

Foundations of Faith (A Catechism for Today)

Lesson 19 – May 7

Salvation, Predestination, and Saving Faith

Question 52: Why do we say that salvation is by God's grace alone?

God "chose us in Christ before the foundation of the world" (Ephesians 1:4). We do not earn or deserve to be saved; this is God's gracious gift.

Eph 1:4-6 Just as he chose us in Christ before the foundation of the world to be holy and blameless before him in love. He destined us for adoption as his children through Jesus Christ, according to the good pleasure of his will to the praise of his glorious grace that he freely bestowed on us in the Beloved.

Eph 2:8-9 For by grace you have been saved through faith, and this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God – not the result of works so that no one may boast.

Rom 3:24 They are now justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus.

Deut 7:6-9, 32:10

6 For you are a holy people, who belong to the LORD your God. Of all the people on earth, the LORD your God has chosen you to be his own special treasure. 7 "The LORD did not set his heart on you and choose you because you were more numerous than other nations, for you were the smallest of all nations! 8 Rather, it was simply that the LORD loves you, and he was keeping the oath he had sworn to your ancestors. That is why the LORD rescued you with such a strong hand from your slavery and from the oppressive hand of Pharaoh, king of Egypt. 9 Understand, therefore, that the LORD your God is indeed God. He is the faithful God who keeps his covenant for a thousand generations and lavishes his unfailing love on those who love him and obey his commands.

10 He found them in a desert land, in an empty, howling wasteland. He surrounded them and watched over them; he guarded them as he would guard his own eyes.

Isa 49:14-18

14 Yet Jerusalem says, "The LORD has deserted us; the Lord has forgotten us." 15 "Never! Can a mother forget her nursing child? Can she feel no love for the child she has borne? But even if that were possible, I would not forget you! 16 See, I have written your name on the palms of my hands. Always in my mind is a picture of Jerusalem's walls in ruins. 17 Soon your descendants will come back, and all who are trying to destroy you will go away. 18 Look around you and see, for all your children will come back to you. As surely as I live," says the LORD, "they will be like jewels or bridal ornaments for you to display.

Rom 5:15-21

15 But there is a great difference between Adam's sin and God's gracious gift. For the sin of this one man, Adam, brought death to many. But even greater is God's wonderful grace and his gift of forgiveness to many through this other man, Jesus Christ. 16 And the result of God's gracious gift is very different from the result of that one man's sin. For Adam's sin led to condemnation, but God's free gift leads to our being made right with God, even though we are guilty of many sins. 17 For the sin of this one man, Adam, caused death to rule over many. But even greater is God's wonderful grace

and his gift of righteousness, for all who receive it will live in triumph over sin and death through this one man, Jesus Christ. 18 Yes, Adam's one sin brings condemnation for everyone, but Christ's one act of righteousness brings a right relationship with God and new life for everyone. 19 Because one person disobeyed God, many became sinners. But because one other person obeyed God, many will be made righteous. 20 God's law was given so that all people could see how sinful they were. But as people sinned more and more, God's wonderful grace became more abundant. 21 So just as sin ruled over all people and brought them to death, now God's wonderful grace rules instead, giving us right standing with God and resulting in eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Question 53: How do we receive God's gift of salvation?

God's gracious gift is received through faith alone. "If we confess with our lips that Jesus is Lord, and believe in our hearts that God raised him from the dead, we will be saved" (Romans 10:9).

Rom 3:28 For we hold that a person is justified by faith apart from works prescribed by the law.

Rom 1:16-17 For I am not ashamed of the gospel; it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who has faith to the Jew first and also to the Greek. For in it the righteousness of God is revealed through faith for faith, as it is written, "The one who is righteous will live by faith."

Eph 2:8 For by grace you have been saved through faith.

Rom 1:5, 3:30, 4:13-25, 10:9-13

5 Through Christ, God has given us the privilege and authority as apostles to tell Gentiles everywhere what God has done for them, so that they will believe and obey him, bringing glory to his name.

