

# Systematic Theology: Part 5: The Doctrine of the Application of Redemption

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This document contains the teacher notes for 13 Sunday school lessons walking through the fifth part of Wayne Grudem's work, *Systematic Theology*. There is a complementary document containing student handouts that can be shared with listeners to aid them with this material.

I claim no infallibility relative to the material presented here (the bulk is a condensation of Grudem's text). It is, as many have said before, beggars showing other beggars where to find bread.

These teachings are provided free in the spirit of [Matthew 10:8b](#).

As errors are found, please let me know so I can correct. The theology expressed here should not be construed as representing the theology of Stuart Heights Baptist Church (especially when I am wrong or when I am being an idiot).

The formatting is as follows:

- **bold green text are quotes from outside sources (primarily Wayne Grudem's Systematic Theology text)**
- **bold red text is the Scripture** (NKJV is used unless otherwise noted. Scripture taken from the New King James Version®. Copyright © 1982 by Thomas Nelson, Inc. Used by permission. All rights reserved.)
- **bold blue text are Bible references**
- **bold purple text are questions to consider asking while teaching this material**
- **highlighted, bold, and underlined text in the teacher notes are answers to blanks in the student handouts**
- plain black text are my comments

The file formats available online are only the PDFs, but if the native Microsoft Word files are needed, I am more than happy to email them. I can be reached at [jim314@yahoo.com](mailto:jim314@yahoo.com).

The audio recordings of many of these teachings themselves are available via our class [podcast](#). Many thanks to David Barber for his faithfulness in this area.

I hope these resources assist in enabling you to teach through a work like Grudem's *Systematic Theology*. Again, feel free to contact me with questions or feedback.

Grace and peace,

Jim Fleming  
Hixson, Tennessee  
April 2016

# Systematic Theology

## Part 5: Application of Redemption

### Chapter 31: Common Grace

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*What are the undeserved blessings that God gives to all people, both believers and unbelievers?*

#### Introduction & Review

Note: The primary textbook for the structure of this series is Wayne Grudem's *Systematic Theology*. The primary text for the substance of this series is the Bible.

**Grudem: What is systematic theology? Many different definitions have been given, but for the purposes of this book the following definition will be used: *Systematic theology is any study that answers the question, "What does the whole Bible teach us today?" about any given topic.***

**This definition indicates that systematic theology involves collecting and understanding all the relevant passages in the Bible on various topics and then summarizing their teachings clearly so that we know what to believe about each topic.** Example: Lego sets vs Lego pieces

#### The Words

1. Systematic – carefully organized (all relevant passages organized into topics)
2. Theology – the study of religious truths

#### The Schedule

Part 1: The Doctrine of the Word of God (February – April, 2014)

- Chapter 1: Introduction to Systematic Theology: What is systematic theology? Why should Christians study it? How should we study it? Why Should We as a Class Study Systematic Theology? To fulfill the Great Commission, to confront sin in our lives, and **Grudem: To be able to make better decisions later on new questions of doctrine that may arise**
- Chapter 2: The Word of God: What are the different forms of the Word of God?
- Chapter 3: The Canon of Scripture: What belongs in the Bible and what does not belong?
- Chapter 4: The Four Characteristics of Scripture: (1) Authority: How do we know that the Bible is God's Word?
- Chapter 5: The Inerrancy of Scripture: Are there any errors in the Bible?
- Chapter 6: The Four Characteristics of Scripture: (2) Clarity: Can only Bible scholars understand the Bible rightly?

- Chapter 7: The Four Characteristics of Scripture: (3) Necessity: For what purposes are the Bible necessary? How much can people know about God without the Bible?
- Chapter 8: The Four Characteristics of Scripture: (4) Sufficiency: Is the Bible enough for knowing what God wants us to think or do?

#### Part 2: The Doctrine of God (September – November, 2014)

- Chapter 9: The Existence of God: How do we know that God exists?
- Chapter 10: The Knowability of God: Can we really know God? How much of God can we know?
- Chapter 11: The Character of God: “Incommunicable” Attributes: How is God different from us?
- Chapter 12: The Character of God: “Communicable” Attributes (Part 1): How is God like us in his being and in mental and moral attributes?
- Chapter 13: The Character of God: “Communicable” Attributes (Part 2): How is God like us in attributes of will and in attributes that summarize his excellence?
- Chapter 14: God in Three Persons: The Trinity: How can God be three persons, yet one God?
- Chapter 15: Creation: Why, how, and when did God create the universe?
- Chapter 16: God’s Providence: If God controls all things, how can our actions have real meaning? What are the decrees of God?
- Chapter 17: Miracles: What are miracles? Can they happen today?
- Chapter 18: Prayer: Why does God want us to pray? How can we pray effectively?
- Chapter 19: Angels: What are angels? Why did God create them?
- Chapter 20: Satan and Demons: How should Christians think of Satan and demons today? Spiritual warfare.

#### Part 3: The Doctrine of Man (March 2015)

- Chapter 21: The Creation of Man: Why did God create us? How did God make us like himself? How can we please him in everyday living?
- Chapter 22: Man as Male and Female: Why did God create two sexes? Can men and women be equal and yet have different roles?
- Chapter 23: The Essential Nature of Man: What does Scripture mean by “soul” and “spirit”? Are they the same thing?
- Chapter 24: Sin: What is sin? Where did it come from? Do we inherit a sinful nature from Adam? Do we inherit guilt from Adam?
- Chapter 25: The Covenants between God and Man: What principles determine the way God relates to us?

#### Part 4: The Doctrines of Christ and the Holy Spirit (October – November, 2015)

- Chapter 26: The Person of Christ: How is Jesus fully God and fully man, yet one person?
- Chapter 27: The Atonement: Was it necessary for Christ to die? Did Christ’s entire earthly life earn any saving benefits for us? The cause and nature of the atonement. Did Christ descend into hell?

- Chapter 28: Resurrection and Ascension: What was Christ's resurrection body like? What is its significance for us? What happened to Christ when he ascended into heaven? What is meant by the states of Jesus Christ?
- Chapter 29: The Offices of Christ: How is Christ prophet, priest, and king?
- Chapter 30: The Work of the Holy Spirit: What are the distinctive activities of the Holy Spirit throughout the history of the Bible?

#### **Part 5: The Doctrine of the Application of Redemption (January – April, 2016)**

- Chapter 31: Common Grace: What are the undeserved blessings that God gives to all people, both believers and unbelievers?
- Chapter 32: Election and Reprobation: When and why did God choose us? Are some not chosen?
- Chapter 33: The Gospel Call and Effective Calling: What is the gospel message? How does it become effective?
- Chapter 34: Regeneration: What does it mean to be born again?
- Chapter 35: Conversion (Faith and Repentance): What is true repentance? What is saving faith? Can people accept Jesus as Savior and not as Lord?
- Chapter 36: Justification (Right Legal Standing before God): How and when do we gain right legal standing before God?
- Chapter 37: Adoption (Membership in God's Family): What are benefits of being a member of God's family?
- Chapter 38: Sanctification (Growth in Likeness to Christ): How do we grow in Christian maturity? What are the blessings of Christian growth?
- Chapter 39: Baptism in and Filling with the Holy Spirit: Should we seek a "baptism in the Holy Spirit" after conversion? What does it mean to be filled with the Holy Spirit?
- Chapter 40: The Perseverance of the Saints (Remaining a Christian): Can true Christians lose their salvation? How can we know if we are truly born again?
- Chapter 41: Death and the Intermediate State: What is the purpose of death in the Christian life? What happens to our bodies and souls when we die?
- Chapter 42: Glorification (Receiving a Resurrection Body): When will we receive resurrection bodies? What will they be like?
- Chapter 43: Union with Christ: What does it mean to be "in Christ" or "united with Christ"?

#### **Part 6: The Doctrine of the Church (July – September, 2016)**

#### **Part 7: The Doctrine of the Future (November 2016)**

## Explanation and Scriptural Basis

### A. Grudem: Introduction and definition

**Genesis 2:15-17; 3:6**. We would expect **Genesis 3:7** to say they both immediately died. But that's not the case. **Romans 6:23** confirms the cost of sin is death. But it's not immediate for humans. It was immediate for angels (**2 Peter 2:4**), though.

Today's lesson seeks to answer, 'Why do we not immediately die as a result of sin? And, how can God bless sinners who deserve only death?' The answer is common grace.

**Grudem: Common grace is the grace of God by which he gives people innumerable blessings that are not part of salvation. The word common here means something that is common to all people and is not restricted to believers or to the elect only. In distinction from common grace, the grace of God that brings people to salvation is often called "saving grace." Of course, when we talk about "common grace" and "saving grace" we are not implying that there are two different kinds of grace in God himself, but only that God's grace manifests itself in the world in two different ways. Common grace is different from saving grace in its results (it does not bring about salvation), in its recipients (it is given to believers and unbelievers alike), and in its source (it does not directly flow from Christ's atoning work, since Christ's death did not earn any measure of forgiveness for unbelievers, and therefore did not merit the blessings of common grace for them either).**

If you search your Bible, the term *common grace* will not appear—much like the term *trinity* will not appear. It's a theological construct to help us understand God.

We won't get into the differences between reformed and Arminian theology today, but it is generally safe to say Arminian theologians accept common grace. The debate generally comes when discussing whether or not this is part of God's saving grace (resistible or not).

### B. Grudem: Examples of common grace

#### 1. Grudem: The physical realm

When teaching his Sunday school class on this topic, Grudem suggested to his class that they walk outside and anything they saw not identical to the fires of hell was an example of common grace. (it was quite funny as he does not tell a lot of jokes)

**Genesis 3:17-18: Grudem: The earth does not produce only thorns and thistles**

**Matthew 5:44-45:** The just and the unjust get rain

**Genesis 39:5:** A pagan is blessed because of God's blessing on a believer

**Psalms 145:9, 15-16:** General verses about God's goodness

## 2. Grudem: The intellectual realm

Grudem: Human beings in the world today, even unbelievers, are not **totally** given over to lying, irrationality, and ignorance. All people are able to have some grasp of truth; indeed, some have great intelligence and understanding. This also must be seen as a result of God's grace.

**John 1:9**: Grudem: In his role as creator and sustainer of the universe . . . the Son of God allows enlightenment and understanding to come to all people in the world

**Romans 1:21**: Grudem: All people have a knowledge of God. . . This means that there is a sense of God's existence and often a hunger to know God that he allows to remain in people's hearts, even though it often results in many differing man-made religions.

Grudem: The common grace of God in the intellectual realm also results in an ability to grasp truth and distinguish it from error, and to experience growth in knowledge that can be used in the investigation of the universe and in the task of subduing the earth. This means that all science and technology carried out by non-Christians is a result of common grace, allowing them to make incredible discoveries and inventions, to develop the earth's resources into many material goods, to produce and distribute those resources, and to have skill in their productive work. In a practical sense this means that every time we walk into a grocery store or ride in an automobile or enter a house we should remember that we are experiencing the results of the abundant common grace of God poured out so richly on all mankind.

## 3. Grudem: The moral realm

Grudem: God also by common grace **restrains** people from being as evil as they could be.

**Romans 2:14-15**: Conscience is an example of common grace. Grudem: This inward sense of right and wrong that God gives to all people means that they will frequently approve of moral standards that reflect many of the moral standards in Scripture. This is why some pagans are described as, 'good guys.' They are manifesting God's common grace.

