

**Essentials of Christianity (pt 22)**  
**8/1/2010**

**Introduction** \_\_\_\_\_

The essentials of Christianity! What is it that people need to believe about God, the Bible, salvation, sin, etc.,? That's what we've been talking about for several months.

Today we begin a new chapter in this study. To begin, let's turn to the gospel of **Luke 23:26-49**.

*<sup>NAU</sup> Luke 23:26 When they led Him away, they seized a man, Simon of Cyrene, coming in from the country, and placed on him the cross to carry behind Jesus.*

*<sup>27</sup> And following Him was a large crowd of the people, and of women who were mourning and lamenting Him.*

*<sup>28</sup> But Jesus turning to them said, "Daughters of Jerusalem, stop weeping for Me, but weep for yourselves and for your children.*

*<sup>29</sup> "For behold, the days are coming when they will say, 'Blessed are the barren, and the wombs that never bore, and the breasts that never nursed.'*

*<sup>30</sup> "Then they will begin TO SAY TO THE MOUNTAINS, 'FALL ON US,' AND TO THE HILLS, 'COVER US.'*

*<sup>31</sup> "For if they do these things when the tree is green, what will happen when it is dry?"*

*<sup>32</sup> Two others also, who were criminals, were being led away to be put to death with Him.*

*<sup>33</sup> When they came to the place called The Skull, there they crucified Him and the criminals, one on the right and the other on the left.*

<sup>34</sup> *But Jesus was saying, "Father, forgive them; for they do not know what they are doing." And they cast lots, dividing up His garments among themselves.*

<sup>35</sup> *And the people stood by, looking on. And even the rulers were sneering at Him, saying, "He saved others; let Him save Himself if this is the Christ of God, His Chosen One."*

<sup>36</sup> *The soldiers also mocked Him, coming up to Him, offering Him sour wine,*

<sup>37</sup> *and saying, "If You are the King of the Jews, save Yourself!"*

<sup>38</sup> *Now there was also an inscription above Him, "THIS IS THE KING OF THE JEWS."*

<sup>39</sup> *One of the criminals who were hanged there was hurling abuse at Him, saying, "Are You not the Christ? Save Yourself and us!"*

<sup>40</sup> *But the other answered, and rebuking him said, "Do you not even fear God, since you are under the same sentence of condemnation?"*

<sup>41</sup> *"And we indeed are suffering justly, for we are receiving what we deserve for our deeds; but this man has done nothing wrong."*

<sup>42</sup> *And he was saying, "Jesus, remember me when You come in Your kingdom!"*

<sup>43</sup> *And He said to him, "Truly I say to you, today you shall be with Me in Paradise."*

<sup>44</sup> *It was now about the sixth hour, and darkness fell over the whole land until the ninth hour,*

<sup>45</sup> *because the sun was obscured; and the veil of the temple was torn in two.*

<sup>46</sup> *And Jesus, crying out with a loud voice, said, "Father, INTO YOUR HANDS I COMMIT MY SPIRIT." Having said this, He breathed His last.*

<sup>47</sup> *Now when the centurion saw what had happened, he began praising God, saying, "Certainly this man was innocent."*

*<sup>48</sup> And all the crowds who came together for this spectacle, when they observed what had happened, began to return, beating their breasts.*

*<sup>49</sup> And all His acquaintances and the women who accompanied Him from Galilee were standing at a distance, seeing these things.*

Here we see true **salvation** in action. Two men are exposed to the power of God being displayed on a cross. Two men are profoundly touched. One person is not.

**Salvation** is the topic we'll be addressing.

Soteriology is the study of salvation. The word soteriology is derived from two Greek words, "soteria" (salvation) and "logos" (word, discourse, doctrine).

Having dealt with anthropology and hamartiology (sin); and having seen the failure and sin of mankind, one is brought to realize the utter need for a plan of salvation sufficient to bridge the vast gap between these two infinite extreme's: man's sinfulness and God's holiness.

Fortunately for all, God foreknew all that was to take place in man's fall, and He planned just such a salvation as was needed before the foundation of the earth.

Before the first sin was committed, before the sad plight brought on by rebellious man, who had been made in the image of God, the Lord had already made provision.

Our God was not caught unawares. He foreknew the fall and he foreordained the plan of rescue.