30 There is only one God, and he makes people right with himself only by faith, whether they are Jews or Gentiles.

13 Clearly, God's promise to give the whole earth to Abraham and his descendants was based not on his obedience to God's law, but on a right relationship with God that comes by faith. 14 If God's promise is only for those who obey the law, then faith is not necessary and the promise is pointless. 15 For the law always brings punishment on those who try to obey it. (The only way to avoid breaking the law is to have no law to break!) 16 So the promise is received by faith. It is given as a free gift. And we are all certain to receive it, whether or not we live according to the law of Moses, if we have faith like Abraham's. For Abraham is the father of all who believe. 17 That is what the Scriptures mean when God told him, "I have made you the father of many nations." This happened because Abraham believed in the God who brings the dead back to life and who creates new things out of nothing. 18 Even when there was no reason for hope, Abraham kept hoping—believing that he would become the father of many nations. For God had said to him, "That's how many descendants you will have!" 19 And Abraham's faith did not weaken, even though, at about 100 years of age, he figured his body was as good as dead—and so was Sarah's womb. 20 Abraham never wavered in believing God's promise. In fact, his faith grew stronger, and in this he brought glory to God. 21 He was fully convinced that God is able to do whatever he promises. 22 And because of Abraham's faith, God counted him as righteous. 23 And when God counted him as righteous, it wasn't just for Abraham's benefit. It was recorded 24 for our benefit, too, assuring us that God will also count us as righteous if we believe in him, the one who raised Jesus our Lord from the dead. 25 He was handed over to die because of our sins, and he was raised to life to make us right with God.

Acts 16:30,31

30 Then he brought them out and asked, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" 31 They replied, "Believe in the Lord Jesus and you will be saved, along with everyone in your household."

Gal 3:8-9

8 What's more, the Scriptures looked forward to this time when God would declare the Gentiles to be righteous because of their faith. God proclaimed this good news to Abraham long ago when he said, "All nations will be blessed through you." 9 So all who put their faith in Christ share the same blessing Abraham received because of his faith.

Jas 2:24-26

24 So you see, we are shown to be right with God by what we do, not by faith alone. 25 Rahab the prostitute is another example. She was shown to be right with God by her actions when she hid those messengers and sent them safely away by a different road. 26 Just as the body is dead without breath, so also faith is dead without good works.

Question 54: What is predestination?

Predestination is God's decision from eternity to move savingly towards us in Jesus Christ in whom and by whom we are chosen. As such, it is gospel, good news. We are chosen for a purpose, to be like Christ and to serve God.

Rom 8:29 For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the firstborn within a large family. And those whom he predestined he also called; and those whom he called he also justified; and those whom he justified he also glorified.

Eph 1:4 Just as he chose us in Christ before the foundation of the world to be holy and blameless before him in love.

Jn 15:16 You did not choose me but I chose you. And I appointed you to go and bear fruit, fruit that will last, so that the Father will give you whatever you ask in my name.

Gen 12:1-2, 25:19-23

1 The LORD had said to Abram, "Leave your native country, your relatives, and your father's family, and go to the land that I will show you. 2 I will make you into a great nation. I will bless you and make you famous, and you will be a blessing to others.

19 This is the account of the family of Isaac, the son of Abraham. 20 When Isaac was forty years old, he married Rebekah, the daughter of Bethuel the Aramean from Paddan-aram and the sister of Laban the Aramean. 21 Isaac pleaded with the LORD on behalf of his wife, because she was unable to have children. The LORD answered Isaac's prayer, and Rebekah became pregnant with twins. 22 But the two children struggled with each other in her womb. So she went to ask the LORD about it. "Why is this happening to me?" she asked. 23 And the LORD told her, "The sons in your womb will become two nations. From the very beginning, the two nations will be rivals. One nation will be stronger than the other; and your older son will serve your younger son." 24 And when the time came to give birth, Rebekah

Deut 7:6-11

6 For you are a holy people, who belong to the LORD your God. Of all the people on earth, the LORD your God has chosen you to be his own special treasure. 7 "The LORD did not set his heart on

you and choose you because you were more numerous than other nations, for you were the smallest of all nations! 8 Rather, it was simply that the LORD loves you, and he was keeping the oath he had sworn to your ancestors. That is why the LORD rescued you with such a strong hand from your slavery and from the oppressive hand of Pharaoh, king of Egypt. 9 Understand, therefore, that the LORD your God is indeed God. He is the faithful God who keeps his covenant for a thousand generations and lavishes his unfailing love on those who love him and obey his commands. 10 But he does not hesitate to punish and destroy those who reject him. 11 Therefore, you must obey all these commands, decrees, and regulations I am giving you today.

