Notes

THE DOCTRINE OF SALVATION (Cont.)

15. Origination: (I Chron. 29:10-14) This is the final word concept concerning the vocabulary of the doctrine of Salvation. This is perhaps the most confrontational and conflicting subject in scripture, especially since the 16th century reformation teaching. Where does the concept of Salvation come from? It's origin, by what means, who can be saved? How are they saved? Why are not all men saved? Can all men be saved?

This aspect of doctrine can be examined by considering eight words which determine the declaration. 1.) Decree[1], 2.) Ordain[2], 3.) Foreknowledge[3], 4.) Election[4], 5.) Counsel[5], 6.) Predestination[6], 7.) Purpose[7], and 8.) Called[8]. The wrong definition produces the wrong doctrine!

1. **Decree:** (Col. 1:16; Rev. 4:11) The decree of God is defined by the Westminster Shorter Catechism… "The decree of God is His eternal purpose according to the counsel of His will, whereby, for His own glory, He hath foreordained whatsoever comes to pass." That all things come to pass as God declares, as directed by His divine plan, and for His determined purpose.

In Berkhofs Systemic Theology he lists seven characteristics of this decree.

1. It is established in Divine Wisdom[9] (Ps. 104:24; Prov. 3:19; Eph. 3:9-11)
2. It is Eternal[10], from the eternal God (Acts 15:18; Eph. 1:4; II Tim. 1:9)

Notes

3. It is Effarcacious[11], (effective) counterfeit (Ps. 33:11; Prov. 19:21; Is. 46:9, 10, 14:24).
4. It is Immutable[12], Will not change (Acts 2:22-24)
5. It is Unconditional[13], absolute (Eph. 2:8; I Pt. 1:12)
6. It is Universal[14], inclusive-all (Eph. 1:11)
7. It is Permissive[15], (concerning sin) choosing (Ps. 78:29, 106:15; Acts 14:16, 17:30)

NOTE: In our Bible Institute we consider the order of these decrees, 1) **SUPRALAPSARIAN**, 2) **INFRALAPSARIAN**, and 3. **SUBLAPSARIAN**. The word **LAPSARIAN** refers to one who believes in the doctrine that man is a falling being. Each contains five key ingredients (varying orders). The decree to create man, to permit the fall, to provide a Saviour, to choose the elect, and to call the elect through the Holy Spirit. Each of the 3 positions is determined by the order of events.

2. **Ordain:** (The Greek word **TASSO**, also translated "appoint" means (to place or put in order, to arrange according to predetermine position). In the New Testament we have three examples (Mt. 28:16; Lk. 7:8; Rom. 13:1). These are non-theological examples but (Acts 13:48; I Pt. 1:18-20) gives us a theological application to consider.
3. **Foreknowledge:** The Greek word **PROGINOSKO**, "to know experientially", to know in advance, beforehand, prior knowledge, examples, (Acts 15:18) creation; (Amos 3:1-2) the Nation of Israel, (Lk. 12:22; Acts 2:23-24; I Pt. 1:20) crucifixion, tomb, resurrection (Ps. 139; Rom. 8:29; I Pt. 1:2) the believer, physical-spiritual condition.

Notes

4. **Election:** The Greek word **EKLEKTOS**, to pick or choose, select, examples, Christians – God's elect (Is. 42:1; 49:5; Lk. 23:35; I Pt. 2:4; 2:6). The angels (I Tim. 5:21) Old Testament Israel (Deut. 4:37, 7:6-8; Is. 44:1-2; Mt. 24:22-24, 31). Believing Jews are an elect group (Rom. 11:5). Certain people were elect to a specific purpose (Jer. 1:5 – Jeremiah; David – I Sam. 16:12, II Sam. 7:8; Abraham – Gen 12:1-3, John the Baptist – Lk. 1:13-17; Paul – Isaac and Jacob).

   The twelve Apostles were elected by God (Mt. 10:1; John 15:16; Acts 1:2-24). Chosen by God – the plan of salvation (I Cor. 1:27-28). The people of Salvation where chosen by God (Rom. 8:33; Eph. 1:4; II Thess. 2:13; II Tim 2:10).

