

Foundations 101

Date: November 19, 2008

Topic: Soteriology: How is Man Saved?

Summary: How is man saved? How does grace work practically?

Reading Assignment: *Systematic Theology, Grudem* pg. 669-691; 709-721 or *Bible Doctrine, Grudem* pg. 281-294; 307-325.

I. Process- “Ordo Salutis”

For years theologians tried to nail down the exact “order of salvation” or the “ordo salutis” in Latin. In order to understand the elements individually we must understand how they fit together as a whole.

Order of Salvation (Grudem, pg. 670)

1. Election- God’s choice of people to be saved
2. The Gospel Call- proclaiming the gospel
3. Regeneration- being born again
4. Conversion- faith and repentance
5. Justification- right legal standing before God
6. Adoption- membership in God’s family
7. Sanctification- right conduct in life
8. Perseverance- remaining a Christian
9. Death- going to be with the Lord
10. Glorification- receiving resurrection body

It should be noted that numbers 2-7 happen together and we are all involved in “becoming a Christian.” Numbers 7 & 8 work themselves out in life and number 9 marks the end of life. Number 10 occurs when Christ returns.

II. Election & Reprobation

1. Election

We will concentrate on the most debated and misunderstood doctrine in this process, the doctrine of election. Election is the act of God choosing to save specific people and not others. Whenever talking about election we must also address “reprobation” or the act of God passing over people and not saving them.

Election- “an act of God before creation in which He chooses some people to be saved, not on account of any foreseen merit in them, but only because of his sovereign good pleasure.” (Grudem, pg. 670)

2. Reprobation

Reprobation-“a sovereign decision of God before creation to pass over some persons, in sorrow deciding not to save them, and to punish them for their sins, and thereby manifest his justice. (Grudem, pg. 685).

In many ways the doctrine of reprobation is the most difficult to think about and accept, because it deals such horrible and eternal consequences for humans made in the image of God. The very love that God calls us to have for humanity (Gen 6:5) and our neighbors (Matthew 5:43-48) causes us to recoil against this doctrine. It is something we do not want to believe and would not believe unless scripture clearly taught it as truth. So we will look to the pages of scripture to find the truth and then deal with how to respond.

-Does the Bible teach reprobation?

“¹⁷For the Scripture says to Pharaoh, “For this very purpose I have raised you up, that I might show my power in you, and that my name might be proclaimed in all the earth.” ¹⁸So then he has mercy on whomever he wills, and he hardens whomever he wills. ¹⁹You will say to me then, “Why does he still find fault? For who can resist his will?” ²⁰But who are you, O man, to answer back to God? Will what is molded say to its molder, “Why have you made me like this?” ²¹Has the potter no right over the clay, to make out of the same lump one vessel for honorable use and another for dishonorable use? ²²What if God, desiring to show his wrath and to make known his power, has endured with much patience vessels of wrath prepared for destruction”

-Romans 9:17-22

*“⁷What then? Israel failed to obtain what it was seeking. The elect obtained it, but the rest were hardened”
-Romans 11:7*

*“⁸and "A stone of stumbling, and a rock of offense." They stumble because they disobey the word, as they were destined to do”
-1 Peter 2:8*

*“²⁵At that time Jesus declared, "I thank you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that you have hidden these things from the wise and understanding and revealed them to little children; ²⁶yes, Father, for such was your gracious will.”
-Matthew 11:25-26*

-How should I respond? What do I do with this information?

First, we must be very careful in our attitude towards God as we read these verses. We must never begin to wish the Bible was written differently or left verses out. As children of God we are to trust God revealed through the Bible, and while it may cause us to tremble before his power, we trust his perfect justice and purpose.

We should also note one of the purposes given for reprobation. (Romans 9:22-23). God exercises his great and perfect justice in our presence so that we understand the weight and value of his grace lavished on us.

It is important to know important differences between election and reprobation. Election to salvation is viewed as something that God receives all the credit and great pleasure from (Eph 1:3-6, 1 Peter 1:1-3). He delights to bestow grace upon us. Reprobation, on the other hand, is viewed as something that brings God great sorrow, not delight.

*“¹¹Say to them, As I live, declares the Lord GOD, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his way and live;turn back, turn back from your evil ways, for why will you die, O house of Israel?”
-Ezekiel 33:11*

And the credit or blame in this case is always given to the humans or angels who rebel (John 3:18-19; 5:40). So scripture clearly teaches that the cause of election is God and the cause of reprobation is the sinner. So, like God, we should respond in great sorrow when people won't repent and turn to Jesus.

“¹I am speaking the truth in Christ—I am not lying; my conscience bears me witness in the Holy Spirit— ²that I have great sorrow and unceasing anguish in my heart. ³For I could wish that I myself were accursed and cut off from Christ for the sake of my brothers, my kinsmen according to the flesh. ⁴They are Israelites, and to them belong the adoption, the glory, the covenants, the giving of the law, the worship, and the promises.”
-Romans 9:1-4

*Two Wills

III. Faith and Repentance

Use Gospel Book to cover the following:

- True saving faith includes knowledge, approval, and trust. These are not enough alone.
- Faith and repentance must come together
- attrition-contrition