

Simon Field / General Adult

Theology for Life

“Having united himself to our flesh, sharing in our suffering and death, he now unites us to himself in his victorious life by his Spirit.”- Michael Horton

Romans 8:30–31 “And those he predestined, he also called; and those he called, he also justified; and those he justified, he also glorified. What, then, are we to say about these things? If God is for us, who is against us?”

I. Why do Some Believe and Others not?

A. Unbelief: The Bondage of the Will

Romans 1:20–22 “For his invisible attributes, that is, his eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly seen since the creation of the world, being understood through what he has made. As a result, people are without excuse. For though they knew God, they did not glorify him as God or show gratitude. Instead, their thinking became worthless, and their senseless hearts were darkened. Claiming to be wise, they became fools”

Romans 3:11 “There is no one who understands; there is no one who seeks God.”

Jeremiah 17:9 “The heart is more deceitful than anything else, and incurable—who can understand it?”

Salvation is not *synergistic*

Salvation is *monergistic*

B. Belief: Electing, Redeeming and Regenerating Love

Being born again (regeneration)

- John 3:3 “Jesus replied, “Truly I tell you, unless someone is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.””
- John 3:8 “The wind blows where it pleases, and you hear its sound, but you don’t know where it comes from or where it is going. So it is with everyone born of the Spirit.””

God planned when Christians would be born again (predestination)

- John 15:16 "You did not choose me, but I chose you. I appointed you to go and produce fruit and that your fruit should remain, so that whatever you ask the Father in my name, he will give you."
- Ephesians 1:3–5 "Blessed is the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavens in Christ. For he chose us in him, before the foundation of the world, to be holy and blameless in love before him. He predestined us to be adopted as sons through Jesus Christ for himself, according to the good pleasure of his will,"

Predestination happens only for one reason

- Deuteronomy 7:7 ""The Lord had his heart set on you and chose you, not because you were more numerous than all peoples, for you were the fewest of all peoples."
- Romans 8:29 "For those he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, so that he would be the firstborn among many brothers and sisters."

Predestination is our basis for confidence

- Romans 8:31–33 "What, then, are we to say about these things? If God is for us, who is against us? He did not even spare his own Son but gave him up for us all. How will he not also with him grant us everything? Who can bring an accusation against God's elect? God is the one who justifies."

C. Effectual Calling and the Question of Coercion

Outward call

Inward call

- Acts 16:14 "A God-fearing woman named Lydia, a dealer in purple cloth from the city of Thyatira, was listening. The Lord opened her heart to respond to what Paul was saying."
- 1 Peter 1:23, 25 "because you have been born again—not of perishable seed but of imperishable—through the living and enduring word of God.... And this word is the gospel that was proclaimed to you."

Why is salvation not coercion?

II. Conversion

In regeneration we are passive, we do not act.

In conversion, we are active in two ways:

A. Repentance

1. Repentance is a change of mind
2. Repentance involves realising all our sin has always been against God
 - Psalm 51:4 "Against you—you alone—I have sinned and done this evil in your sight. So you are right when you pass sentence; you are blameless when you judge."
3. Repentance involves grief that leads to life
 - 2 Corinthians 7:10 "For godly grief produces a repentance that leads to salvation without regret, but worldly grief produces death."
4. Repentance produces fruit
 - Matthew 3:8 "Therefore produce fruit consistent with repentance."

B. Faith

John 1:12 "But to all who did receive him, he gave them the right to be children of God, to those who believe in his name,"

Faith involves three things

1. Knowledge
2. Assent
3. Trust