Grudem: In many other cases this inward sense of conscience leads people to establish laws and customs in society that are, in terms of the outward behavior they approve or prohibit, quite like the moral laws of Scripture: people often establish laws or have customs that respect the sanctity of marriage and the family, protect human life, and prohibit theft and falsehood in speech.

Grudem: God has so ordered the world that living according to his moral standards very often brings rewards in the natural realm, and violating God's standards often brings destruction to people, in both cases indicating the eventual direction of the final judgment: Honesty, hard work, showing love and kindness to others, and faithfulness in marriage and family will (except in the most corrupt societies) bring much more material and emotional reward in this life than dishonesty, laziness, cruelty, marital infidelity, and other wrongs such as drunkenness, drug abuse, theft, and so forth. These normal consequences of sin or righteousness should serve as a warning of judgment to come, and, in this way, they are also examples of God's common grace. (my head exploded when I read this)

#### 4. Grudem: The creative realm

Grudem: God has allowed significant measures of skill in artistic and musical areas, as well as in . . . athletics, cooking, writing. . . . God gives to us an ability to appreciate beauty in many areas of life.

#### 5. Grudem: The societal realm

Grudem: God's grace is also evident in the existence of various organizations and structures in human society. We see this first in the human family, evidenced in the fact that Adam and Eve remained husband and wife after the fall and then had children. . . . The human family persists today, not simply as an institution for believers, but for all people.

Grudem: Human government is also a result of common grace. It was instituted in principle by God after the flood . . . and is clearly stated to be given by God. (Romans 13:1, 4) This is not to say governments are holy or incorruptible, but rather examples of God's common grace.

Grudem: Other organizations in human society include educational institutions, businesses and corporations, voluntary associations (such as many charitable and public service groups), and countless examples of ordinary human friendship.

#### 6. Grudem: The religious realm

Grudem: God's common grace brings some blessings to **unbelieving** people.

**Matthew 5:44**: This implies that God wants to answer our prayers about unbelievers

**1 Timothy 2:1-2**: We are commanded to pray for our leaders—believers and unbelievers alike

**1 Timothy 2:4; Ezekiel 33:11**: Grudem: Even the proclamation of the gospel to those who do not ultimately accept it is a clear declaration of the mercy and grace of God, which gives clear witness to the fact that God does not delight in the death or condemnation of any of his creatures.

#### 7. Grudem: Common grace and special grace influence each other

Grudem: Common grace, of course, influences and enriches the **church**

We benefit from everything that does not look like the fires of **hell** (electricity, paper, computers, etc.)

Grudem: The special grace that God gives to those who are saved brings more of the blessings of common grace to unbelievers living in the realm of the church's influence. Unbelievers benefit from the example of Christian lives that they see in society, from the prayers and the acts of mercy that Christians do for the community, from the knowledge of the teachings of Scripture and its wisdom in which they find some intellectual and moral benefit, and from the influence on laws, customs, and beliefs of a society that comes through the social and political activities of Christians.



### C. Grudem: Reasons for common grace

**Grudem: Why does God bestow common grace on undeserving sinners who will never come to salvation? We can suggest at least four reasons.**

**1. Grudem: To redeem those who will be saved**

**2 Peter 3:9-10:** Had God killed everyone immediately at the moment of his or her first sin, the human race would not have lasted long

**2. Grudem: To demonstrate God's goodness and mercy**

**Luke 6:35:** God is good to those that hate Him (what an example for us!)

**Grudem: It is not unjust for God to delay the execution of punishment upon sin and to give temporary blessings to human beings, because the punishment is not forgotten, but just delayed.**

**3. Grudem: To demonstrate God's justice**

**Grudem: When God repeatedly invites sinners to come to faith and when they repeatedly refuse his invitations, the justice of God in condemning them is seen much more clearly.**

**Romans 2:5; 3:19: Grudem: No one will be able to object that God has been unjust.**

**4. Grudem: To demonstrate God's glory**

When we (through the benefits of common grace) live out God's commands, God is glorified.

### D. Grudem: Our response to the doctrine of common grace

**1. Grudem: Common grace does not mean that those who receive it will be saved**

Everyone needs the gospel for salvation. Jesus + nothing = salvation. You cannot eliminate Jesus from the equation and still have salvation.

**2. Grudem: We must be careful not to reject the good things that unbelievers do as totally evil**

**Grudem: By common grace, unbelievers do some good, and we should see God's hand in it and be thankful for common grace as it operates in every friendship, every act of kindness, every way in which it brings blessing to others. All of this—though the unbeliever does not know it—is ultimately from God and he deserves the glory for it.**

**3. Grudem: The doctrine of common grace should stir our hearts to much greater thankfulness to God**

**Grudem: When we walk down a street and see houses and gardens and families dwelling in security, or when we do business in the marketplace and see the abundant results of technological progress, or when we walk through the woods and see the beauty of nature, or when we are protected by government, or when we are educated from the vast storehouse of human knowledge, we should realize not only that God in his sovereignty is ultimately responsible for all of these blessings, but also that God has granted them all to sinners who are totally undeserving of any of them! . . . The realization of this fact should cause our hearts to swell with thanksgiving to God in every activity of life.**

## Grudem: Questions for Personal Application (abbreviated)

1. Before . . . this chapter, did you have a different viewpoint on whether unbelievers deserved the ordinary benefits of the world around them?
2. In what ways will this doctrine change the way you relate to an unbelieving neighbor or friend? Will it tend to make you thankful for the good that you see in their lives?
3. As you look around the place where you are at this moment, can you name at least twenty different examples of common grace that you can see? How does that make you feel?
4. Has this chapter changed the way you view creative activities such as music, art, architecture, or poetry, or (something that is very similar) the creativity expressed in athletic activities?
5. If you are kind to an unbeliever and he or she never comes to accept Christ, has it done any good in God's sight (see [Matthew 5:44–45](#); [Luke 6:32–36](#))? What good has it done?

## Scripture Memory Passage

**Luke 6:35-36:** But love your enemies, do good, and lend, hoping for nothing in return; and your reward will be great, and you will be sons of the Most High. For He is kind to the unthankful and evil. Therefore be merciful, just as your Father also is merciful.

## Hymn: “All People That on Earth Do Dwell” (William Kethe, 1561)

All people that on earth do dwell,  
Sing to the Lord with cheerful voice;  
Him serve with fear, his praise forthtell,  
Come ye before him and rejoice.

The Lord ye know is God indeed;  
Without our aid he did us make;  
We are his folk, he doth us feed,  
And for his sheep he doth us take.

O enter then his gates with praise,  
Approach with joy his courts unto;  
Praise, laud, and bless his name always,  
For it is seemly so to do.

For why? The Lord our God is good,  
His mercy is forever sure;  
His truth at all times firmly stood,  
And shall from age to age endure.

# Systematic Theology

## Part 5: Application of Redemption

### Chapter 32: Election and Reprobation

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*When and why did God choose us? Are some not chosen?*

#### Scripture Memory Passage Review

**Luke 6:35-36:** But love your enemies, do good, and lend, hoping for nothing in return; and your reward will be great, and you will be sons of the Most High. For He is kind to the unthankful and evil. Therefore be merciful, just as your Father also is merciful.

#### Introduction

**Why are you saved?** We will look at the answer to that question today.

**Grudem:** In the earlier chapters we talked about the fact that we all have sinned and deserve eternal punishment from God, and the fact that Christ died and *earned* salvation for us. But now in this unit (chapters 32–43) we will look at the way God *applies* that salvation to our lives. We begin in this chapter with God’s work of election, that is, his decision to choose us to be saved before the foundation of the world. This act of election is, of course, not (strictly speaking) part of the *application* of salvation to us, since it came before Christ earned our salvation when he died on the cross. But we treat election at this point because it is chronologically the *beginning* of God’s dealing with us in a gracious way. Therefore, it is rightly thought of as the first step in the process of God’s bringing salvation to us individually.

**Grudem:** We begin our discussion of the order of salvation with . . . election. In connection with this we will also discuss at the end of this chapter the question of “reprobation,” the decision of God to pass over those who will not be saved, and to punish them for their sins. As will be explained below, election and reprobation are different in several important respects, and it is important to distinguish these so that we do not think wrongly about God or his activity.

**Grudem:** The term *predestination* is also frequently used in this discussion. In this textbook, and in Reformed theology generally, *predestination* is a broader term and includes the two aspects of election (for believers) and reprobation (for unbelievers).

#### Explanation and Scriptural Basis

**Grudem:** 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.

## A. Grudem: Does the New Testament teach predestination?

Grudem: Several passages in the New Testament seem to affirm quite clearly that God ordained beforehand those who would be saved.

Acts 13:48; Romans 8:28-30; 9:11-13; 11:7; Ephesians 1:4-6, 12; 1 Thessalonians 1:4-5 (Grudem: As soon as they came to faith Paul concluded that long ago God had chosen them, and therefore they had believed when he preached); 2 Thessalonians 2:13; 2 Timothy 1:9; 1 Peter 1:1; 2:9; Revelation 13:7-8; 17:8

## B. Grudem: How does the New Testament present the teaching of election?

### 1. Grudem: As a comfort

Grudem: Romans 8:28-30. Paul's point is to say that God has *always* acted for the good of those whom he called to himself. If Paul looks into the distant past before the creation of the world, he sees that God foreknew and predestined his people to be conformed to the image of Christ. If he looks at the recent past he finds that God called and justified his people whom he had predestined. And if he then looks toward the future when Christ returns, he sees that God has determined to give perfect, glorified bodies to those who believe in Christ. From eternity to eternity God has acted with the good of his people in mind. But if God has *always* acted for our good and will in the future act for our good, Paul reasons, then *will he not also in our present circumstances work every circumstance together for our good as well?* In this way predestination is seen as a comfort for believers in the everyday events of life.

### 2. Grudem: As a reason to praise **God**

This point is in contrast to the idea of praising man for man's salvation.

Ephesians 1:5-6, 12; 1 Thessalonians 1:2, 4; 2 Thessalonians 2:13: Grudem: Paul was obligated to give thanks to God for the Christians at Thessalonica because he knew that their salvation was ultimately due to God's choice of them.

### 3. Grudem: As an encouragement to **evangelism**

2 Timothy 2:10: Grudem: Election is Paul's guarantee that there will be some success for his evangelism, for he knows that some of the people he speaks to will be the elect, and they will believe the gospel and be saved. It is as if someone invited us to come fishing and said, "I guarantee that you will catch some fish—they are hungry and waiting."

## C. Grudem: Misunderstandings of the doctrine of election

### 1. Grudem: Election is not fatalistic or mechanistic

Grudem: By "fatalism" is meant a system in which human choices and human decisions really do not make any difference. . . . In a mechanistic system the picture is one of an impersonal universe in which all things that happen have been inflexibly determined by an impersonal force long ago, and the universe functions in a mechanical way so that human beings are more like machines or robots than genuine persons.

