of grace.
  - 1. Peter backslides. He denies the Lord. Yet, Jesus says, “Simon, Simon, behold, Satan has demanded *permission* to sift you like wheat; but I have prayed for you, that your faith may not fail; and you, when once you have turned again, strengthen your brothers” (Luke 22:31-32).
  - 2. Believers may grieve the Spirit by living contrary to the Scriptures, but they will not ultimately be lost. **Eph 4:30**: “Do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption.”
- g. Implications for the doctrine of perseverance
  - i. Seriousness. We ought to take serious the commands to persevere until the end. Paul’s attitude was: “Therefore I run in such a way, as not without aim; I box in such a way, as not beating the air; but I discipline my body and make it my slave, so that, after I have preached to others, I myself will not be disqualified” (1 Cor 9:26-27).

- ii. Thankfulness. We ought to have thankfulness that we are eternally kept ultimately by God's power. Paul put it like this: "For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor any other created thing, will be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord" (**Rom 8:38-39**).
- iii. Conversion. When people recount their "testimony" they refer to the time when they experienced "conversion."<sup>3</sup> While we should not minimize a conversion story, a better indicator of someone's salvation is persevering in the faith. Someone who once prayed a prayer of salvation, but who is living in unrepentant sin and not a member of a church, that person's conversion should be suspect.

### 3. Glorification

- a. Glorification is the \_\_\_\_\_ of our salvation. In Paul's *ordo solutis*, he includes glorification as the final step: "and these whom He predestined, He also called; and these whom He called, He also justified; and these whom He justified, He also glorified" (**Rom 8:30**).
- b. Glorification will happen when believers receive resurrection bodies at the resurrection.<sup>4</sup> Thus, though to "depart and be with Christ, . . . is very much better" (**Phil 1:23**) than remaining in this life, properly speaking, glorification does not occur at death but at the resurrection.
  - i. **Rom 8:11**: 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 dwells in you.
  - ii. **1 Cor 15:20-23**: But now Christ has been raised from the dead, the first fruits of those who are asleep. For since by a man *came* death, by a man also *came* the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ all will be made alive. But each in his own order: Christ the first fruits, after that those who are Christ's at His coming.
  - iii. **1 Thess 4:14-17**: For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so God will bring with Him those who have fallen asleep in Jesus. For this we say to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive and remain

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<sup>3</sup> For more on conversion, see: Dan Burrus, "Systematic Theology, Lesson 26: Soteriology, Part 4," lecture available at [gracelakeville.org](http://gracelakeville.org).

<sup>4</sup> More on the doctrine of resurrection will be covered in a subsequent systematic theology lesson.

until the coming of the Lord, will not precede those who have fallen asleep. 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 will rise first. Then we who are alive and remain will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we shall always be with the Lord.

c. Glorification occurs to our entire being: body and soul.

i. Body

1. **Rom 8:23**: 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.
2. **2 Cor 5:1-2**: 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. For indeed in this *house* we groan, longing to be clothed with our dwelling from heaven.

ii. Soul

1. **Col 1:22**: 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.
2. **Jude 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.

d. Believer's glorified body will be like \_\_\_\_\_ glorified body.

- i. **Phil 3:21**: 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.
- ii. **1 Cor 15:42-44**: So also is the resurrection of the dead. It is sown a perishable *body*, it is raised an imperishable body; it is sown in dishonor, it is raised in glory; it is sown in weakness, it is raised in power; it is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body.

e. **GCBC Statement of Faith** (under "Eschatology/Death")

We teach that physical death involves no loss of our immaterial consciousness, that the soul of the redeemed passes immediately into the presence of Christ, and that, for the redeemed, such separation will continue until the rapture which immediately follows the first resurrection, when our soul and body will be reunited to be glorified forever with our Lord.