

False Concepts of Salvation

- Existential Theology. It is built on a radical distinction between objective and subjective knowledge.
 - Theology is subjective truth rather than observable and testable truth. So the Bible is not truth, but if I choose, it can be “my truth.”
 - The 19th century liberal school of German theology promoted this idea with two German words for history: *historie* and *geschichte*.
 - *Historie* is objective and scientific history and is rooted in fact.
 - *Geschichte* is “significance history,” which is meant to convey the idea that the Bible does not contain factual information, but instead mythological stories designed to stress some important truth that can transform us. Thus, miracles aren’t real.
- Martin Heidegger was the perhaps the great 20th century example.
 - The task of philosophy (as well as theology) is to lead us from inauthentic existence to authentic existence. Authentic existence is when we become what we were meant to be by God. Inauthentic existence is found in modern man as we are selfish and seek our own will above everything else

False Concepts

- Existential theology (cont.).
- Rudolph Bultmann was the most prominent of such thinkers.
 - Used Heidegger’s theories to build his theology of demythologization, which is extremely popular among liberal theologians.
 - Through myth, or *geschichte*, the Bible calls us away from our selfish illusions, and brings us toward God to faith and obedience.
 - The task of theology is to demythologize the Bible to see what it says about us, not to believe in what it says about the ancient peoples it speaks of.



False Concepts

- Historic Roman Catholic salvation.
 - Salvation is found exclusively in the church.
 - Can't have God as your Father if you don't have the Church as your mother. You need the church as a mediator.
 - The church mediates for the laity with the sacraments. Sacraments bestow God's grace upon the obedient Catholic.
- Contemporary Roman Catholic salvation.
 - All humans have access to God through nature. His grace exists in nature.
 - Thus, His grace exists in other religions (there is true moral good and spirituality).
 - A Buddhist with "true intent" who seeks the divine is said to unofficially be a member of the church.



False Concepts

- Contemporary RCC salvation (cont.)
 - The church as a whole is divided into 3 groups: incorporated members, linked members, and related members.
 - Incorporated members = Roman Catholics.
 - Linked members = Protestants and Eastern Orthodox.
 - Related members = anonymous Christians (non-Christian religions with morally good people).
- This is clearly an attempt at global ecumenicalism that borders on universalism.
 - There are many conservative Catholics that resist the contemporary model and hold the historic model.
 - They see these trends being similar to Protestant liberalism (evolution, universalism, etc.)



The Biblical View of Salvation

- The Reformers and modern Evangelicals hold the right view.
- We see the doctrine of salvation being in response to the reality of sin.
- Sin involves a broken relationship with God.
- Because of this broken relationship, all men are objectively guilty before God, and deprived. Thus, sin has a forensic (legal) element to it.
- As a result, salvation must come about through radical and supernatural transformation; something that the Bible calls the new birth.
- This new birth restores the broken relationship with God and empowers the individual to have faith and walk in obedience to God.



Predestination—Salvation's Antecedent

- Though controversial, predestination is entirely biblical.
- Therefore, it is very important to see what it means.
- Sometimes it is confused with related terms.
- First, it is important to understand that predestination is like a coin with two sides: election and reprobation.
- We will talk about election first.



Election

- Election is “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, *Systematic Theology*, 670).
- Election is clearly from eternity past.
- We must distinguish several terms.
 - *foreordination* – This is the broadest of terms. It encompasses all of God’s will (decrees, purposes, or plans from eternity, the creation of the universe, the salvation of people, natural disasters, and everything else that comes to pass). Non-contingent.
 - *predestination* — God’s choice of some people for eternal life and others for eternal death. This term is specifically related to salvation, and it encompasses both election and reprobation.
 - *election* – This is the narrowest of these terms. It is God’s choice of some people for eternal life. It is specifically related to salvation, but it is restricted to election.