Grudem: By contrast to the mechanistic picture, the New Testament presents the entire outworking of our salvation as something brought about by a *personal* God in relationship with *personal* creatures. . . . [Ephesians 1:5](#). God's act of election was neither impersonal nor mechanistic, but was permeated with personal love for those whom he chose. [Ezekiel 33:11](#)

Grudem: [We are] personal creatures who make willing choices to accept or reject the gospel. [Matthew 11:28](#); [Revelation 22:17](#); [John 5:40](#); [Matthew 23:37](#)

Grudem: In contrast to the charge of fatalism. . . . Not only do we make willing choices as real persons, but these choices are also *real choices* because they do affect the course of events in the world. [John 3:18](#). Our personal decisions to believe or not believe in Christ have eternal consequences in our lives, and Scripture is quite willing to talk about our decision to believe or not believe as the factor that decides our eternal destiny.

Grudem: The implication of this is that we certainly must preach the gospel, and people's eternal destiny hinges on whether we proclaim the gospel or not. . . . Paul is quite clear about the fact that unless people preach the gospel others will not be saved. [Romans 10:14, 17](#). . . . Far from saying that whatever he did made no difference, and that God's elect would be saved whether he preached or not, Paul endured a life of incredible hardship in order to bring the gospel to those whom God had chosen. [2 Timothy 2:10](#)

## 2. Grudem: Election is not based on God's foreknowledge of our faith

Grudem: Quite commonly people will agree that God predestines some to be saved, but they will say that he does this by looking into the future and seeing who will believe in Christ and who will not. If he sees that a person is going to come to saving faith, then he will predestine that person to be saved, *based on foreknowledge of that person's faith*. If he sees that a person will not come to saving faith, then he does not predestine that person to be saved. In this way, it is thought, the ultimate reason why some are saved and some are not lies *within the people themselves* not within God. All that God does in his predestining work is to give confirmation to the decision he knows people will make on their own. The verse commonly used to support this view is [Romans 8:29a](#): **"For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son."**

### a. Grudem: Foreknowledge of persons, not facts

Grudem: The passage speaks rather of the fact that God knew *persons* ("**those whom he foreknew**"), not that he knew some *fact about them* such as the fact that they would believe. . . . The text actually says nothing about God foreknowing or foreseeing that certain people would believe, nor is that idea mentioned in any other text of Scripture.

Grudem: Sometimes people say that God elected *groups* of people, but not individuals to salvation. In some Arminian views, God just elected the church as a group, while the Swiss theologian Karl Barth (1886–1968) said that God elected Christ, and all people in Christ. But [Romans 8:29](#) talks about certain people whom God foreknew ("**those whom he foreknew**"), not just undefined or unfilled groups. And in [Ephesians](#) Paul talks about certain people whom God chose,

including himself: “He *chose us in him before the foundation of the world*” (Ephesians 1:4). To talk about God choosing a group with no people in it is not biblical election at all. But to talk about God choosing a group of people means that he chose specific individuals who constituted that group.

b. Grudem: Scripture never speaks of our faith as the reason God **chose** us. Grudem appears to draw a distinction between choosing and salvation here. Do not think Grudem is saying you can be saved without faith. He is saying faith is not the reason God chose us. Romans 9:11-13; 11:5-6; Ephesians 1:5-6; 2 Timothy 1:9. Grudem: God’s sovereign purpose is seen as the ultimate reason for our salvation . . . without reference to any foreseen merit or worthiness on our part.

c. Grudem: Election based on something good in us (our faith) would be the beginning of salvation by merit. We deserve no credit for our salvation. Grudem: Salvation at its most foundational level is based on *grace alone*.

e. Grudem: Conclusion: Election is **unconditional**. Grudem: The reason for election is simply God’s sovereign **choice**. Ephesians 1:5. This understanding of election has traditionally been called “unconditional election.” It is “unconditional” because it is not *conditioned upon* anything that God sees in us that makes us worthy of his choosing us.

#### D. Grudem: Objections to the doctrine of election

Grudem: It must be said that the doctrine of election as presented here is by no means universally accepted in the Christian church. . . . Among current evangelicals, those in more Reformed or Calvinistic circles (conservative Presbyterian denominations, for example) will accept this view, as will many Lutherans and Anglicans (Episcopalians) and a large number of Baptists and people in independent churches. On the other hand, it will be rejected quite decisively by nearly all Methodists, as well as by many others in Baptist, Anglican, and independent churches.

1. Grudem: Election means that we do not have a choice in whether we accept Christ or not

Grudem: The doctrine of election is fully able to accommodate the idea that we have a voluntary choice and we make willing decisions in accepting or rejecting Christ. . . . God can work sovereignly through our desires so that he guarantees that our choices come about as he has ordained, but this can still be understood as a real choice because God has created us and he ordains that such a choice is real. In short, we can say that God causes us to choose Christ voluntarily. The mistaken assumption underlying this objection is that a choice must be absolutely free (that is, not in any way caused by God) in order for it to be a genuine human choice.

2. Grudem: On this definition of election, our choices are not real choices

Grudem: We must respond by challenging the assumption that a choice must be absolutely free in order to be genuine or valid. If God makes us in a certain way and then tells us that our voluntary choices are real and genuine choices, then we must agree that they are. God is the definition of what is real and genuine in the universe.

### 3. Grudem: The doctrine of election makes us puppets or robots, not real persons

Grudem: God has created us and we must allow him to define what genuine personhood is. . . . We are real people created in God's image, and God has allowed us to make genuine choices that have real effects on our lives.

### 4. Grudem: The doctrine of election means that unbelievers never had a chance to believe

Grudem gives two answers: (1) Grudem: The Bible does not allow us to say that unbelievers had no chance to believe. [John 8:43-44](#); [Matthew 23:37](#); [John 5:40](#); [Romans 1:20](#). Grudem: People who remain in unbelief do so because they are unwilling to come to God, and the blame for such unbelief always lies with the unbelievers themselves, never with God. (2) Grudem: Paul's answer to a similar objection: [Romans 9:20](#)

### 5. Grudem: Election is unfair

Grudem: *It would be perfectly fair for God not to save anyone just as he did with the angels.* [2 Peter 2:4](#).

Grudem: At a deeper level this objection would say that it is not fair for God to create some people who he knew would sin and be eternally condemned, and whom he would not redeem. [Romans 9](#).

Grudem: Paul simply says that there is a point beyond which we cannot answer back to God or question his justice. He has done what he has done according to his sovereign will. He is the Creator; we are the creatures, and we ultimately have no basis from which to accuse him of unfairness or injustice.

### 6. Grudem: The Bible says that God wills to save everyone

[1 Timothy 2:4](#); [2 Peter 3:9](#). Grudem: Do not these passages contradict the idea that God has only chosen certain people to be saved?

Grudem: One common solution to this question (from the Reformed perspective advocated in this book) is to say that these verses speak of God's *revealed will* (telling us what we should do), not his *hidden will* (his eternal plans for what will happen). The verses simply tell us that God invites and commands every person to repent and come to Christ for salvation, but they do not tell us anything about God's secret decrees regarding who will be saved.

Grudem: Here the difference between the Reformed and the Arminian conception of God's will is clearly seen. Both Calvinists and Arminians agree that God's commands in Scripture reveal to us what he wants us to do, and both agree that the commands in Scripture invite us to repent and trust in Christ for salvation. Therefore, in one sense both agree that God wills that we be saved—it is the will that he reveals to us explicitly in the gospel invitation. But both sides must also say that there is something else that God deems more important than saving everyone. Reformed theologians say that God deems *his own glory* more important than saving everyone, and that (according to [Romans 9](#)) God's glory is also furthered by the fact that some are not saved. Arminian theologians also say that something else is more important to God than the salvation of all people, namely, the preservation of *man's free will*. So in a Reformed system God's highest value is his own glory, and in an Arminian system God's highest value is the free will of man.

## E. Grudem: The doctrine of reprobation

Grudem: When we understand election as God's sovereign choice of some persons to be saved, then there is necessarily another aspect of that choice, namely, God's sovereign decision to pass over others and not to save them. This decision of God in eternity past is called reprobation.

*Reprobation is the sovereign decision of God before creation to **pass over** some persons, in sorrow deciding not to save them, and to punish them for their sins, and thereby to manifest his justice.*

**Jude 4; Romans 9:17-22; 11:7; 1 Peter 2:8**

Grudem: The fact of reprobation and the eternal condemnation of some will show God's justice and also result in his glory. **Romans 9:22-23**

Grudem: We must be careful of our attitude toward God and toward these passages of Scripture. We must never begin to wish that the Bible was written in another way, or that it did not contain these verses. Moreover, if we are convinced that these verses teach reprobation, then we are obligated both to believe it and accept it as fair and just of God, even though it still causes us to tremble in horror as we think of it.

Grudem: We also must remember that *there are important differences between election and reprobation as they are presented in the Bible*. Election . . . God is viewed as actively choosing us for salvation, and doing so in love and with delight. But reprobation is viewed as something that brings God sorrow, not delight (see **Ezekiel 33:11**). . . . Another important difference is that the ground of election is God's grace, whereas the ground of reprobation is God's justice. . . . Paul himself felt great sorrow when he thought about the unbelieving Jews who had rejected Christ. **Romans 9:1-4**.

Grudem: We ought also to feel this great sorrow as well when we think about the fate of unbelievers.

Grudem: But it might be objected at this point, if God genuinely feels sorrow at the punishment of the wicked, then why does he allow it or even decree that it will come about? The answer must be that God knows that this will ultimately result in greater glory for himself. It will show his power and wrath and justice and mercy in a way that could not otherwise be demonstrated. Certainly in our own human experience it is possible to do something that causes us great sorrow but which we know will result in long-term greater good. And so, after this faint human analogy, we may somewhat understand that God can decree something that causes him sorrow yet ultimately will further his glory.

## F. Practical application of the doctrine of election

Grudem: It is right for each Christian to ask of himself or herself, "Why am I a Christian? What is the final reason why God decided to save me?" The doctrine of election tells us that I am a Christian simply because God in eternity past decided to set his love on me. But why did he decide to set his love on me? Not for anything good in me, but simply because he decided to **love** me. There is no more ultimate reason than that. It humbles us before God to think in this way. It makes us realize that we have no claim on God's grace whatsoever. Our salvation is totally due to grace alone. Our only appropriate response is to give God eternal **praise**.



## Grudem: Questions for Personal Application (abbreviated)

1. Does the doctrine of election give you any comfort or assurance about your future?
2. After reading this chapter, do you honestly feel that you would like to give thanks or praise to God for choosing you to be saved?
3. If you agree with the doctrine of election as presented in this chapter, does it diminish your sense of individual personhood or make you feel somewhat like a robot or a puppet in God's hands? Do you think it should make you feel this way?
4. What effect do you think this chapter will have on your motivation for evangelism? Is this a positive or negative effect? Can you think of ways in which the doctrine of election can be used as a positive encouragement to evangelism (see 1 Thessalonians 1:4-5; 2 Timothy 2:10)?
5. Is there anything that Calvinists and Arminians could do to bring about greater understanding and less division on this question?

## Scripture Memory Passage

**Ephesians 1:3-6:** **3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places, 4 even as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him. In love 5 he predestined us for adoption as sons through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of his will, 6 to the praise of his glorious grace, with which he has blessed us in the Beloved.**

## Hymn: "When This Passing World is Done" (Robert Murray McCheyne, 1837)

When this passing world is done,  
When has sunk yon glaring sun,  
When we stand with Christ in glory,  
Looking o'er life's finished story,  
Then, Lord, shall I fully know,  
Not till then, how much I owe.