Ps 139

1 O LORD, you have examined my heart and know everything about me. 2 You know when I sit down or stand up. You know my thoughts even when I'm far away. 3 You see me when I travel and when I rest at home. You know everything I do. 4 You know what I am going to say even before I say it, LORD. 5 You go before me and follow me. You place your hand of blessing on my head. 6 Such knowledge is too wonderful for me, too great for me to understand! 7 I can never escape from your Spirit! I can never get away from your presence! 8 If I go up to heaven, you are there; if I go down to the grave, you are there. 9 If I ride the wings of the morning, if I dwell by the farthest oceans, 10 even there your hand will guide me, and your strength will support me. 11 I could ask the darkness to hide me and the light around me to become night— 12 but even in darkness I cannot hide from you. To you the night shines as bright as day. Darkness and light are the same to you. 13 You made all the delicate, inner parts of my body and knit me together in my mother's womb. 14 Thank you for making me so wonderfully complex! Your workmanship is marvelous—how well I know it. 15 You watched me as I was being formed in utter seclusion, as I was woven together in the dark of the womb. 16 You saw me before I was born. Every day of my life was recorded in your book. Every moment was laid out before a single day had passed. 17 How precious are your thoughts about me, O God. They cannot be numbered! 18 I can't even count them; they outnumber the grains of sand! And when I wake up, you are still with me! 19 O God, if only you would destroy the wicked! Get out of my life, you murderers! 20 They blaspheme you; your enemies misuse your name. 21 O LORD, shouldn't I hate those who hate you? Shouldn't I despise those who oppose you? 22 Yes, I hate them with total hatred, for your enemies are my enemies. 23 Search me, O God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts. 24 Point out anything in me that offends you, and lead me along the path of everlasting life.

Isa 41:8

“But as for you, Israel my servant, Jacob my chosen one, descended from Abraham my friend,

Am 3:2

2 “From among all the families on the earth, I have been intimate with you alone. That is why I must punish you for all your sins.”

Gal 1:15

15 But even before I was born, God chose me and called me by his marvelous grace. Then it pleased him

Eph 1:3-14

3 All praise to God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly realms because we are united with Christ. 4 Even before he made the world, God loved us and chose us in Christ to be holy and without fault in his eyes. 5 God decided in advance to adopt us into his own family by bringing us to himself through Jesus Christ. This is what he wanted to do, and it gave him great pleasure. 6 So we praise God for the glorious grace he has poured out on us

who belong to his dear Son. 7 He is so rich in kindness and grace that he purchased our freedom with the blood of his Son and forgave our sins. 8 He has showered his kindness on us, along with all wisdom and understanding. 9 God has now revealed to us his mysterious plan regarding Christ, a plan to fulfill his own good pleasure. 10 And this is the plan: At the right time he will bring everything together under the authority of Christ—everything in heaven and on earth. 11 Furthermore, because we are united with Christ, we have received an inheritance from God, for he chose us in advance, and he makes everything work out according to his plan. 12 God’s purpose was that we Jews who were the first to trust in Christ would bring praise and glory to God. 13 And now you Gentiles have also heard the truth, the Good News that God saves you. And when you believed in Christ, he identified you as his own by giving you the Holy Spirit, whom he promised long ago. 14 The Spirit is God’s guarantee that he will give us the inheritance he promised and that he has purchased us to be his own people. He did this so we would praise and glorify him.

Rom 9:10-18, 11:2,28-36

10 This son was our ancestor Isaac. When he married Rebekah, she gave birth to twins. 11 But before they were born, before they had done anything good or bad, she received a message from God. (This message shows that God chooses people according to his own purposes; 12 he calls people, but not according to their good or bad works.) She was told, “Your older son will serve your younger son.” 13 In the words of the Scriptures, “I loved Jacob, but I rejected Esau.” 14 Are we saying, then, that God was unfair? Of course not! 15 For God said to Moses, “I will show mercy to anyone I choose, and I will show compassion to anyone I choose.” 16 So it is God who decides to show mercy. We can neither choose it nor work for it. 17 For the Scriptures say that God told Pharaoh, “I have appointed you for the very purpose of displaying my power in you and to spread my fame throughout the earth.” 18 So you see, God chooses to show mercy to some, and he chooses to harden the hearts of others so they refuse to listen.