5. **Counsel:** The Greek word **BOULEMA**, willful-deliberate – intentional directive, examples, the intention of the Pharisees to kill Christ (Jn. 11:53), to kill Peter and John (Acts 5:33), the Centurion to save Paul (Acts 27:43), of God to offer up Christ (Acts 2:23, 4:26-28) and the intention of God to save the elect (Eph. 1:11; Heb. 6:17).

Notes

6. **Predestination:** The Greek words **PROORIZO** and **HORIZO**, to mark out before hand, set boundary (English horizon/Horizo) to mark out the earth from the sky. Also translated determination – declaration, example, (note: EL-ROI – Thou God Seest Me – Pre-Sees (Gen. 16:13; 21:14-19). It is predestined or predetermined – pronounced that Jesus is the Christ, His Deity (Rom. 1:4), His death, burial, resurrection (Divine appointments) (Rom. 8:29-30; Eph. 1:9, 12) The predetermined conformation of believers in Christ.

7. **Purpose:** The Greek word **PROTHESIS**, a 'setting forth' proposed reasoning – recognition, example, (Lk. 6:4; Heb. 9:2) setting forth the showbread in the tabernacle. The setting forth of Nations for judgment (Is. 14:26-Assyria, Is. 23:9-Tyre, Is. 46:11-Babylon, Jer. 4:28-Israel) The setting forth of Pharaoh as an object of judgment (Rom. 9:17). The setting forth of God's plan for Isaac instead of Ishmael, Jacob instead of Esau (Rom. 9:6-13). Making known God's intention with Divine assurance, authority.

8. **Called:** The Greek words **KALEO** and **KLESIS**, to officially summon, to extend an invitation – opportunity, directive, example, the parable of the vineyard (Mt. 20:8) and the departing master (Mt. 25:14). Also referring to the call of the elect (Rom. 8:30; I Cor. 1:9; Eph. 4:1; Phil. 3:4; I Thess. 2:12; II Thess. 1:11-12; I Tim. 1:9; Heb. 3:1, 9:25; II Pt. 1:10).

These eight words and their Biblically determined definitions are essential to declaring the truth concerning the origin of the doctrine of Salvation.

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TWO BASIC POSITIONS CONCERNING SALVATIONS ORIGIN: The position of either is determined by the definition of Election[16] and how that impacts the questions, why are some people saved, and others remain lost? Does man have any say in whether he is saved or lost? If election is predetermined, when is a person saved or lost? How is someone saved? And why? Why not?

Position Number One: This is the presentation made by Dr. John R. Rice in the pamphlet "predestined for hell?" No! Page 90. This is an articulate representation of a commonly held position among bible believing fundamentalist regarding Predistination[17] of those considered to be God's elect and those who are not elect. (Select, chosen, appointed, declared).

Defined: The only people that God Predestinates[18] to be Saved[19] are those whom He did Foreknow[20], that is, those who, in His infinite knowledge, God knows will, when given the opportunity, come to trust in Christ to be saved. It is not that predestination causes people to trust Christ and be saved. No, they are only predestined to be saved because God knows that they will put their trust in Christ. **PREDESTINATION IS BASED WHOLLY ON GOD'S FORKNOWLEDGE.**

Notes

NOTE: There is not anything that is not known to God at any time! Past-present-future. God is, not was, not will be. God is, God always is, past, present and future. He knows the end from the beginning. Man does not know much and even with adding knowledge, man cannot know much, but what he encounters, experiences or learns with education. Man discovers; God declares!

Henry Thiessen, Systematic Theology: Pages 344, 345

Furthermore, He chose those who He foreknew would accept Christ. The scriptures definitely base God's election on His foreknowledge: Whom He foreknew, He also foreordained… and whom He foreordained, them He also called (Rom. 8:29-30); "to the elect… according to the foreknowledge of God the Father" (I Pt. 1:1-2). Although we are nowhere told what it is in the foreknowledge of God that determines His choice, the repeated teaching of scripture that man is responsible for accepting or rejecting salvation necessitates our postulating that it is man's reaction to the revelation God has made of Himself that is the basis of His election. May we repent: Since mankind is hopelessly dead in trespass and sins and can do nothing to obtain salvation, God graciously restores to all men sufficient ability to make a choice in the matter of submission to Him. This is the salvation-bringing the grace of God that has appeared to all men. In His foreknowledge He perceives what each of us will do with this restored ability, and elects men to salvation in harmony with His knowledge of their choice of Him. There is no merit in this transaction.

