

## The Doctrine of Soteriology by Christopher Warrington

### Common Grace

I believe that “common grace is the grace of God by which He gives people innumerable blessings that are not part of salvation.” I believe that God bestows this grace physically (Ps 145:9, 15-16; Mt 5:44-45)<sup>1</sup>, intellectually (Jn 1:9; Ro 1:21), morally (Ro 1:32; Lk 6:33), creatively, societally (Ge 5:4; Ro 13:1), and religiously (Lk 4:40; 1Tm 2:4) for the purpose of redemption of those that will be saved (2Pt 3:9-10), and to demonstrate His goodness and mercy (Lk 6:35; Ps 145:9), and His justice and glory (Ro 2:5; 3:19).

### Salvation

I believe that the Bible states that there is a divine order to the nature of salvation (Ro 8:29-30): a pre-state, a beginning state, a continuing state and a future state. It is by this divinely appointed order that people<sup>2</sup> are elected to come to a saving knowledge of Christ (pre-state) and into relationship with the Father (the beginning state), are sanctified by the Spirit (the continuing state) and await their final glorification and union with Christ (the future state). I believe that we can see these and further details throughout scripture (see following).

As of the writing of this statement, I have yet to fully reconcile my understanding and belief on the doctrine of **predestination, election** and **reprobation**. I currently feel that there is a battle going on between my mind and my spirit on this issue; and I have yet to figure out which side each is taking. I cannot yet reconcile how a person is without excuse for refusing God (Jn 5:39-40; Ro 1:20), yet is unable to fully comprehend the spiritual world unless God regenerates them (1Co 2:14). If they are without capacity to understand, then how are they without excuse? Yet, I cannot ignore the overwhelming evidence that states that God has predestined an chosen those who are saved (Eph 1:4-6; Ro 8:28-30; 2Ti 2:10; Ro 9:18-24). So, as of this moment, I believe that God has the divine right, as creator and God, to **elect** whomever He wills to be saved (Ro 9:18-24) and that He did **predestine** some to be saved before the foundation of the world

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<sup>1</sup> The English Standard Version was used during my study for and compilation of these Statements.

<sup>2</sup> The terms “people”, “person”, “they”, and/or “them” is meant to include any person that comes to faith in Christ Jesus; and this term will carry through the salvation process outlined here.

(Eph 1:4-6) and hardened the hearts of others against Him (Ro 11:7; 1Pe 2:8) - this is also known as **reprobation**.

I believe that for the lost to be saved they must hear the salvation call in two distinct ways: both physically (“gospel”) and spiritually (“effective”). These can happen at different times, or at the same time; but, they must have heard the the **effective call** by which God calls people to him (1Co 1:9, 1Th 2:12) and they must hear the **gospel call** from the mouth of men (Ac 16:14; Ro 10:14). Once a person has heard that all have sinned (Ro 3:23), that the penalty for that sin is death (Ro 6:23), and that Jesus Christ died to pay the penalty for sin (Ro 5:8); they should be told that Jesus invites them into a saving relationship (Mt 11:28, Re 3:20) and that, when they accept that invitation, the forgiveness of their sins is secured (Jn 3:16; 6:37; Ac 3:19).

I believe that upon hearing these calls, **regeneration** occurs within the person. I believe that the mysterious work of regeneration (Jn 3:8) is done completely by the work of God (Ezk 36:26-27; 1Pe 1:3) in which He causes a new spiritual life to be born in the person (Jn 3:5, Col 2:13) so that they are able to understand spiritual things (1 Co 2:14) and conversion is able to take place. I believe that **conversion** is the result of regeneration and is a willful response to the “effective” and “gospel” calls. I believe that conversion requires a sincere repentance by the person (Ac 3:19; Ro 2:4) and a placing of their trust in Christ (Jn 3:16; Heb 7:25) which results in saving faith (Is 55:6-7; Ac 20:21). I believe that upon conversion two distinctive, yet powerful acts occur simultaneously: the person is justified (Ro 4:16) and adopted (Jn 1:12; Ga 3:25-26) into the family of God.

I believe that **justification** is the act by which God (Ro 8:33-34) legally declares the sins, of the person, forgiven (Ro 4:6-8, 8:1), Christ’s righteousness is imputed upon them<sup>3</sup> (1 Co 1:30; Php 3:9) and He declares them righteous in His sight (Is 61:10; Ro 3:21-22). I believe that justification is given entirely by the grace of God (Ro 3:23-24), not by any merit found within them (Ep 2:8-9). I believe that justification is given by and through their faith in Christ alone (Ro 4:5, 5:1; Ga 2:16) and that, in the context of James 2, works is the result of true faith, not the other way around.

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<sup>3</sup> or is “belonging to them”

I believe that **adoption** is the act by which a person is considered a member of God's family (Ro 8:14-17; Ga 4:4-7) and I believe that there are present and future (Ro 8:23) benefits to their adoption. I believe these benefits include the following: they relate to God as their loving Father (Mt 6:32, Ga 4:7), they are guided and disciplined as children (Heb 12:5-6), they relate to other believers as family (1Tm 5:1-2), they imitate and honor the Heavenly Father (Mt 5:16; Eph 5:1; Php 2:14-15), they share in Jesus' sufferings and glory (Ro 8:16-17) and they are led by the Holy Spirit (Ro 8:14).