2 No, God has not rejected his own people, whom he chose from the very beginning. Do you realize what the Scriptures say about this? Elijah the prophet complained to God about the people of Israel and said,

28 Many of the people of Israel are now enemies of the Good News, and this benefits you Gentiles. Yet they are still the people he loves because he chose their ancestors Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. 29 For God’s gifts and his call can never be withdrawn. 30 Once, you Gentiles were rebels against God, but when the people of Israel rebelled against him, God was merciful to you instead. 31 Now they are the rebels, and God’s mercy has come to you so that they, too, will share in God’s mercy. 32 For God has imprisoned everyone in disobedience so he could have mercy on everyone. 33 Oh, how great are God’s riches and wisdom and knowledge! How impossible it is for us to understand his decisions and his ways! 34 For who can know the LORD’s thoughts? Who knows enough to give him advice? 35 And who has given him so much that he needs to pay it back? 36 For everything comes from him and exists by his power and is intended for his glory. All glory to him forever! Amen.

1 Pet 1:2, 2:9

2 God the Father knew you and chose you long ago, and his Spirit has made you holy. As a result, you have obeyed him and have been cleansed by the blood of Jesus Christ. May God give you more and more grace and peace.

9 But you are not like that, for you are a chosen people. You are royal priests, a holy nation, God’s very own possession. As a result, you can show others the goodness of God, for he called you out of the darkness into his wonderful light.

2 Pet 1:3-10

3 By his divine power, God has given us everything we need for living a godly life. We have received all of this by coming to know him, the one who called us to himself by means of his marvelous glory and excellence. 4 And because of his glory and excellence, he has given us great and precious promises. These are the promises that enable you to share his divine nature and escape the world's corruption caused by human desires. 5 In view of all this, make every effort to respond to God's promises. Supplement your faith with a generous provision of moral excellence, and moral excellence with knowledge, 6 and knowledge with self-control, and self-control with patient endurance, and patient endurance with godliness, 7 and godliness with brotherly affection, and brotherly affection with love for everyone. 8 The more you grow like this, the more productive and useful you will be in your knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. 9 But those who fail to develop in this way are shortsighted or blind, forgetting that they have been cleansed from their old sins. 10 So, dear brothers and sisters, work hard to prove that you really are among those God has called and chosen. Do these things, and you will never fall away.

Question 55: Are those who do not believe, then not chosen?

Though we know that there are some who do not believe and who reject God, God's love continues to invite them to faith. God wills the salvation of all and excludes no one from the reach of his love.

1 Tim 2:3-4 This is right and is acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour, who desires everyone to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.

Jn 3:17-18 "Indeed, God did not send the Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him. Those who believe in him are not condemned; but those who do not believe are condemned already, because they have not believed in the name of the only Son of God.

Rom 11:32 For God has imprisoned all in disobedience so that he may be merciful to all.

Ezek 18:32

32 I don't want you to die, says the Sovereign LORD . Turn back and live!

Jn 6:37,39, 12:32

37 However, those the Father has given me will come to me, and I will never reject them.

39 And this is the will of God, that I should not lose even one of all those he has given me, but that I should raise them up at the last day.

32 And when I am lifted up from the earth, I will draw everyone to myself."

Rom 5:18

18 Yes, Adam's one sin brings condemnation for everyone, but Christ's one act of righteousness brings a right relationship with God and new life for everyone.

1 Cor 15:22

22 Just as everyone dies because we all belong to Adam, everyone who belongs to Christ will be given new life.

2 Cor 5:19

19 For God was in Christ, reconciling the world to himself, no longer counting people's sins against them. And he gave us this wonderful message of reconciliation.

Eph 1:10

10 And this is the plan: At the right time he will bring everything together under the authority of Christ—everything in heaven and on earth.

Titus 2:11

11 For the grace of God has been revealed, bringing salvation to all people.

Heb 10:31

31 It is a terrible thing to fall into the hands of the living God.

2 Pet 3:9

9 The Lord isn't really being slow about his promise, as some people think. No, he is being patient for your sake. He does not want anyone to be destroyed, but wants everyone to repent.

1 Jn 2:9

9 If anyone claims, "I am living in the light," but hates a fellow believer, that person is still living in darkness.

Rev 20:14

14 Then death and the grave were thrown into the lake of fire. This lake of fire is the second death.