God's plan of salvation is so simple that the least among the sons of men can grasp enough of it to experience its transforming power. And yet it's so profound.<sup>1</sup>

*NAU 1 Corinthians 1:19 For it is written, "I WILL DESTROY THE WISDOM OF THE WISE, AND THE CLEVERNESS OF THE CLEVER I WILL SET ASIDE."*

*<sup>20</sup> Where is the wise man? Where is the scribe? Where is the debater of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world?*

*<sup>21</sup> For since in the wisdom of God the world through its wisdom did not come to know God, God was well-pleased through the foolishness of the message preached to save those who believe.*

Those of us who have been redeemed are continuously amazed at how one, **AND ONLY ONE**, plan of salvation is needed to meet the spiritual needs among the almost limitless varieties of the needs of men in every race, culture and condition among the nations of the world.

It's as simple as this:

*NAU Romans 10:9 that if you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved;*

*<sup>10</sup> for with the heart a person believes, resulting in righteousness, and with the mouth he confesses, resulting in salvation.*

*NAU Romans 10:13 for "WHOEVER WILL CALL ON THE NAME OF THE LORD WILL BE SAVED."*

*NAU 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.*

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<sup>1</sup> Val Cleave Nathaniel M. Duffield Guy P., *Foundations of Pentecostal Theology* (L.I.F.E Bible College, 1987).

## Minister Herbert Lockyer:

The preeminent reason for the biblical understanding of this basic doctrine is that it represents the supreme mission of the Master.

Why was He, when He was so rich in heaven, willing to become poor on earth? Why did He willingly discard a garment of glory for the robe of humanity? Paul answers these and other pertinent questions associated with Christ's incarnation. **He came into the world to save sinners** (1Tim 2:15)!

He did not leave the battlements above, where He was the Prince of Glory, to become a teacher, or a model for our obedience, or as a martyr willing to die for truths and principles He believed.

According to His own declaration, He came to seek and save the lost (Luke 19:10). His saving name was ready for Him as soon as He entered the world to die as its Savior.<sup>2</sup>

*<sup>NAU</sup> Matthew 1:21 "She will bear a Son; and you shall call His name Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins."*

As often as the Bible speaks of salvation; and as simple as it is for even a child to receive it, the fact remains that the clear stream of salvation is constantly being muddied by man's attempt to make the biblical concept of salvation into his own image.

Just as we have done with God:

*<sup>NAU</sup> Romans 1:23 and exchanged the glory of the incorruptible God for an image in the form of corruptible man and of birds and four-footed animals and crawling creatures.*

So too the doctrine of salvation has been attacked and maligned.

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<sup>2</sup> Herbert Lockyer, *All the Doctrines of the Bible: A Study and Analysis of Major Bible Doctrines* (Zondervan Publishing Company, 1966).

This is why it is of great importance that we spend the necessary time learning about this together.

The term salvation may seem to persons familiar with it to have a somewhat obvious meaning. Yet there are, even within Christian circles, widely differing conceptions of what salvation entails.<sup>3</sup>

The question of how salvation is obtained or transmitted is highly important. Some views regard the transmission of salvation as virtually a physical process.

This is true of certain sacramentalist systems which believe salvation or grace to be obtained by means of a physical object or observance of a religious ordinance.

For example, in traditional Roman Catholicism,

...grace is believed to be actually transmitted and received by taking the bread of communion into one's body.

While the value of the sacrament (bread) depends to some extent upon the inward attitude or condition of the individual, grace is received primarily through the external, physical act.

Two of the groups we talked about last week: **liberation & feminist theologies**, also have their own methodologies of how salvation is administered.

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<sup>3</sup> Millard J. Erickson, *Christian Theology Unabridged (1 Vol. Edition)* (Baker Book House, 1996).

**New Age Movement** ---- For some in the new age movement salvation (future happiness) is a direct result or continuation of the maintaining of satisfactory standard of conduct in the present. The best that can be done to gain secure and lasting well being is to cut down the evil actions and increase the good ones.

**Works Based Salvation**---- Mormon doctrine says:

We believe that through the Atonement of Christ, all mankind may be saved, by obedience to the laws and ordinances of the Gospel.<sup>4</sup>

Or...