I believe in the continuing state of salvation, namely that of being filled with the Holy Spirit, sanctified by the Holy Spirit and the perseverance of the saints. I believe that the terms "**baptized by the Spirit**" and "filled with the Spirit" are synonymous with one another. I believe that the day of Pentecost was a unique point in history which marked the transition between the old and new covenant works of the Spirit (Joe 2:28-29; Ac 1:8) and that all new believers are given a "manifestation of the Spirit for the common good" of the Church (1Co 12:7,11). As the Bible mentions times that Jesus was filled with the Spirit, I do not believe that being filled with the Spirit is a necessary stage in salvation, but is an outpouring of being righteous and blessed by God (Lk 4:1).

I believe that, whereas justification was a one-time act of God in which a person is declared perfectly righteous, **sanctification** begins at regeneration (1Tt 3:5; 1Jn 3:9) and is a continuous act (Pr 20:9; Php 3:13-14) in which a person cooperates with God (Php 2:13; 2Pe 1:5), in their present life (Mt 5:48; 2Co 7:1; 1Jn3:6), to increase in holiness (2 Co 3:18; Co 3:10). And where as justification effects the spiritual, sanctification effects the whole person: the physical (Ro 6:12), intellectual (Ro 12:2), emotional (Eph 4:31), the will (Php 2:13), and the spirit (2 Co 7:1).

I believe in the **perseverance of the saints** in which all those who are truly saved will be kept by the power of God (Jn 10:27-29, Php 1:6, 1Pe 1:3-5) so as to persevere as Christians (Co 1:22-23; Heb 3:14; 1Jn 2:19) until the end of their lives (Mt. 10:22; Jn 6:38-40). I believe that those that keep their trust in Christ (Heb 6:12, Jn 3:16), have evidence of regenerating work of the Holy Spirit (1Jn 3:14,17, 4:13) and can see a long-term pattern of growth of holiness in their lives (2Pe 1:5-7,10). I believe these people have the guarantee and assurance of eternal life (Eph 1:13-14).

I believe that **death** is the final consequence of a fallen human state that people face in this world

(1Co 15:26, 54-55). It is not a punishment (Ro 8:1) but is a means toward increasing our sanctification (Ro 8:28, Php 1:20) and union with Christ (Ro 8:17; 1 Pe 2:21, 4:13). We should not fear death (2Co 5:8; Php 1:22-23; Ro 8:38-39) and though saddened (Ac 20:37-38; Jn 11:35), we should not be overcome with sorrow at the death of fellow believers (1Th 4:13; Ps 116:15). The death of unbelievers should serve as a reminder for the immediate need for salvation (Ro 9:1-3, Jn 3:18). I believe that when a believer dies they are **immediately** in the presence of God (Mt 25:46; Lk 23:43; 2Co 5:8) and when a non-believer dies, they **immediately** go to eternal punishment (Mt 25:46; Re 14:11) and await the final judgement (Jn 5:28-29; Re 20:15). Do to these immediate states of the dead, I believe that prayer for the dead is unnecessary.

I believe in the future state of salvation, namely the **glorification** of the saints, where, upon Christ's return (1Co 15:22-23; 1Th 4:14-17 [16]), all the bodies of believers who have died will be raised first (Da 12:2; Jn 5:28-29; 1Th 4:14-17 [16]); and then, with the bodies of those who remain alive (1Th 4:14-17 [17]), all bodies of believers will be changed at the same time (1Th 4:14-17 [17]) into perfect resurrection bodies like that of Jesus' (Php 3:20-21) and will be united, each body, with its soul (Job 19:25-26; 1Co 15:37-44 [38,44]). I believe that our glorified bodies will be imperishable (1 Co 15:42), glorious (1 Co 15:41; Mt 13:14; Da 12:3; Ex 34:34), powerful (1 Co 15:43) and spiritual (1 Co 15:44). And I believe that the entirety of Creation will be renewed as well (Ro 8:19-23).

Finally, I believe in the **union between believers and Christ**, which is seen during Christ's life and work on Earth (Ga 2:20; Eph 2:6) and in our lives now (Col 2:12; 1Jn 5:11; Eph 1:3). I believe that every state of salvation listed above is because of our union with Christ: we are called (1Co 7:22), regenerated (Eph 1:3, 2:10), justified and adopted (Ro 8:1), sanctified (Ro 15:17; 1Th 3:8) and kept (Jn 10:27-29), and we die (1Th 4:16) and are glorified (1Co 15:22) through Christ. I believe that Christ is in us (Ga 2:20; Co 1:27), we are in Christ (1Co 1:9; Ro 8:9), and we are like Christ (1Co 11:1; 2Co 3:18). I believe that all Christians are together one body in Christ (1Co 10:17, 12:12, 27).