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Defended: We should consider some of the Biblical principles and precepts that support this first position. (Also consider Thiesson-Justice of God, pages 396, 397).

Because Christ is said To have died for **all** men, (Jn. 1:4, 7, 12:32, 33, 47; Rom. 5:18, 8:32; I Tim. 2:6, 4:10; II Tim. 2:1, 3:9; I Jn. 2:2).

Because Christ bore **all** our iniquities (Is. 53:6)

Because of the command for **all** men to repent (Acts. 17:30)

Because of the universal invitation to **all** men "whosoever will" (Jn. 3:16; Rom. 10:13; Rev. 22:17)

Let's conclude this first positon presentation returns to John R. Rice's pamphlet pages 6-9.

There is a Bible doctrine of God's foreknowledge, predestination, and election. Most great bodies of Christians not strictly CALVINISTS, or not CALVINISTS at all, agree that God has His controlling hand on the affairs of men. They agree that according to the Bible, He selects individuals like Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, David, and King Cyrus, as instruments to do certain things He has planned. He raised up Pharaoh who was already "a vessel of wrath" with many years of hardened heart and wicked rejection, to make him an example of punishment. Christian's agree that God may choose a Nation, particularly that He did choose Israel,

Notes

through which He would give the law, the prophets, and eventually through whom the Saviour would come. It is a Bible doctrine that God foreknows who will trust in Christ and that He has predestined or purposed to see that they are justified and glorified. He will keep the saved, will glorify those He saves. You see, CALVIN did not originate those teachings. They are taught in the Bible, believed by multitudes who are not CALVINISTS. But the doctrine that God predestined some men to Hell, that some cannot be saved, that they are born to be damned by God's own choice is a doctrine of CALVINISM, a philosophy developed by John Calvin. It is a sectarian tenet strictly followed only by HYPER-CALVANISTS. It is a radical heresy, not taught in the Bible. The term "CALVINISM" is loosely used by people who do not hold CALVINS teaching or predestination. To thousands who may call themselves CALVINISTS, the word means only that they believe in salvation by grace, without human merit, as CALVIN did, and so everlasting life for the believer, since he is kept by the power of God. One who says he is a CALVINIST generally means simply that he is not ARMINIAN, that he is kept by the grace of God, and is not saved or kept by his own works or life.

So those who are generally, but mistakenly, called CALVINISTS only rarely follow CALVIN in his doctrine that some are predestined to be lost, born to be damned, by God's own plan, and cannot be saved.

Notes

John Calvin was a great theologian, was right in saying that people are saved by grace alone. But, extreme CALVINISM, the teaching that some people, by the foreordained plan of God, are predestined to be saved and some are predestined to be lost and their destinies are settled before they were born, is a wicked heresy contrary to the Bible, that dishonors God and has done incalculable harm. The heresy of EXTREME CALVINISM is particularly appealing to people from four viewpoints:

First, it appeals to the SCHOLARLY INTELLECT, the self-sufficient and proud mind. So brilliant, philosophical, scholarly, preachers are apt to be misled on this matter more than the humble-hearted Bible believer.

Second, this doctrine appeals particularly to those who hold "COVENANT THEOLOGY", that is, the Presbyterian doctrine that believers and their children should be received in the church alike, that babies sprinkled in infancy are in a COVENANT RELATIONSHIP with God without any choice of their own, etc.

Third, the HYPER CALVINISTIC HERESY is particularly appealing to the CARNAL NATURE, unwilling to have the heart-break, the burden for soul-winning, unwilling to pay the price of separation and perhaps ostracism, which goes with all out soul-winning, unwilling to pay the price for the fullness of the SPIRIT in continual self-crucifixion and waiting on God.

Notes

Fourth, CALVINISM especially appeals to those who think that HYPER-CALVINISM is the only answer to ARMINIANISM. They do not believe that a saved person is "on probation" and may lose his salvation at any moment. They know the Bible clearly teaches salvation by grace and not of works. HYPER-CALVINISM would like to make people believe, and do make people believe, that if one does not teach universal salvation, he must be either a CALVINIST or an ARMINIAN. The ARMINIAN position does such violence to the grace of God that many would rather be CALVINISTS. I am convinced that Whitefield and Spurgeon were both influenced by the pressure of ARMINIAN theology in their day, to call themselves CALVINISTS, although neither was HYPER-CALVINISTIC in actual practice and emphasis. Note: Some of the foolish statements of HYPER-CALVINISTS "there are babes in Hell not a span long" (that is little ones who died in infancy or pre-birth predestined to eternal damnation in Hell).