When I hear the wicked call  
On the rocks and hills to fall,  
When I see them start to shrink  
On the fiery deluge brink,  
Then, Lord, shall I fully know,  
Not till then, how much I owe.

When I stand before the throne,  
Dressed in beauty not my own,  
When I see thee as thou art,

Love thee with unsinning heart,  
Then, Lord, shall I fully know,  
Not till then, how much I owe.

When the praise of heav'n I hear,  
Loud as thunders to the ear,  
Loud as many waters' noise,  
Sweet as harp's melodious voice,  
Then, Lord, shall I fully know,  
Not till then, how much I owe.

Chosen not for good in me,  
Wakened up from wrath to flee,  
Hidden in the Savior's side,  
By the Spirit sanctified,  
Teach me, Lord, on earth to show,  
By my love, how much I owe.

# Systematic Theology

## Part 5: Application of Redemption

### Chapter 33: The Gospel Call and Effective Calling

---

*What is the gospel message? How does it become effective?*

#### Scripture Memory Passage Review

**Ephesians 1:3-6:** **3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places, 4 even as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him. In love 5 he predestined us for adoption as sons through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of his will, 6 to the praise of his glorious grace, with which he has blessed us in the Beloved.**

#### Introduction

**Romans 8:28-30** implies there is an order to the salvific process. This fifth major doctrine (the application of redemption) is a look at that order.

In week one of this fifth doctrine, we looked at common grace—which Grudem defined as anything that does not look like the burning fires of hell. Last week, we looked at predestination and its two components—election (the choosing of the saved) and reprobation (the passing over of the lost).

This week, we start looking at the components of the order of salvation that are chronologically closer to us. We begin with calling. Chronologically, it looks something like this (taken from Grudem's Sunday school class handout—I added '0. Common grace'):

- |                    |                         |                          |                          |
|--------------------|-------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| 0. Common grace    | 3. <b>Regeneration</b>  | 6. <b>Adoption</b>       | 9. <b>Death</b>          |
| 1. <b>Election</b> | 4. <b>Conversion</b>    | 7. <b>Sanctification</b> | 10. <b>Glorification</b> |
| 2. <b>Calling</b>  | 5. <b>Justification</b> | 8. <b>Perseverance</b>   |                          |

**What are we not talking about today?** We are not talking about what we (as believers) are called to do. **1 Peter 2:9; 1 Corinthians 1:9; 1 Thessalonians 2:12; 1 Peter 5:10; 2 Peter 1:3; Romans 1:6-7; 1 Corinthians 1:2; 1 Corinthians 7:15; Colossians 3:15; Galatians 5:13; Ephesians 1:18; 4:4; 1 Thessalonians 4:7; 1 Peter 2:20-21; 3:8-9; 1 Timothy 6:12.** We are called to many things in the Christian life that are results of the relationship with God. Today's lesson specifically is focused on the calling into relationship with God and not those actions that come later in the life of a believer.

## Explanation and Scriptural Basis

In today's lesson, we will move from the specific, internal, and effective calling of God that draws sinners to faith to the general, external, and gospel calling of man that is not 100% fruitful. In application, the order is reversed, but Grudem presents them this way, so I will as well.

### A. Grudem: Effective calling

*Grudem: Effective calling is an act of God the Father, speaking through the human proclamation of the gospel, in which he summons people to himself in such a way that they **respond** in saving faith. It is important that we not give the impression that people will be saved by the power of this call apart from their own willing response to the gospel. . . . Although it is true that effective calling awakens and brings forth a response from us, we must always insist that this response still has to be a voluntary, willing response in which the individual person puts his or her trust in Christ.*

*Grudem: This powerful act of God is often referred to as *effective calling*, to distinguish it from the general gospel invitation that goes to all people and which some people reject. This is not to say that human gospel proclamation is not involved. In fact, God's effective calling comes *through* the human preaching of the gospel. **2 Thessalonians 2:13-14; Romans 10:14***

*Grudem: This calling has the capacity to draw us out of the kingdom of darkness and bring us into God's kingdom so we can join in full fellowship with him. **1 Corinthians 1:9***

**Is sharing the gospel 100% effective every time to every hearer?** No

*Grudem: Of course, there are many who hear the general call of the gospel message and do not respond. But in some cases the gospel call is made so effective by the working of the Holy Spirit in people's hearts that they do respond; we can say that they have received "effective calling."*

*Grudem: Unless God works in peoples' hearts to make the proclamation of the gospel effective, there will be no genuine saving response. **John 6:44***

*Grudem: An example of the gospel call working effectively. **Acts 16:14***

### B. Grudem: The elements of the gospel call

In other words, **what does our part look like?**

*Grudem: In human preaching of the gospel, three important elements must be included.*

#### 1. Grudem: Explanation of the **facts** concerning salvation

*Grudem: Anyone who comes to Christ for salvation must have at least a basic understanding of who Christ is and how he meets our needs for salvation. Therefore an explanation of the facts concerning salvation must include at least the following:*

1. All people have sinned (**Romans 3:23**).
2. The penalty for our sin is death (**Romans 6:23**).
3. Jesus Christ died to pay the penalty for our sins (**Romans 5:8**).

Grudem: But understanding those facts and even agreeing that they are true is not enough for a person to be saved. There must also be an invitation for a personal response on the part of the individual who will repent of his or her sins and trust personally in Christ. This is Grudem's way of saying that mental assent is not enough. It is not a head knowledge only.

## 2. Grudem: **Invitation** to respond to Christ personally in repentance and faith

Grudem: When the New Testament talks about people coming to salvation it speaks in terms of a personal response to an invitation from Christ himself.

**Matthew 11:28-30**. Grudem: Every non-Christian hearing these words should be encouraged to think of them as words that Jesus Christ is *even now*, at *this very moment*, speaking to him or to her individually. Jesus Christ is a Savior who is now alive in heaven, and each non-Christian should think of Jesus as speaking directly to him or her. . . . This is a genuine *personal* invitation that seeks a personal response from each one who hears it.

**John 1:11-12**. Grudem: In emphasizing the need to "receive" Christ, John, too, points to the necessity of an individual response.

**Revelation 22:17**. Grudem: Finally, just five verses from the end of the entire Bible, there is another invitation from the Holy Spirit and the church to come to Christ.

Grudem: But what is involved in coming to Christ? . . . If we come to Christ and trust him to save us from our sin, we cannot any longer cling to sin but must willingly renounce it in genuine repentance. . . . Any genuine gospel proclamation must include an invitation to make a conscious decision to forsake one's sins and come to Christ in faith, asking Christ for forgiveness of sins. If either the need to repent of sins or the need to trust in Christ for forgiveness is neglected, there is not a full and true proclamation of the gospel. **Luke 24:47; Acts 2:37-38; 3:19; 5:31; 17:30; Romans 2:4; 2 Corinthians 7:10**

## 3. Grudem: A promise of forgiveness and eternal **life**

Grudem: The primary thing that is promised in the gospel message is the promise of forgiveness of sins and eternal life with God. **John 3:16; Acts 3:19; 2:38**

Grudem: Coupled with the promise of forgiveness and eternal life should be an assurance that Christ will accept all who come to him in sincere repentance and faith seeking salvation. **John 6:37**

The following table is taken from Wayne Grudem's Sunday school class handout to help illustrate the technical differences between the two calls discussed today:

Gospel Call	Effective Call
Man's action	God's action
Offered to all people	Particular
External	Internal
Often rejected	Always effective
The means for effective calling	

### C. Grudem: The importance of the gospel call

Grudem: The doctrine of the gospel call is important, because if there were no gospel call we could not be saved. **Romans 10:14**

So what do we do with that? Spread the gospel

### Grudem: Questions for Personal Application (abbreviated)

1. Can you remember the first time you heard the gospel and responded to it? Do you think the Holy Spirit was working to make that gospel call effective in your life?
2. In your explanation of the gospel call to other people, have some elements been missing?
3. Before . . . this chapter, had you thought of Jesus in heaven speaking the words of the gospel invitation personally to people even today?
4. Do you understand the elements of the gospel call clearly enough to present them to others?

### Scripture Memory Passage

**Matthew 11:28-30: 28 Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. 29 Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. 30 For My yoke is easy and My burden is light.**

### Hymn: "I Heard the Voice of Jesus Say" (Horatius Bonar, 1846)

I heard the voice of Jesus say, "Come unto me and rest;  
Lay down, thou weary one, lay down thy head upon my breast."

I came to Jesus as I was, weary and worn and sad,  
I found in him a resting place, and he has made me glad.

I heard the voice of Jesus say, "Behold, I freely give  
The living water; thirsty one, stoop down and drink, and live."

I came to Jesus, and I drank of that life-giving stream;  
My thirst was quenched, my soul revived, and now I live in him.

I heard the voice of Jesus say, "I am this dark world's light;  
Look unto me, thy morn shall rise, and all thy day be bright."

I looked to Jesus, and I found in him my star, my sun;  
And in that light of life I'll walk, till trav'ling days are done.

# Systematic Theology

## Part 5: Application of Redemption

### Chapter 34: Regeneration

---

*What does it mean to be born again?*

#### Scripture Memory Passage Review

**Matthew 11:28-30:** **28** Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. **29** Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. **30** For My yoke is easy and My burden is light.

**Homework review: Who shared the gospel last week?**

#### Introduction

**Romans 8:28-30** implies there is an order to the salvific process. This fifth major doctrine (the application of redemption) is a look at that order.

In week one of this fifth doctrine, we looked at common grace—which Grudem defined as anything that does not look like the burning fires of hell. Two weeks ago, we looked at predestination and its two components—election (the choosing of the saved) and reprobation (the passing over of the lost).

Last week, we start looking at the components of the order of salvation that are chronologically closer to us. We began with calling and today we will look at regeneration. Chronologically, it looks something like this (taken from Grudem’s Sunday school class handout—I added ‘O. Common grace’):

- |                    |                         |                          |                          |
|--------------------|-------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| 0. Common grace    | 3. <b>Regeneration</b>  | 6. <b>Adoption</b>       | 9. <b>Death</b>          |
| 1. <b>Election</b> | 4. <b>Conversion</b>    | 7. <b>Sanctification</b> | 10. <b>Glorification</b> |
| 2. <b>Calling</b>  | 5. <b>Justification</b> | 8. <b>Perseverance</b>   |                          |

#### Explanation and Scriptural Basis

**Grudem:** Regeneration is a secret act of God in which he imparts new spiritual **life** to us. This is sometimes called “being **born again**” (using language from **John 3:3-8**).

#### A. Grudem: Regeneration is totally a work of God

**Grudem:** In some of the elements of the application of redemption that we discuss in subsequent chapters, we play an active part. . . . But in the work of regeneration we play **no** active role at all.

John 1:13; James 1:18; 1 Peter 1:3; John 3:3-8

**Grudem:** We did not choose to be made physically alive and we did not choose to be born—it is something that happened to us

Ezekiel 36:26-27

**Grudem:** Which member of the Trinity is the one who causes regeneration? 1 Peter 1:3; John 3:8; Ephesians 2:5; Colossians 2:13; James 1:17-18. **Grudem:** We can conclude that both God the **Father** and God the Holy **Spirit** bring about regeneration.

