

So Great a Salvation: 'Blind, but Now I See'

by Greg Herrick

The sermon emphasizes the sovereignty of God in salvation, from election to glorification, and encourages believers to respond to God's gracious plan with faith, repentance, and obedience.

Scripture: Matthew 11:20, Acts 2:23, Romans 4:1, Romans 8:29, Romans 10:17, 1 Corinthians 1:30, Ephesians 1:3-4, Ephesians 1:11, Titus 3:5

Topics: "Sovereignty Of God", "Salvation Doctrine"

Description

Greg Herrick preaches on the sovereignty of God in life and salvation, emphasizing how God's plans and choices are consistent with His will, even using sinful acts of men for His redemptive purposes. The sermon explores the concepts of being chosen, called, regenerated, justified, placed into union with Christ, adopted, sanctified, and glorified by God, highlighting the importance of understanding these doctrines in our lives.

Transcript

It is because of him that you are in Christ Jesus who has become to us wisdom from God, namely, righteousness, holiness, and redemption (1 Cor 1:30)

Meditation: The God Who Saves Me The Sovereignty of God in Life and Salvation 1. Read Ephesians 1:11. How many things does God work out in conformity with or in agreement with the purpose of his will? Thus, his choice of you to be saved and to know him is simply consistent with the way he does all things, in the sense that he works them out according to His gracious and wise plan. Now most of his plan remains a mystery to us, but by his grace we have become sharers in the gospel; that much we do know! 2.

Read Acts 2:23. Did the death of Christ catch God off guard, so to speak? Did the Jews and other wicked men willingly put him to death? Are they held responsible for his death? Conclusion: Not even the sinful acts of men, for which they will be held responsible, can overturn the sovereign purposes of God. Think about how Joseph's brothers sold him into slavery and intended him harm, yet even he admits that while his brothers meant it for evil, God used it for good, i.e., the preservation, development, and ultimate salvation of his people (see Gen 45:5-8). 3.

We saw above that God is sovereign in literally everything that happens on the earth (Eph 1:11). We also saw that men put Christ to death, but that God used their sin to redeem the world. Now Read Matthew

11:20-30. How does God express his sovereignty in salvation and how did Jesus feel about this? Chosen By God 1. Read Ephesians 1:4. Who chose us? When? If he chose us before we came into existence, and before we could do either good or bad, what does this tell you about his choice (cf.

Ephesians 2:8-9; Rom 9:11-12)? What is the motivating factor in God marking us out beforehand, according to Ephesians 1:4? NOTE: Theologians often refer to God's free choice of people--on the basis of his love and not on the basis of any foreseen merit in them--as "unconditional election," that is, his electing or choosing is not conditioned upon foreseen merit in the object of his choice, namely, us. As Paul said, we were sinners when Christ died for us (Rom 5:8) and objects of his wrath (Eph 2:3); therefore, God saw us as sinners before the foundation of the world. 2.

Read Acts 13:48. What does Luke say about those who believed the gospel? 3. Read Romans 8:29-30. Who takes the initiative in salvation? Can you see the logical progression in Paul's description of the entire salvation process in v. 30? Outline it. Called By God 1. We saw above that God is the sovereign author and finisher of salvation. He uses several means to save us, including the cross as the primary means, as well as the preaching of the gospel and granting us faith to trust him (Read Ephesians 2:8-9 again).

In the preaching of the gospel, there is both a "general call" and a "special call." The "general call" goes out to all people, i.e., as when someone preaches or shares the gospel, but it alone does not result in salvation for anyone. Read Matthew 11:28-30. Here Jesus calls all who recognize their need to come to him. 2. Theologians also speak of a "special" or "efficacious" call (effectual call) of God. This is where the Spirit takes the preached message of the gospel and enables the sinner--who is dead in sin (Eph 2:1)--to believe and trust in Christ.

See 2 Thessalonians 2:14. According to Romans 8:30 who are those who receive this special call? 3. Read Romans 1:6-7. What is our calling to? See also 1 Corinthians 1:9; 2 Timothy 1:9; 1 Peter 2:9. 4. Read Galatians 1:6. How does God call you to faith in Christ? 5. Does God ever Change his mind in terms of his calling us to salvation? Read Romans 11:29. Regenerated by God 1. Read Titus 3:5. The term "rebirth" (NIV) means "regeneration" or "new birth" (see NET Bible). On what basis did God "birth" us?

Which member of the Trinity is specifically involved in the process of giving us new birth, i.e., a new principle of spiritual life within us. 2. What does John 3:3-8 teach you about the new birth? Conversion to Christ: The Proper Response to God's Invitation 1. According to Romans 10:17 how does faith come about? 2. Although, as Romans 10:17 points out, true faith involves knowledge of the facts of the gospel, it is much deeper than that. See James 2:19. True faith requires that one agree with those facts and that one personally trust or commit him/herself to the living Christ.

See John 1:12; 3:16, and 5:24. 3. What is repentance in Acts 20:21 and 2 Corinthians 7:9-10? See also Acts 17:30. NOTE: Faith and repentance are two aspects of the one true response to God for salvation. See Isaiah 55:6-7. Repentance is generally understood to be the negative aspect of turning from known sin and faith is the positive response of turning to Christ to embrace him. 4. Who gives faith, according to Ephesians 2:8? 5. Who grants repentance according to Acts 5:31 and 2 Tim 2:25?

NOTE: Faith and repentance stand so closely together, the Scripture often times uses only one in the sharing of the gospel, though both ideas are present (but see Acts 20:21). Justified by God 1. The term "justify" in the New Testament means to "declare righteous"; it does not mean to "make righteous." On the other hand, sanctification often times means "to consecrate" or "to grow" in righteousness or holiness. Though the two ideas are closely related, the former is the ground and foundation of the latter; they are

not the same thing, and should not be confused. 2.