NOTE: There are numerous other confusing and conflicting doctrines of CALVINISM to consider, but this one deals particularly with Salvation's origin.

Position Number Two: This Position presents the positives and the negatives regarding this view in contrasts and comparisons that clearly present the Biblical perspective of the origin of salvation.

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Definition: The definition is detailed in numerous theological presentations. Here we consider two sources, Strong's Systematic Theology and Dispensational Theology by Charles F. Baker.

Election is that eternal act of God, by which in His sovereign pleasure, and on account of no foreseen merit in them, He chooses certain out of the number of sinful men to be the recipients of the special grace of His Spirit and so be made voluntary partakers of Christ's Salvation (Systematic Theology, pg. 779).

Defended: In approaching the doctrine of election, we must keep certain scriptural facts in mind. The first is that God is absolutely righteous[21]. As Paul introduces the subject of ELECTION in Romans 9 he asks the question which comes to the mind of everyone who has ever seriously considered the doctrine: "What shall we say then? Is there unrighteousness with God? (v:19) God forbid." The second fact we need to consider is the estate of man under sin. Man is a responsible being[22] who is fully accountable to God. He is responsible for his apostasy from God and his lost condition. He merits only the judgment of God. The third thing which scripture presents is that no man of himself seeks after God. In other words, scripture teaches that even though God provided a salvation for the whole world, no one would accept it and be saved unless God first of all took the initiative by Himself seeking after man. (Bakers dispositional theology, pg. 389-390).

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a. What election is not:

1. It is not an arbitrary act of God, it is according to God's eternal purpose and foreknowledge (Rom. 8:28-29, 9:11; Eph. 1:4-11; I Pt. 1:2).
2. It is not choosing/setting some to be lost or decreeing them reprobate. Election is to SALVATION, not CONDEMNATION (I Thess. 1:4; II Thess. 2:13).
3. It is not merely God's purpose to save them that believe, although it is true, only those who believe will be saved.
4. It is not man's choosing of himself, although man must himself choose to be saved, election is God's choice (Jn. 15:16).
5. It is not merely a place or position to serve, although God chooses men for such, election is unto salvation (II Thess. 2:13)

b. What election is:

1. It is a conscious choice on the part of God which is appointed to some but not all. This fact is substantiated in three lines of proof. First, the fact that some are lost is proven, not all were chosen. Second, the word itself (to elect) would be meaningless unless there were another position, (being lost) if all were saved there would be no need for election. Thirdly, the scriptures speak repeatedly of those who are lost, so they are clearly not of the elect (to life or death).

Notes

2. It is a conscious choice God made before the foundation of the world (Eph. 1:4). We must remember God is without limitation of time or matter, He is continually eternal, is, was, and will be at one time. This is not only a past decision, it is a present decision and is predestined even beyond the prophetic future, all things known to God, before they were known to man.
3. It is a conscious choice based upon something in God, not something in man. Paul said election is according to the Grace of God (Rom. 11:5) and not of man's merit/works (Rom. 9:11). Election, like Salvation, is all of grace and not of works. Therefore, it should be evident that God did not choose to condemn some because they did not merit salvation, nor to save some because they did.
4. It is a conscious choice based on foreknowledge, which his based on the determinate counsel and purpose of God (conscious). God has a purpose for everything He has done and will do. The reason God foreknows what will come to pass, is because God purposed it, according to His Divine plan.
5. It is a conscious choice which confirm its completion, there is no power that can overcome God's purpose (though Satan has tried) as God allowed. In (Rom. 8:28-30) we discover everyone who is foreknown of God WILL BE CALLED, JUSTIFIED, GLORIFIED. In (Rom. 8:33) we are told NO ONE will ever be able to lay anything to the charge of God's elect.

Notes

Then the chapter ends assuming the believer/elect, nothing shall ever separate them from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus. In (Acts 13:48) we read, "As many as were ordained to eternal life believed."