...it is by grace that we are saved, after all we can do.<sup>5</sup>

So the doctrine of salvation may well be the pinnacle of our study so far. It is the doctrine of salvation that reels us in so that we can make a connection with God.

Typically, when one makes a formal study of **soteriology**; you'll find that there are a number of sub-categories that are connected. There are, in fact, a number of essential components that make up the doctrine of salvation.

A brief overview of these categories will help us to better understand the biblical doctrine of salvation, and better equip us to avoid any misconceptions of salvation.

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<sup>4</sup> <http://www.mormon.org/articles-of-faith/>

<sup>5</sup> BOM, 2Nephi 25:23

<sup>6</sup> H. Wayne House, *Charts of Cults, Sects, & Religious Movements* (Zondervan Publishing House, 2000).

Here are the categories we will be covering. Don't let the list size scare you, some of these can be covered in a few minutes.

Election/Predestination  
Atonement  
Grace  
Faith  
Regeneration  
Justification  
Sanctification  
Adoption  
Propitiation  
Forgiveness  
Repentance  
The Believers Security  
Glorification

These are the subgroups that the Bible links with salvation.

### ***Election/Predestination***

To begin, let's start with the subject of predestination/election (election from here on). This is definitely in the **top two** for being the most controversial of the list. Here is what we need to know about **election**.

I'm starting with this because it should be the most logical place to start. Election is the antecedent (that which precedes) to salvation.

I figured I'd talk about the thing not many want to talk about. I'm not going to settle the controversy, but hopefully our own understanding will be enlarged by the direction we take.

To begin, let's turn to **1Peter 1:1-2: read**

<sup>NAU</sup> *1 Peter 1:1 Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, To those who reside as aliens, scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia, who are **chosen (elect)***

<sup>2</sup> *according to the **foreknowledge** of God the Father, by the sanctifying work of the Spirit, to obey Jesus Christ and be sprinkled with His blood: May grace and peace be yours in the fullest measure.*

**Vs 2--** Peter uses the word “**elect**” in reference to the people he's writing to, but by extension this is to the church universal.

The church is the **elect of God**.

The word for election means *to be chosen*.

**Vs 2--** coupled with **election** is **foreknowledge**.

Foreknowledge means *that which is known ahead of time or before a particular temporal reference*. This word is connected to the principle of predestination.<sup>7</sup>

Cross reference these verses with **Romans 8:28-30--turn to: read.**

<sup>NAU</sup> *Romans 8:28 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.*

<sup>29</sup> *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;*

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<sup>7</sup> Johannes P Louw and Eugene A Nida, *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament Based on Semantic Domains* (New York: United Bible Societies, 1988).

<sup>30</sup> *and these whom He **predestined**, He also called; and these whom He called, He also justified; and these whom He justified, He also glorified.*

Contained in these verses is **predestination and election**. The word election is not used, but the principle is certainly contained in the reference.

**Vs 28--** God “causes” all things to work together...

**Vs 29--** “for” connects the two verses. God “causes” because His plan is “predetermined.” He predetermined that his **elect** would be conformed to the image of His Son.

Aren’t you glad?

**Vs 30--** and... (I don’t want to get too far ahead of myself)

*“and these whom He predestined, He also called; and these whom He called, He also justified; and these whom He justified, He also glorified.”*

Now a breakdown of the keywords in these passages related to our subject:

**Vs 29--** the word “foreknow” is a little different from the word “foreknowledge” in 1Peter. Here it means to *know, to select in advance, to choose or appoint before hand*.<sup>8</sup>

**Vs 29--** those He **selected in advance** He also “predestined.” This word means to *determine in advance, to decide before hand*.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> Timothy & Barbara Friberg, *Analytical Lexicon to the Greek New Testament ANLEX* (Copyright © 1995 Michael S. Bushell, 1994).

<sup>9</sup> Friberg, *Analytical Lexicon to the Greek New Testament ANLEX*.

From 1Peter 1:2 foreknowledge is also used in **Acts 2:23-24**

<sup>NAU</sup> Acts 2:23 *this Man, delivered over by the **predetermined** plan and **foreknowledge** of God, you nailed to a cross by the hands of godless men and put Him to death.*

<sup>24</sup> *"But God raised Him up again, putting an end to the agony of death, since it was impossible for Him to be held in its power.*

In Romans 8:29 the word “foreknow” is also found in **1Peter 1:20**.