Read Romans 4:1-12. How many times does the term "credit" appear? Some versions translate the Greek term as "reckon" or "consider". The term is an accounting term. 3. How was righteousness "reckoned" or "credited" to Abraham? See 4:3. Is this also true for us? See 4:22-24 and 5:1. 4. Are good works necessary for justification? Read Romans 4:4-6. What about religious rites? Are they necessary for justification? See 4:9-11. Is there room for bragging then? See 4:2. 5. What is a key element in the doctrine of justification?

Read 4:6-7. 6. Since justification is clearly granted by God apart from works, religious rites, and any human merit, but through faith, what does this imply? Read 4:16 Placed into Union with Christ by God 1. Read Ephesians 1:3. What is the sphere of all our blessings? 2. Read Ephesians 1:4. When was the choice made that we would be "in Christ"? 3. Read Romans 6:4-5. How has God brought us into a living union with Christ? 4. How does Ephesians 2:5-6 relate to the idea of being "in Christ"? 5.

What kinds of things are said to be "in Christ"? a. 1 Corinthians 1:30 b. 1 Timothy 1:14 c. 2 Timothy 2:1, 10 d. 1 John 5:11 e. 2 Corinthians 5:21 f. Ephesians 1:7 g. 1 Thessalonians 4:16 6. NOTE: It is safe to say that every good thing we have is "in Christ Jesus," on the basis of his merit and God's grace, won for us through his earthly obedience, cross work, resurrection, and exaltation to the Father's right hand. In all these things we are regarded as "in Christ" and benefit, through God's electing purposes, in his magnificent grace, his triumph over sin, and his victory over all the powers of darkness.

Adopted by God 1. How does John refer to Christians? Read 1 John 3:1-2. How does Paul refer to Christians in Galatians 3:26? 2. How does a person become a "child of God" or a "son of God"? See John 1:12 and read Galatians 3:26 again. 3. What is the term or analogy that Paul uses to describe our status as children of God? See Romans 8:15, 23; Galatians 4:5, and Ephesians 1:5. NOTE: The NIV translates the Greek term as "sonship" or something similar. The term is "adoption." 4.

How does Paul refer to the children of God, corporately speaking, in Ephesians 2:19? 5. Who convinces us of our adoption into God's family as one of his special sons or daughters (on "sons" and "daughters," see 2 Corinthians 6:18)? Read Romans 8:16. Sanctified by God 1. What is the context for sanctification? See Romans 5:1-2. 2. What does sanctification mean in 1 Peter 1:15? Read also 2 Corinthians 3:18. What is the key term Paul uses in 2 Cor 3:18 to describe this moral and spiritual change as Christians undergo? 3.

On what basis is this change actually taking place in us? Read Romans 6:4-5. 4. Who works in you to produce holiness? See especially 2 Corinthians 3:18; Galatians 5:22-24; Ephesians 5:18, and Philippians 2:12-13. 5. What does holiness look like in Romans 13:8-10 and how does that relate to Galatians 5:22-24? 6. Is perfect holiness ever achieved in this life? See Philippians 3:12-14. 7. Is sanctification or growth in holiness ever simply "letting go" and "letting God"? How does the language of conflict in Galatians 5:17-18 relate to this idea?

NOTE: There are times when we need to let go, if you will, but this will not do as a comprehensive view of how to grow in holiness. It is far too passive and misses the stress on the command to work "out" (not "for") our own salvation (Phil 2:12-13). 8. Why can't we as Christians just do what we want, after all, we're "under grace" (see Romans 6:1-23)? In Galatians 6:7-8 Paul has a warning for those of us who willingly or unwillingly adopt this attitude. What is the warning?

How does it relate to our justification and status as God's children? Glorified by God 1. What is the final stage in God's plan of saving Christians? See Romans 8:30. 2. Glorification includes the resurrection of the body to perfect holiness and redemption. See Romans 8:23 and read slowly 1 Corinthians 15:1-58 (esp. 1 Cor 15:53). 3. What does glorification also include according to Romans 8:19-21? The Sovereignty of God Why is it important to understand the Biblical doctrine of God's sovereignty?

What happens, though, if we equate "sovereignty" with "fatalism" or a rigid "determinism"? Remember, God was completely sovereign in the death of his Son, but the Jews and wicked men acted freely to commit the crime. The point is, that though there is tension between divine sovereignty and human freedom and responsibility, do not fall off either the side that sees God's decree or plan as rigidly fixed from a human perspective or that he does not know the future and responds to it as it occurs.

Both are false: God knows the future for he designed it and directs the present toward it, yet we can and ought to render him intelligent and free service through His Spirit who lives in us. This is the best balance between the clear statements of Scripture and our experience as free creatures. See Phil 2:12-13 again.

Meditation: What Does This Mean for My Life?

Chosen by God

What does it mean to you that God chose you for himself in eternity past? What should our response be when things are difficult?

Adoption

What does it mean to you to be able to call God "Abba father"? We have a father who knows us through and through and still loves us. He understands us intimately and longs to hear our cries and comfort our hearts. He provides for us like any good father and he protects us as well. He even chastens us for our good so that we might share in his holiness. Someday he will bring us to himself where we will live in his family without the struggle which sin occasions.

Sanctified by God

What do you think the Spirit is most interested in working in your life these days? When you face struggles and defeat, why is it important to reflect on God's electing purpose in your life as well as the doctrine of justification and repentance?

Further Applications

From this study what are some things you need to believe, attitudes to change, and behavior to work out? Ask God for insight, wisdom, and strength in the carrying out of his will.

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