Grudem spends a considerable amount of time talking about the exact timeline for regeneration (whether it is before or after faith and whether it is before or after effective calling). Grudem believes his definition results in a regeneration before faith, but it is a highly academic argument and appear to me to be of little practical application/impact whichever way is actually correct.

**Grudem:** As the gospel comes to us, God speaks through it to summon us to himself (effective calling) and to give us new spiritual life (regeneration) so that we are enabled to respond in faith. Effective calling is thus God the Father *speaking powerfully to us*, and regeneration is God the Father and God the Holy Spirit *working powerfully in us*, to make us alive. . . . Sometimes the term *irresistible grace* is used in this connection. It refers to the fact that God effectively calls people and also gives them regeneration, and both actions guarantee that we will respond in saving faith. The term *irresistible grace* is subject to misunderstanding, however [Jim's note: I hate the term for the exact reason Grudem is about to explain], since it *seems* to imply that people do not make a voluntary, willing choice in responding to the gospel—a wrong idea, and a wrong understanding of the term *irresistible grace*. The term does preserve something valuable, however, because it indicates that God's work reaches into our hearts to bring about a response that is absolutely certain—even though we respond voluntarily.

Jim's view: the effective call and regeneration are one side of a coin. Repentance and faith are the other side. You must have both sides of the coin to have money. What Grudem is saying is that if God calls and regenerates, the result is always voluntary repentance and faith. A bit of a technical argument, but worth contemplating, nonetheless.

## **B. Grudem: The exact nature of regeneration is mysterious to us**

**Grudem:** Exactly what happens in regeneration is mysterious to us.

**John 3:8:** We don't understand the details of how the wind works and the same is true of the Holy Spirit.

**Ephesians 2:1:** Grudem: We know that somehow we who were spiritually dead have been made alive to God and in a very real sense we have been "**born again**" (John 3:3, 7; Ephesians 2:5; Colossians 2:13).

**2 Corinthians 5:17:** Grudem: It is not correct to say that the only thing that happens in regeneration is that our spirits are made alive (as some would teach), for *every part of us* is affected by regeneration.

Grudem: Because regeneration is a work of God within us in which he gives us new life it is right to conclude that it is an *instantaneous event*. It happens only **once**. At one moment we are spiritually dead, and then at the next moment we have new spiritual life from God.

### C. Grudem: In this sense of “regeneration,” it comes before saving faith

Grudem would view regeneration occurring at any time prior to faith, but I don't see the Bible clearly teaching that view. It seems more as two nearly simultaneous events to me (faith and regeneration). I agree with this statement: Grudem: **This work of God** [regeneration] **that gives us the spiritual ability to respond to God in faith**. I would just argue that it occurs immediately before repentance and faith.

Aside: **Have you ever talked to someone who just doesn't 'get it' (things of God)?** See **1 Corinthians 2:14**. Grudem: **The solution to this spiritual deadness and inability to respond only comes when God gives us new life within.**

### D. Grudem: Genuine regeneration must bring results in **life**

**1 John 3:9**

What does that look like lived out?

Grudem: A genuine, Christlike **love**. **1 John 4:7**

Grudem: **Overcoming the world**. **1 John 5:3-4**

Grudem: **Protection from Satan**. **1 John 5:18**

**Galatians 5:22-23**

Jesus gave us a test to see who is in the faith and who is not: **Matthew 7:15-20**

Grudem: We should realize that John emphasizes these as *necessary* results in the lives of those who are born again. If there is genuine regeneration in a person's life, he or she *will* believe that Jesus is the Christ, and *will* refrain from a life pattern of continual sin, and *will* love his brother, and *will* overcome the temptations of the world, and *will* be kept safe from ultimate harm by the evil one. What a wonderful result of being a child of God!

### Grudem: Questions for Personal Application (abbreviated)

1. Have you been born again? Is there evidence of the new birth in your life?
2. If you . . . are not sure whether you have been born again, what would Scripture encourage you to do in order to gain greater assurance (or to be truly born again for the first time)?



3. What do you think about the fact that your regeneration was totally a work of God, and that you contributed nothing to it? How does it make you feel toward yourself? How does it make you feel toward God?

### Scripture Memory Passage

**John 3:5-8:** 5 Jesus answered, “Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God. 6 That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. 7 Do not marvel that I said to you, ‘You must be born again.’ 8 The wind blows where it wishes, and you hear the sound of it, but cannot tell where it comes from and where it goes. So is everyone who is born of the Spirit.”

### Hymn: “I Sought the Lord, and Afterward I Knew” (Anonymous, 1904)

I sought the Lord, and afterward I knew  
He moved my soul to seek him, seeking me;  
It was not I that found, O Savior true,  
No, I was found of thee.

Thou didst reach forth thy hand and mine enfold;  
I walked and sank not on the storm-vexed sea,  
'Twas not so much that I on thee took hold,  
As thou, dear Lord, on me.

I find, I walk, I love, but, O the whole  
Of love is but my answer, Lord, to thee;  
For thou wert long beforehand with my soul,  
Always thou lovedst me.

# Systematic Theology

## Part 5: Application of Redemption

### Chapter 35: Conversion (Faith and Repentance)

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*What is true repentance? What is saving faith? Can people accept Jesus as Savior and not as Lord?*

#### Scripture Memory Passage Review

**John 3:5-8:** **5** Jesus answered, “Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God. **6** That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. **7** Do not marvel that I said to you, ‘You must be born again.’ **8** The wind blows where it wishes, and you hear the sound of it, but cannot tell where it comes from and where it goes. So is everyone who is born of the Spirit.”

#### Introduction

**Romans 8:28-30** implies there is an order to the salvific process. This fifth major doctrine (the application of redemption) is a look at that order.

We have looked at common grace (blessings not part of salvation), predestination (election (choosing the saved) and reprobation (passing over the lost)), calling (both the Holy Spirit’s call and the gospel call), and regeneration (being born again).

Today, we will look at conversion (moving away from sin and to Christ). Chronologically, it looks something like this (taken from Grudem’s Sunday school class handout—I added ‘0. Common grace’):

- |                    |                         |                          |                          |
|--------------------|-------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| 0. Common grace    | 3. <b>Regeneration</b>  | 6. <b>Adoption</b>       | 9. <b>Death</b>          |
| 1. <b>Election</b> | 4. <b>Conversion</b>    | 7. <b>Sanctification</b> | 10. <b>Glorification</b> |
| 2. <b>Calling</b>  | 5. <b>Justification</b> | 8. <b>Perseverance</b>   |                          |

#### Explanation and Scriptural Basis

**Grudem:** *Conversion is our willing **response** to the gospel call, in which we sincerely repent of sins and place our trust in Christ for salvation. The word conversion itself means “**turning**”—here it represents a spiritual turn, a turning *from sin to Christ*. The turning from sin is called **repentance**, and the turning to Christ is called **faith**. . . . It does not matter which one we discuss first, for neither one can occur without the other, and they must occur together when true conversion takes place.*

## A. Grudem: True saving faith includes knowledge, approval, and personal trust

1. Grudem: Knowledge alone is **not** enough (Romans 1:32; James 2:19)

2. Grudem: Knowledge and approval are **not** enough (John 3:2; Acts 26:27-28)

3. Grudem: I must decide to depend on Jesus to save me **personally**

**Grudem: Saving faith is trust in Jesus Christ as a living person for forgiveness of sins and for eternal life with God. . . . The definition emphasizes personal trust in Christ, not just belief in facts about Christ.** Grudem writes at length about which word best describes this action (trust, faith, or belief). The reality is that our faith is rooted in truth and not in irrational belief (i.e., the Cubs will win the pennant or the Titans will win the Superbowl this year—when there is no evidence to support this).

**John 3:16: For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him [Grudem: could also be translated “believe into him”] should not perish but have everlasting life.**

**Grudem: Leon Morris can say, “Faith, for John, is an activity which takes men right out of themselves and makes them one with Christ.”** Our destination and our journey are both in Him.

More personal verses about coming to Christ: [John 6:37; 7:37; Matthew 11:28-30](#)

**Grudem: We may now appreciate that when a person comes to trust in Christ, all three elements must be present.** (knowledge, approval, and personal trust)

4. Grudem: Faith should increase as our knowledge increases

**Grudem: Saving faith is consistent with knowledge and true understanding of facts.** [Romans 10:17.](#)

**Grudem: When people have true information about Christ, they are better able to put their trust in him. . . . Thus faith is not weakened by knowledge but should increase with more true knowledge.**

## B. Grudem: Faith and repentance must come together

**Grudem: Repentance is a heartfelt **sorrow** for sin, a **renouncing** of it, and a sincere **commitment** to forsake it and walk in obedience to Christ.** This definition indicates that repentance is something that can occur at a specific point in time, and is not equivalent to a demonstration of change in a person’s pattern of life. Repentance, like faith, is an intellectual *understanding* (that sin is wrong), an emotional *approval* of the teachings of Scripture regarding sin (a sorrow for sin and a hatred of it), and a *personal decision* to turn from it (a renouncing of sin and a decision of the will to forsake it and lead a life of obedience to Christ instead). [2 Corinthians 7:9-10; Hebrews 12:17](#)

**Grudem: We cannot say that someone has to actually *live* that changed life over a period of time before repentance can be genuine, or else repentance would be turned into a kind of obedience that we could *do* to merit salvation for ourselves. Of course, genuine repentance will result in a changed life.**

Grudem: Scripture puts repentance and faith together as different aspects of the one act of coming to Christ for salvation. . . . Both occur at the same time. When we turn to Christ *for* salvation from our sins, we are simultaneously turning away from the sins that we are asking Christ to save us from [visually, this is one fluid motion]. . . . The person who genuinely turns to Christ for salvation must at the same time release the sin to which he or she has been clinging and turn away from that sin in order to turn to Christ. Thus, neither repentance nor faith comes first; they must come together. John Murray speaks of “penitent faith” and “believing repentance.” . . . Paul summarizes his gospel ministry as one of “**testifying both to Jews and to Greeks of repentance to God and of faith in our Lord Jesus Christ**” (**Acts 20:21**). See also **Hebrews 6:1**.

Faith alone passages: **John 3:16; Acts 16:31; Romans 10:9; Ephesians 2:8-9**

Repentance alone passages: **Luke 24:46-47; Acts 2:37-38; 3:19; 5:31; 17:30; Romans 2:4; 2 Corinthians 7:10; Luke 18:18-30; Luke 19:1-10; John 4:16; 3:1-21**. Grudem: Jesus consistently puts his finger on the area of sin most influential in that person’s life. (i.e., it’s not about the nail video: [bit.ly/NotAboutTheNail](http://bit.ly/NotAboutTheNail))

Conclusion: The New Testament authors understood so well that genuine repentance and genuine faith had to go together that they often simply mentioned repentance alone with the understanding that faith would also be included [and vice-versa], because turning from sins in a genuine way is impossible apart from a genuine turning to God.

Grudem: Preaching the need for faith without repentance is preaching only half of the gospel. It will result in many people being deceived, thinking that they have heard the Christian gospel and tried it, but nothing has happened.

Grudem: Finally, what shall we say about the common practice of asking people to *pray* to receive Christ as their personal Savior and Lord? Since personal faith in Christ must involve an actual decision of the will, it is often very helpful to *express* that decision in spoken words, and this could very naturally take the form of a prayer to Christ in which we tell him of our sorrow for sin, our commitment to forsake it, and our decision actually to put our trust in him. Such a spoken prayer does not in itself save us, but the attitude of heart that it represents does constitute true conversion, and the decision to speak that prayer can often be the point at which a person truly comes to faith in Christ.