<sup>NAU</sup> 1 Peter 1:20 *For He was **foreknown** before the foundation of the world, but has appeared in these last times for the sake of you*

And the word “predestinate” is also used in reference to Christ. **Acts 4:27-28**

<sup>NAU</sup> Acts 4:27 *"For truly in this city there were gathered together against Your holy servant Jesus, whom You anointed, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, along with the Gentiles and the peoples of Israel,*

<sup>28</sup> *to do whatever Your hand and Your purpose **predestined** to occur.*

All of this leads us to conclude that God’s plan of salvation **predates** the fall of man. The entirety of His plan was **predetermined**.

All of this is beautifully portrayed in the magnum opus of the Bible’s teaching on E/P: found in **Ephesians 1:1-12-- turn to: read.**

<sup>NAU</sup> Ephesians 1:1 *Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, To the saints who are at Ephesus and who are faithful in Christ Jesus:*

<sup>2</sup> *Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.*

<sup>3</sup> *Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ,*

<sup>4</sup> *just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we would be holy and blameless before Him. In love*

<sup>5</sup> *He predestined us to adoption as sons through Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the kind intention of His will,*

<sup>6</sup> *to the praise of the glory of His grace, which He freely bestowed on us in the Beloved.*

<sup>7</sup> *In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of His grace*

<sup>8</sup> *which He lavished on us. In all wisdom and insight*

<sup>9</sup> *He made known to us the mystery of His will, according to His kind intention which He purposed in Him*

<sup>10</sup> *with a view to an administration suitable to the fullness of the times, that is, the summing up of all things in Christ, things in the heavens and things on the earth. In Him*

<sup>11</sup> *also we have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to His purpose who works all things after the counsel of His will,*

<sup>12</sup> *to the end that we who were the first to hope in Christ would be to the praise of His glory.*

These are not the only verses on the subject.

To summarize and conclude.

Several passages in the New Testament seem to affirm quite clearly that God ordained beforehand those who would be saved. For example, when Paul and Barnabas began to preach to the Gentiles in Antioch in Pisidia, Luke writes,

*"And when the Gentiles heard this, they were glad and glorified the word of God; and as many as were ordained to eternal life believed" (Acts 13:48).*

It is significant that Luke mentions the fact of election almost in passing. It is as if this were the normal occurrence when the gospel was preached. How many believed? "As many as were ordained to eternal life believed."

After reading all these verses on election, it is important to view this doctrine in the way the New Testament itself views it.

### **1. As a Comfort.**

The New Testament authors often present the doctrine of election as a comfort to believers. When Paul assures the Romans that "in everything God works for good with those who love him, who are called according to his purpose" (Rom 8:28), he gives God's work of predestination as a reason why we can be assured of this truth. He explains in the next verse, "For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son...And those whom he predestined he also called...justified...glorified" (Rom 8:29-30).

### **2. As a Reason to Praise God.**

Paul says, "He destined us in love to be his sons through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of his will, to the praise of his glorious grace" (Eph 1:5-6).

### **3. As an Encouragement to Evangelism.**

Paul says, "I endure everything for the sake of the elect, that they also may obtain salvation in Christ Jesus with its eternal glory" (2 Tim 2:10).

He knows that God has chosen some people to be saved, and he sees this as an encouragement to preach the gospel, even if it means

enduring great suffering. Election is Paul's guarantee that there will be some success for his evangelism.<sup>10</sup>

Finally...

Throughout the scriptures, several characteristics of predestination can be seen: it determined our status as adopted sons of God (Eph. 1:5); it assures our ultimate glorification (Rom. 8:29–30); it is for the purpose of extolling the grace of God (Eph. 1:6); it secures our eternal inheritance (Eph. 1:11); and it is according to the free choice of God and according to His will (Eph. 1:5, 11).

Election and predestination do not, however, take away man's responsibility. Even though election and predestination are clearly taught in Scripture, man is still held accountable for his choices. Scripture never suggests that man is lost because he is not elect or has not been predestined; the emphasis of Scripture is that man is lost because he is a sinner and he refuses to believe the gospel.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> Wayne A. Grudem, *Systematic Theology* (Zondervan Publishing, 1994).

<sup>11</sup> Paul P Enns, *The Moody Handbook of Theology* (Moody, Chicago, 1989).