Scriptural Teaching on Election

- Ephesians 1:3-14:
 - 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, to the praise of his glorious grace that he lavished on us in the Beloved One.* In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace that he richly poured out on us with all wisdom and understanding. He made known to us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure that he purposed in Christ as a plan for the right time—to bring everything together in Christ, both things in heaven and things on earth in him. In him we have also received an inheritance, because we were predestined according to the plan of the one who works out everything in agreement with the purpose of his will, so that we who had already put our hope in Christ might bring praise to his glory. In him you also were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and when you believed. ¹⁴The Holy Spirit is the down payment of our inheritance, until the redemption of the possession, to the praise of his glory.

Scriptural Teaching on Election

- We see some key truths from Ephesians 1:3-14.
- We are blessed with six spiritual blessings in Christ.
 - He chose us in Christ before the foundation of the world (v. 4). Election.
 - He predestined us for adoption through Christ—according to the good pleasure of His will (v. 5).
 - He redeemed us via forgiveness through His blood (v.7).
 - He made known the mystery of His will (v. 9.)
 - We receive an inheritance because we were predestined according to the plan of God’s will (v. 11).
 - We were sealed with the Holy Spirit (v. 13).
- Ultimately, we have election, adoption, and redemption. All three are from predestination and the purpose of God’s will.



Scriptural Teaching on Election

- 1 Thessalonians 1:4-5.
 - For we know, brothers and sisters loved by God, that he has chosen you, because our gospel did not come to you in word only, but also in power, in the Holy Spirit, and with full assurance.
- Paul knows they were chosen because they believed when the gospel was preached to them. It was proof of their election. If belief is the evidence of election, then election is the cause of belief.
- 1 Peter 1:1-2. Believers are chosen.
 - Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ: To those chosen, living as exiles dispersed abroad in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia, chosen according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through the sanctifying work of the Spirit, to be obedient and to be sprinkled with the blood of Jesus Christ.



Scriptural Teaching on Election

- Romans 11:5.
 - In the same way, then, there is also at the present time a remnant chosen by grace.
- Paul is saying just as in the past, there is a present remnant of saved Israelites. Both in the Old Covenant and New Covenant, the remnant is “chosen by grace.” Election is in both covenants (e.g., “In the same way.”)
- Romans 8:28-30, 33.
 - We know that all things work together for the good of those who love God, who are called according to his purpose. 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. And those he predestined, he also called; and those he called, he also justified; and those he justified, he also glorified...Who can bring an accusation against God’s elect?



Scriptural Teaching on Election

- Acts 13:48—election causes belief.
 - When the Gentiles heard this, they rejoiced and honored the word of the Lord, and all who had been appointed to eternal life believed.
- 2 Thessalonians 2:13—election is from the beginning, but it is actualized through the Holy Spirit and belief.
 - But we ought to thank God always for you, brothers and sisters loved by the Lord, because from the beginning God has chosen you for salvation through sanctification by the Spirit and through belief in the truth.
- Revelation 13:8. The saved had their names written in the book of life before the foundation of the world.
 - All those who live on the earth will worship it, everyone whose name was not written from the foundation of the world in the book of life of the Lamb who was slaughtered.
- John 17:2—those who are saved were previously given to the Son by the Father.
 - ... so that he may give eternal life to everyone you have given him.

Scriptural Teaching on Election

- Acts 18:9-10—Paul was told to keep preaching because He has many people in the city. This is before any of them believed.
 - The Lord said to Paul in a night vision, “Don’t be afraid, but keep on speaking and don’t be silent. For I am with you, and no one will lay a hand on you to hurt you, because I have many people in this city.”
- Romans 9:23—believers were prepared beforehand for glory.
 - And what if he did this to make known the riches of his glory on objects of mercy that he prepared beforehand for glory.

When Did Election Occur?

- Ephesians 1:4.
 - For he chose us in him, before the foundation of the world, to be holy and blameless in love before him.
- 2 Timothy 1:9.
 - He has saved us and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given to us in Christ Jesus before time began.
- Election was granted to us in Christ before the universe even existed.