**C. Grudem: Both faith and repentance continue throughout life**  
**Matthew 6:12; Revelation 3:19; Galatians 2:20**

Grudem: The heart attitudes of repentance and faith only begin at conversion. These same attitudes should continue throughout the course of our Christian lives. Each day there should be heartfelt repentance for sins that we have committed, and faith in Christ to provide for our needs and to empower us to live the Christian life.

## Grudem: Questions for Personal Application (abbreviated)

1. Have you come to trust in Christ personally, or are you still at the point of intellectual knowledge and emotional approval of the facts of salvation without having personally put your trust in Christ? If you have not put your trust in Christ yet, what do you think it is that is making you hesitate?
2. If your knowledge about God has increased through reading this book, has your faith in God increased along with that knowledge?
3. In terms of human relationships, do you trust a person more when you do not know that person very well or after you have come to know him or her quite well (assuming that the person is essentially a trustworthy and reliable person)?
4. Did you feel a sincere sorrow for sin when you first came to Christ? Can you describe what it felt like? Did it lead you to a genuine commitment to forsake sin? How long was it before you noticed a change in your pattern of life?
5. Have you ever truly repented of sin, or do you think you have been taught a watered-down gospel that did not include repentance?
6. Have faith and repentance remained a continuing part of your Christian life, or have those attitudes of heart grown somewhat weak in your life? What has been the result in your Christian life?

## Scripture Memory Passage

**John 3:16: For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.**

## Hymn: “Just As I Am” (Charlotte Elliot, 1836)

Just as I am, without one plea  
But that thy blood was shed for me,  
And that thou bidd'st me come to thee,  
O Lamb of God, I come, I come.

Just as I am, poor, wretched, blind;  
Sight, riches, healing of the mind,  
Yea, all I need, in thee to find,  
O Lamb of God, I come, I come.

Just as I am, and waiting not  
To rid my soul of one dark blot,  
To thee, whose blood can cleanse each spot,  
O Lamb of God, I come, I come.

Just as I am! Thou wilt receive,  
Wilt welcome, pardon, cleanse, relieve;  
Because thy promise I believe,  
O Lamb of God, I come, I come.

Just as I am, though tossed about  
With many a conflict, many a doubt,  
Fightings and fears within, without,  
O Lamb of God, I come, I come.

Just as I am! Thy love unknown  
Has broken ev'ry barrier down;  
Now, to be thine, yea, thine alone,  
O Lamb of God, I come, I come.

# Systematic Theology

## Part 5: Application of Redemption

### Chapter 36: Justification (Right Legal Standing Before God)

---

*How and when do we gain right legal standing before God?*

#### Scripture Memory Passage Review

**John 3:16: For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.**

#### Introduction

There is an order to the salvific process. This fifth major doctrine is a look at that order.

We have looked at common grace (blessings not part of salvation), predestination (election (choosing the saved) and reprobation (passing over the lost)), calling (both the Holy Spirit's call and the gospel call), regeneration (being born again), and conversion (turning from sin (repentance) and to Christ (faith)).

Today, we will look at justification (our declared righteousness). Chronologically, it looks something like this (taken from Grudem's Sunday school class handout—I added 'O. Common grace'):

- |                    |                         |                          |                          |
|--------------------|-------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| 0. Common grace    | 3. <b>Regeneration</b>  | 6. <b>Adoption</b>       | 9. <b>Death</b>          |
| 1. <b>Election</b> | 4. <b>Conversion</b>    | 7. <b>Sanctification</b> | 10. <b>Glorification</b> |
| 2. <b>Calling</b>  | 5. <b>Justification</b> | 8. <b>Perseverance</b>   |                          |

#### Explanation and Scriptural Basis

So far in this process of applying redemption, our sin (or the guilt of our sin) has not been dealt with. We turned away from it at conversion, but our sin is still there—unforgiven.

History aside: **Grudem: Once Martin Luther realized the truth of justification by faith alone, he became a Christian and overflowed with the new-found joy of the gospel. The primary issue in the Protestant Reformation was a dispute with the Roman Catholic Church over justification.**

**Grudem: Justification is an instantaneous legal act of God in which he (1) thinks of our sins as forgiven and Christ's righteousness as belonging to us, and (2) declares us to be righteous in his sight.**

## A. Grudem: Justification includes a legal declaration by God

When the Bible uses the word justify, it is used in a few different ways, but the first we will look at is a way that declares something to be true—not in a way that makes something true.

NT example: **Luke 7:29**. Grudem: The people and the tax collectors did not make God to be righteous—that would be impossible for anyone to do. Rather they declared God to be righteous.

**Romans 4:5a**: But to him who does not work but believes on Him who justifies the ungodly

## B. Grudem: God declares us to be just in his sight

Justification does not make someone good (sanctification makes us good)—justification declares someone is good.

**Romans 3:20, 28; 5:1**. Grudem: In God's legal declaration of justification, he specifically declares that we are just in his sight. . . . We have no penalty to pay for sin, including past, present, and future sins. Therefore, **Romans 8:1**. If there is no condemnation/penalty for sin, then we are forgiven. See also **Romans 4; Psalm 103:12**.

Our faith in Christ + God's declaration = Our **forgiveness**

While being forgiven of our sin is wonderful, it is not enough. Forgiveness doesn't make us righteous in God's sight. Grudem: It would only make us morally neutral before God. . . . We must rather move from a point of moral neutrality to a point of having positive righteousness before God.

**Isaiah 61:10; Romans 3:21-22; 4:3; 5:19**. Grudem: The second aspect of God's declaration in justification, then, is that we have the merits of perfect righteousness before him.

But how can God do this?

## C. Grudem: God can declare us to be just because he imputes **Christ's** righteousness to us

Imputes = reckons or **counts**

**Romans 4:3; Genesis 15:6; Romans 4:6**. Grudem: In this way, Christ's righteousness became ours.

We moved from infinitely sinful, to 0, to infinitely righteous.

Our forgiveness + Christ's righteousness = Our **righteousness**

Grudem: This is the third time in studying the doctrines of Scripture that we have encountered the idea of imputing guilt or righteousness to someone else. First, when Adam sinned, his guilt was imputed to us; God the Father viewed it as belonging to us, and therefore it did. Second, when Christ suffered and died for our sins, our sin was imputed to Christ; God thought of it as belonging to him, and he paid the penalty for it. Now in the doctrine of justification we see imputation for the third time. Christ's righteousness is imputed to us, and therefore God thinks of it as belonging to us.

**Grudem:** It is essential to the heart of the gospel to insist that God declares us to be just or righteous not on the basis of our actual condition of righteousness or holiness, but rather on the basis of Christ's perfect righteousness, which he thinks of as belonging to us. This was the heart of the difference between Protestantism and Roman Catholicism at the Reformation. Protestantism since the time of Martin Luther has insisted that justification does not change us internally and it is not a declaration based in any way on any goodness that we have in ourselves. . . . The Roman Catholic Church understands justification as something that changes us internally and makes us more holy within. . . . [continuing with the Catholic view] In order for justification to begin, one must first be baptized and then (as an adult) continue to have faith. This is justification by works and the very thing that the reformers reformed against.

#### **D. Grudem: Justification comes to us entirely by God's grace, not on account of any merit in ourselves**

**Romans 3:20, 23-24**

**Grudem:** God's "grace" means his "unmerited favor." Because we are completely unable to earn favor with God, the only way we could be declared righteous is if God freely provides salvation for us by grace, totally apart from our work. **Ephesians 2:8-9; Titus 3:7**

#### **E. Grudem: God justifies us through our faith in Christ**

**Romans 8:33-34; 3:25-26; 8:30; Romans 4; 5:1; Galatians 2:16; 3:24**

Grudem goes on to discuss why faith and not some other means and whether or not this definition of justification is consistent with **James 2:24**.

**Grudem:** Here we must realize that James is using the word justified in a different sense. . . . The Greek word *dikaioo* can also mean "demonstrate or show to be righteous." Other examples of this usage: **Luke 16:15; 10:28-29; Matthew 11:19; Luke 7:35; Romans 3;4**

**Grudem:** The practical implications of the doctrine of justification by faith alone are very significant. First, this doctrine enables us to offer genuine **hope** to unbelievers who know they could never make themselves righteous before God: if salvation is a free gift to be received through faith alone, then anyone who hears the gospel may hope that eternal life is freely offered and may be obtained. Second, this doctrine gives us **confidence** that God will never make us pay the penalty for sins that have been forgiven on Christ's merits. Note that this is different than the consequences of sin. **Grudem:** But God can never nor will ever take vengeance on us for past sins or make us pay the penalty that is due for them or punish us out of wrath and for the purpose of doing us harm. **Romans 8:1.** **Grudem:** This fact should give us a great sense of joy and confidence before God that we are accepted by him and that we stand before him as "not guilty" and "righteous" forever.



## Grudem: Questions for Personal Application (abbreviated)

1. Are you confident that God has declared you “not guilty” forever in his sight? Do you know when that happened in your own life? Did you do or think anything that resulted in God’s justifying of you? Did you do anything to deserve justification? If you are not sure that God has justified you fully and for all time, is there something you need to do before that will happen? What would persuade you that God has certainly justified you?
2. If you think of yourself standing before God on the day of judgment, would you think that it is enough simply to have your sins all forgiven, or would you also feel a need to have the righteousness of Christ reckoned to your account?
3. Do you think the difference between the Roman Catholic and Protestant understanding of justification is an important one? Describe how you would feel about your relationship to God if you held the Roman Catholic view of justification. Do modern Roman Catholics you know seem to hold to this traditional Roman Catholic view of justification, or do they have another view?
4. Have you ever wondered if God is still continuing to punish you from time to time for sins you have done in the past, even long ago? How does the doctrine of justification help you deal with those feelings?

## Scripture Memory Passage

**Romans 3:27-28:** **27 Where is boasting then? It is excluded. By what law? Of works? No, but by the law of faith. 28 Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith apart from the deeds of the law.**

## Hymn: “Jesus, Thy Blood and Righteousness” (Count Nikolaus Ludwig Von Zinzendorf, 1739; translated by John Wesley, 1740)

Jesus, thy blood and righteousness  
 My beauty are, my glorious dress;  
 ‘Midst flaming worlds, in these arrayed,  
 With joy shall I lift up my head.

Bold shall I stand in thy great day;  
 For who aught to my charge shall lay?  
 Fully absolved through these I am  
 From sin and fear, from guilt and shame.

When from the dust of death I rise  
 To claim my mansion in the skies,

Ev’n then this shall be all my plea,  
 Jesus hath lived, hath died, for me.

Jesus, be endless praise to thee,  
 Whose boundless mercy hath for me—  
 For me a full atonement made,  
 An everlasting ransom paid.

O let the dead now hear thy voice;  
 Now bid thy banished ones rejoice;  
 Their beauty this, their glorious dress,  
 Jesus, thy blood and righteousness.