6. It is the conscious choice in perfect harmony with freedom (free choice, will). Election does not force the elect to believe, God does not compel, He constrains. An old time evangelist, Howard Jewel, once said "God won't make you go against your will, but He can make you willing to go." Paul marveled at the moving of God with the purpose of His people (Rom. 11:33-36).

   "O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God. How searchable are His judgments, and His ways past finding out. For who hath known the mind of the Lord? Or who hath been His counselor? For of Him, and through Him, and to Him, are all things: to whom be glory forever" Amen.

Conclusion: The comments made by Charles Baker at the conclusion of his defense of the doctrine presented in position two are essential to our final conclusion concerning both positions, it is therefore presented here in its entirety.

Notes

In conclusion, certain facts about man's freedom of will should be pointed out. The first fact is that man as a sinner is in slavery to sin. Christ plainly stated this fact: "Whosoever commiteth sin is the servant (slave) of sin." (Jn. 8:34). Being a slave is just the opposite of being free. Paul shows the impossibility of those in the flesh (sinners) to be subject to the law of God or to be pleasing of God (Rom. 8:7-8). Not only is the natural man under bondage to sin, but scripture indicates that Satan, the prince of the power of the air, works or energizes in him. The average unsaved man is totally unware that he is being influenced in his actions and decisions by Satan: he may even boast that he always acts on his own. But entirely apart from satanic influence it must be admitted that our decisions and actions are often influenced by other people. We use argument and persuasion and cause people to change their minds and do just the opposite of what they intended to do, and yet, in the end, the person feels that he has freely made his choice and that he is fully responsible for it.

If Satan and human beings can so influence our actions and decisions without violating our freedom of choice, is it not possible for God to do the same, and especially when we understand that God's influence upon human minds and lives is always for good. Almost everyone who is saved realizes that he did not entirely of himself make the decision to accept Jesus Christ as his Saviour. Friends, and loved ones prayed: the preacher presented the plan of salvation; and either he or others used a great deal of persuasion before

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the decision was made. All of this was God working by His Spirit through the word of God and through the people of God. But the choice, the decision was freely made. And just as Satan energizes in the children of disobedience, so we read: "For it is God which worketh (energizes) in you both to will and to do of His good pleasure". (Phil. 2:13) When the Christian wills to do what is pleasing to God it is the result of God's Spirit influencing him, and whatever he does that is pleasing to God is likewise the result of the same influence and power.

It is our understanding from the teaching of the scriptures that in eternity past, before creation or time came into being, the Triune God existed in all of His perfections. The person of the Godhead formulated a plan which involved the creation of a vast material universe with a host of spirit-beings called angels and a planet called earth, upon which this plan would be enacted. For wise purposes which God has not been pleased to reveal He decreed to permit sin to enter His universe, without Himself being responsible for its origin or results! But at the same time, if we can speak of time, if we can speak of time in eternity, He decreed to manifest His love and grace in providing a salvation for this redemptive program He purposed to people both the heavens and the earth with sinners saved by His grace. In order that this program might be implemented He determined that the Son should come into the world, take upon Himself humanity, suffer and die a redeeming death, and, in order to secure the redeemed peoples, He chose them from before the foundation of the world for Himself.

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Apart from His election, scripture indicates that none would ever have been saved. (Rom. 3:10-12)

Why did He choose only the ones He did and why He did not choose more or all has not been revealed? It would seem that this is one area in which man must exercise faith in God! Belief that God is absolutely righteous in all His ways, even thou His ways are past finding out. Human speculation in this area only leads to doubt and further difficulties. Faith believes that God's purpose and decrees are all just and good and that when the final decree is carried out all of God's creation will unite in giving all honor and glory to God. God's decrees, while they concern man, do not find their end in man, but God, whatever He has decreed, He has decreed for His own glory. (Rev 4:11).

Which position is correct? Is either position complete in itself?

The Bible clearly presents the **Sovereignty of God** and the **responsibility of Man**, these cannot be completely reconciled in the mind of mortal men. God cannot do anything unfair or unreasonable. It is not simply that He wouldn't but He couldn't (Heb. 6:18). We must interpret anything God does in light of what God is (Gen. 18:25; Duet. 32:4; Mk. 7:35, 37). God is love, He is full of mercy, God is good, just, and above all else, righteous. The origin of salvation is from a sovereign God to a sinful creation making available to all redemption and a return to God, but only those who believe receive, these are elect, chosen because they believe.