# Systematic Theology

## Part 5: Application of Redemption

### Chapter 37: Adoption (Membership in God's Family)

---

*What are benefits of being a member of God's family?*

#### Scripture Memory Passage Review

**Romans 3:27-28:** **27 Where is boasting then? It is excluded. By what law? Of works? No, but by the law of faith. 28 Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith apart from the deeds of the law.**

#### Introduction

There is an order to the salvific process. This fifth major doctrine is a look at that order.

We have looked at common grace (blessings not part of salvation), predestination (election (choosing the saved) and reprobation (passing over the lost)), calling (both the Holy Spirit's call and the gospel call), regeneration (being born again), conversion (turning from sin (repentance) and to Christ (faith)), and justification (God declaring our sin forgiven and obtaining Christ's righteousness).

Today, we will look at adoption (membership in God's family). Chronologically, it looks something like this (taken from Grudem's Sunday school class handout—I added 'O. Common grace'):

- |                    |                         |                          |                          |
|--------------------|-------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| 0. Common grace    | 3. <b>Regeneration</b>  | 6. <b>Adoption</b>       | 9. <b>Death</b>          |
| 1. <b>Election</b> | 4. <b>Conversion</b>    | 7. <b>Sanctification</b> | 10. <b>Glorification</b> |
| 2. <b>Calling</b>  | 5. <b>Justification</b> | 8. <b>Perseverance</b>   |                          |

#### Explanation and Scriptural Basis

**Grudem:** In adoption God makes us members of his family. Therefore, the biblical teaching on adoption focuses much more on the personal relationships that salvation gives us with God and with his people. Read: less technical, more personal.

#### A. Grudem: Scriptural evidence for adoption

**Grudem:** Adoption is an act of God whereby he makes us **members of his family**.

There are only **two** options for family membership: the devil's family or God's family.

The devil's family: [John 8:41-44](#)

The family of God: [Romans 8:14-17](#); [John 1:12](#)

**Grudem:** But if we are God's children, are we then related to one another as family members? Certainly so. In fact, this adoption into God's family makes us partakers together in *one family* even with the believing Jews of the Old Testament. [Romans 9:6-8](#) (remember singing, *Father Abraham?*). [Galatians 4:28, 31](#); [1 Peter 3:6](#)

**Grudem:** This status of adoption as God's children was not fully realized in the old covenant. [Galatians 3:23-26](#)

**Grudem:** Even though there was a consciousness of God as Father to the people of Israel, the full benefits and privileges of membership in God's family, and the full realization of that membership, did not come until Christ came and the Spirit of the Son of God was poured into our hearts, bearing witness with our spirit that we were God's children.

**Grudem:** What evidence do we see in our lives that we are God's children? [Galatians 4:4-7](#); [1 John 3:1-2](#); [Hebrews 2:12, 14](#); [Romans 8:29](#); [John 20:17](#)

**Grudem:** Although the New Testament says that we are *now* God's children ([1 John 3:2](#)), we should also note that there is another sense in which our adoption is still future because we will not receive the full benefits and privileges of adoption until Christ returns and we have new resurrection bodies. [Romans 8:23](#). **Grudem:** Paul sees the receiving of new resurrection bodies as the fulfillment of our privileges of adoption, so much so that he can refer to it as our "adoption as sons."

### B. Grudem: Adoption [follows](#) conversion and is an outcome of saving [faith](#)

**Grudem:** We might initially think that we would become God's children by regeneration, since the imagery of being "born again" in regeneration makes us think of children being born into a human family. But the New Testament never connects adoption with regeneration: indeed, the idea of *adoption* is opposite to the idea of being born into a family! Rather, the New Testament connects adoption with saving faith, and says that in response to our trusting in Christ, God has adopted us into his family. [Galatians 3:23-26](#); [John 1:12](#)

### C. Grudem: Adoption is distinct from justification

**Grudem:** Regeneration has to do with our spiritual life within. Justification has to do with our standing before God's law. But adoption has to do with our [relationship](#) with God as our Father, and in adoption we are given many of the greatest blessings that we will know for all eternity.

### D. Grudem: The privileges of adoption

**Grudem:** Being able to speak to God and *relate to him as a good and loving* [Father](#). [Matthew 6:9](#)

**Grudem:** We now relate to God not as a slave relates to a slave master, but as a child relates to his or her father. [Galatians 4:7](#)

Grudem: God gives us an *internal witness from the Holy Spirit* that causes us instinctively to call God our Father. **Romans 8:15-16**. Grudem: Certainly it is true that God is our Creator, our judge, our Lord and Master, our teacher, our provider and protector, and the one who by his providential care sustains our existence. But the role that is most intimate, and the role that conveys the highest privileges of fellowship with God for eternity, is his role as our heavenly Father.

Grudem: The fact that God relates to us as Father shows very clearly that he *loves us* (1 John 3:1), that he **understands us** (Psalm 103:13-14), and that he *takes care of our needs* (Matthew 6:32).

Grudem: God gives us many good **gifts**. Matthew 7:11; Luke 11:13

Grudem: He also gives us a great *inheritance in heaven*. Galatians 4:7; Romans 8:17; **1 Peter 1:3-5**; Revelation 2:26-27; 3:21

Grudem: It is in the context of this relationship with God as our heavenly Father that we are to understand the prayer that Jesus told his disciples to pray daily. Matthew 6:9-12. Grudem: This daily prayer for forgiveness of sins is not a prayer that God would give us justification again and again throughout our lives, for justification is a one-time event that occurs immediately after we trust in Christ with saving faith. Rather, the prayer for forgiveness of sins each day is a prayer that God's fatherly relationship with us, which has been disrupted by sin that displeased him, be restored, and that he relates to us once again as a Father who delights in his children whom he loves.

Grudem: The privilege of being **led** by the Holy Spirit is also a benefit of adoption. Romans 8:14. He sees the Holy Spirit as leading and guiding God's children in paths of obedience to God.

Grudem: Another privilege of adoption into God's family, though we do not always recognize it as a privilege, is the fact that God **disciplines us** as his children. **Hebrews 12:5-10**. Grudem: Just as earthly children grow in obedience and righteousness when they are disciplined properly by their earthly fathers, so we grow in righteousness and holiness when we are disciplined by our heavenly Father.

Grudem: As children of God and joint heirs with Christ, we have the *privilege of sharing both in his sufferings and in his subsequent glory*. Romans 8:17

Grudem: The New Testament refers to Christians as "brothers" and "sisters" in Christ. Romans 1:13; 8:12; 1 Corinthians 1:10; 6:8; James 1:2; Matthew 12:50; Romans 16:1; 1 Corinthians 7:15; Philemon 1:2; James 2:15

There are other relationships as well: **1 Timothy 5:1-2**. Grudem: This concept of the church as God's family should give us a new perspective on the work of the church; it is "family work," and the various members of the family never should compete with each other or hinder one another in their efforts, but should encourage one another and be thankful for whatever good or whatever progress comes to any member of the family, for all are contributing to the good of the family and the honor of God our Father.

Grudem: In fact, just as members of an earthly family often have times of joy and fellowship when they work together on a single project, so our times of working together in building up the church ought to be times of great joy and fellowship with one another. Moreover, just as members of an earthly family honor their parents and fulfill the purpose of a family most when they eagerly welcome any brothers or sisters who are newly adopted into that family, so we ought to welcome new members of the family of Christ eagerly and with love.

Grudem: We, as God's children, are to **imitate** our Father in heaven in all our conduct. **Ephesians 5:1; 1 Peter 1:14-16**. Grudem: Both Peter and Paul realize that it is natural for children to imitate their earthly fathers. . . . When we walk in paths of righteous conduct we *honor our heavenly Father* and bring glory to him. **Matthew 5:16; Philippians 2:15; 1 John 3:10**

### Grudem: Questions for Personal Application (abbreviated)

1. Look back over the list of privileges that come with our adoption as God's children. . . . How do you feel about the fact that God has adopted you into his family?
2. Has your relationship with your own human family become better or more difficult as a result of your becoming a Christian? If your relationship with your earthly family has become more difficult, how have you found **Mark 10:29-30** to be true in your life as a Christian?
3. Sometimes people who have had unloving or cruel earthly fathers have found that their background creates difficulty in their thinking about God and relating to him as a heavenly Father. How can **Hebrews 12:10, Matthew 7:11, and Luke 11:13**, which contrast sinful earthly fathers with our perfect Father in heaven, be of help in that situation? Might **1 Peter 1:18** be helpful in this situation as well?
4. Think of the people who are members of your church. Has this chapter helped you to think of them more as your brothers and sisters (or if they are older, as those who are like "fathers" and "mothers" to you)? How do you think an added appreciation of this idea of the church as a family would be helpful to your church? How could you encourage a greater appreciation of this idea?
5. Does your church have any sense of competition with other churches that might be overcome by greater appreciation of the doctrine of adoption?
6. In the human family, when one of the children commits a crime and is publicly punished for it, the entire family suffers shame. On the other hand, when a family member is honored for an outstanding achievement, the entire family is proud and rejoices. How does this analogy of events in a human family make you feel about your own personal level of holiness in life, and the way it reflects on the other members of your spiritual family? How does it make you feel about the need for personal holiness among your brothers and sisters in the church? Do you personally have a strong inward desire to imitate your heavenly Father in your conduct (**Ephesians 5:1; 1 Peter 1:14-16**)?
7. Do you sense the Holy Spirit within you bearing witness with your spirit that you are a child of God (**Romans 8:15-16; Galatians 4:6**)? Can you describe what that sense is like?

8. Do you sense any discrimination against Christians of other races or other social or economic positions? Can you understand how the doctrine of adoption should obliterate such distinctions in the church (see [Galatians 3:26-28](#))? Can you also see how the doctrine of adoption means that neither men nor women should think of the other sex as more important or less important in the church (see [Galatians 3:28](#))?

### Scripture Memory Passage

**Romans 8:14-17:** **14** For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God. **15** For you did not receive the spirit of bondage again to fear, but you received the Spirit of adoption by whom we cry out, “Abba, Father.” **16** The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, **17** and if children, then heirs—heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with *Him*, that we may also be glorified together.

Hymn: “Children of the Heavenly Father” (Caroline V. Sandell Berg, C. 1855; translated by Ernst W. Olson, 1925)

Children of the heav'nly Father  
Safely in his bosom gather;  
Nestling bird nor star in heaven  
Such a refuge e'er was given.

God his own doth tend and nourish,  
In his holy courts they flourish;  
From all evil things he spares them,  
In his mighty arms he bears them.

Neither life nor death shall ever  
From the Lord his children sever;

Unto them his grace he showeth,  
And their sorrows all he knoweth.

Praise the Lord in joyful numbers,  
Your Protector never slumbers;  
At the will of your Defender  
Every foeman must surrender.

Though he giveth or he taketh,  
God his children ne'er forsaketh;  
His the loving purpose solely  
To preserve them pure and holy.

# Systematic Theology

## Part 5: Application of Redemption

### Chapter 38: Sanctification (Growth in Likeness to Christ)

---

*How do we grow in Christian maturity? What are the blessings of Christian growth?*

#### Scripture Memory Passage Review

**Romans 8:14-17:** **14** For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God. **15** For you did not receive the spirit of bondage again to fear, but you received the Spirit of adoption by whom we cry out, “Abba, Father.” **16** The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, **17** and if children, then heirs—heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him, that we may also be glorified together.

#### Introduction

There is an order to the salvific process. This fifth major doctrine is a look at that order.

We have looked at common grace (blessings not part of salvation), predestination (election (choosing the saved) and reprobation (passing over the lost)), calling (both the Holy Spirit’s call and the gospel call), regeneration (being born again), conversion (turning from sin (repentance) and to Christ (faith)), justification (God declaring our sin forgiven and obtaining Christ’s righteousness), and adoption (membership in God’s family).

Today, we will look at sanctification (growth in likeness to Christ). Chronologically, it looks something like this (taken from Grudem’s Sunday school class handout—I added ‘O. Common grace’):

- |                    |                         |                          |                          |
|--------------------|-------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| 0. Common grace    | 3. <b>Regeneration</b>  | 6. <b>Adoption</b>       | 9. <b>Death</b>          |
| 1. <b>Election</b> | 4. <b>Conversion</b>    | 7. <b>Sanctification</b> | 10. <b>Glorification</b> |
| 2. <b>Calling</b>  | 5. <b>Justification</b> | 8. <b>Perseverance</b>   |                          |

#### Explanation and Scriptural Basis

**Grudem:** The previous chapters have discussed several acts of God that occur at the beginning of our Christian lives. . . . But now we come to a part of the application of redemption that is a progressive work that continues throughout our earthly lives. It is also a work in which God and man cooperate, each playing distinct roles. . . . *Sanctification is a progressive work of God and man that makes us more and more **free** from sin and **like** Christ in our actual lives.*

## B. Grudem: Three stages of sanctification

1. Grudem: Sanctification has a definite **beginning** at regeneration

**Titus 3:5; 1 John 3:4-10 (ESV)**

**Romans 6:5-11**: regeneration (this sets us up for what's coming next by declaring that sin has no dominant power over us any more; **Grudem**: In practical terms, this means that we must affirm two things to be true. On the one hand, we will never be able to say, "I am completely free from sin," because our sanctification will never be completed. . . . But on the other hand, a Christian should never say (for example), "This sin has defeated me. I give up. I have had a bad temper for thirty-seven years, and I will have one until the day I die, and people are just going to have to put up with me the way I am!" To say this is to say that sin has gained dominion. It is to allow sin to reign in our bodies. It is to admit defeat. It is to deny the truth of Scripture.); **Romans 6:12-19**

2. Grudem: Sanctification **increases** throughout life

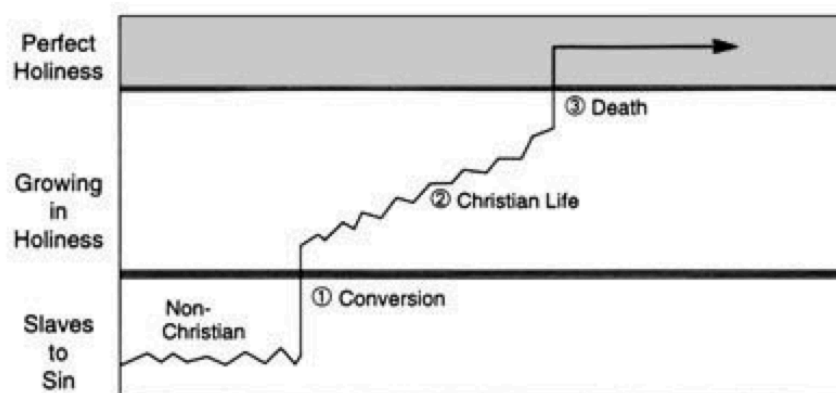
**Romans 6:19**: We become what we present our instruments to (math or band). **2 Corinthians 3:12-18**.

**Grudem**: We are progressively becoming more and more like Christ as we go on in the Christian life.

Sanctification examples: **Colossians 3:10; Hebrews 12:1, 14; James 1:22; 1 Peter 1:15**. **Grudem**: All of the moral exhortations and commands in the New Testament epistles apply here, because they all exhort believers to one aspect or another of greater sanctification in their lives.

3. Grudem: Sanctification is completed at death (for our souls) and when the Lord returns (for our bodies)

**Hebrews 12:23; Revelation 21:27**. **Grudem**: Sanctification involves the **whole** person, including our bodies. **2 Corinthians 7:1**. **Grudem**: Sanctification will not be entirely completed until the Lord returns and we receive new resurrection bodies. **Philippians 3:21**



**Grudem**: Growth in sanctification is not always one-directional in this life. . . . In the extreme case, a believer . . . may actually go for many years with very little progress in sanctification at all. Every teacher I have ever heard say this gives no Scriptural evidence for this perspective. It seems like it is true based on the experiences of millions, but I find no Scriptural basis for it at all.



4. Grudem: Sanctification is **never** completed in this life

But what about **Matthew 5:48**; **2 Corinthians 7:1**; **1 Thessalonians 5:23**; **1 John 3:6**?

Grudem: Do these verses not point to the possibility of sinless perfection in the life of some Christians? . . . First, it is simply not taught in Scripture that when God gives a command, he also gives the ability to obey it in every case.

These verses are Grudem: the goal that he desires them to reach. He does not imply that any reach it, but only that this is the high moral standard toward which God wants all believers to aspire.

Gary Jared: God doesn't draw lines between us, He draws them above us.

All are sinners: **1 Kings 8:46**; **Proverbs 20:9**; **Ecclesiastes 7:20**; **Matthew 6:11-12**; **James 3:2**; **1 John 1:8**

So, if we are never going to be perfect here, do we give up on it now? Do we lose hope? No!  
Romans 6

### C. Grudem: God and man **cooperate** in sanctification

Grudem: God works in our sanctification and we work as well, and we work for the same purpose. We are not saying that we have equal roles in sanctification or that we both work in the same way, but simply that we cooperate with God in ways that are appropriate to our status as God's creatures.

#### 1. Grudem: God's role in sanctification

**1 Thessalonians 5:23a**: God **does** the sanctifying; **Hebrews 12:5-11**: He disciplines us; **Philippians 2:12-13**: God works in us—I can work 'on' me, but I can't work 'in' me

Grudem: God sanctifies . . . by causing them to want his will and by giving them power to do it.  
**Hebrews 13:20-21**

Grudem: The role of God the Son, Jesus Christ, in sanctification is, first, that he earned our sanctification for us. **1 Corinthians 1:30-31**. Grudem: Jesus is also our example. **Hebrews 12:2**; **1 Peter 2:21**; **1 John 2:6**

Grudem: But it is specifically God the Holy Spirit who works within us to change us and sanctify us, giving us greater holiness of life. **1 Peter 1:2**; **2 Thessalonians 2:13**; **Galatians 5:16-18, 22-23**; **Romans 8:14**. Grudem: The Holy Spirit is the spirit of holiness, and he produces holiness within us.

#### 2. Grudem: Our role in sanctification

Grudem: The role that we play in sanctification is both a **passive** one in which we depend on God to sanctify us, and an **active** one in which we strive to obey God and take steps that will increase our sanctification.

Grudem: First, what may be called the "passive" role that we play in sanctification is seen in texts that encourage us to trust God or to pray and ask that he sanctify us. **Romans 6:19; 12:1** (this is not, 'let go and let God')

Grudem: That active role which we are to play is indicated by **Romans 8:13**. Grudem: Paul acknowledges that it is “by the Spirit” that we are able to do this. But he also says we must do it! It is not the Holy Spirit who is commanded to put to death the deeds of the flesh, but Christians! **Philippians 2:12-13; Hebrews 12:14; 1 Thessalonians 4:3; 1 John 3:3; 1 Corinthians 6:18; 2 Corinthians 6:14; 7:1; 2 Peter 1:5; Romans 12:1-13:14; Ephesians 4:17-6:20; Philippians 4:4-9; Colossians 3:5-4:6; 1 Peter 2:11-5:11; Hebrews 5:14**

Grudem: The New Testament does not suggest any short-cuts by which we can grow in sanctification, but simply encourages us repeatedly to give ourselves to the old-fashioned, time-honored means of Bible reading and meditation (**Psalm 1:2; Matthew 4:4; 17:17**), prayer (**Ephesians 6:18; Philippians 4:6**), worship (**Ephesians 5:18-20**), witnessing (**Matthew 28:19-20**), Christian fellowship (**Hebrews 10:24-25**), and self-discipline or self-control (**Galatians 5:23; Titus 1:8**).

Grudem: It is important that we continue to grow both in our passive trust in God to sanctify us and in our active striving for holiness and greater obedience in our lives. If we neglect active striving to obey God, we become passive, lazy Christians. If we neglect the passive role of trusting God and yielding to him, we become proud and overly confident in ourselves.

Grudem: The old hymn wisely says, “Trust and obey, for there’s no other way, to be happy in Jesus, but to trust and obey.”

Grudem: Sanctification is usually a **corporate** process in the New Testament. It is something that happens in community. **Hebrews 10:24-25; 1 Peter 2:4-5, 9; 1 Thessalonians 5:11; Ephesians 4:1-3, 11-16; 1 Corinthians 12:12-26; Galatians 6:1-2**. The family is a microcosm of this concept.

Grudem: It is significant that the fruit of the Spirit includes many things that build community (“**love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control,**” **Galatians 5:22-23**), whereas “the works of the flesh” destroy community (“**fornication, impurity, licentiousness, idolatry, sorcery, enmity, strife, jealousy, anger, selfishness, dissension, party spirit, envy, drunkenness, carousing, and the like,**” **Galatians 5:19-21**). **Galatians 5:24-25**

**D. Grudem: Sanctification affects the whole person**

Grudem: Intellect and our knowledge. **Colossians 3:8-10**

Grudem: Love. **Philippians 1:9; 1 John 2:15**

Grudem: Mind. **Romans 12:2; Colossians 1:10; 2 Corinthians 10:4-6**

Grudem: Emotions. **Galatians 5:22-23; 1 Peter 2:11; Ephesians 4:31**

Grudem: Will. **Philippians 2:13**

Grudem: Spirit. **2 Corinthians 7:1**

Grudem: Physical bodies. **1 Thessalonians 5:23; 2 Corinthians 7:1; 1 Corinthians 9:27; Romans 6:4; 1 Corinthians 6:19-20**

## E. Grudem: Motives for obedience to God in the Christian life

Grudem: Christians sometimes fail to recognize the wide range of motives for obedience to God that are found in the New Testament.

- (1) It is true that a desire to please God and express our love to him is a very important motive for obeying him. John 14:15, 21; 1 John 5:3
- (2) The need to keep a clear conscience before God. Romans 13:5; 1 Timothy 1:5, 19; 2 Timothy 1:3; 1 Peter 3:15-16
- (3) The desire to be a “vessel for noble use” and have increased effectiveness in the work of the kingdom. 2 Timothy 2:20-21
- (4) The desire to see unbelievers come to Christ through observing our lives. 1 Peter 3:1-2, 15-16
- (5) The desire to receive present blessings from God on our lives and ministries. 1 Peter 3:8-12
- (6) The desire to avoid God’s displeasure and discipline on our lives. 2 Corinthians 5:11; 7:1; Ephesians 4:30; Philippians 2:12; 1 Timothy 5:20; Hebrews 12:3-11; 1 Peter 1:17; 2:17
- (7) The desire to seek greater heavenly reward. Matthew 6:19-21; 1 Corinthians 3:12-15; 2 Corinthians 5:9-10
- (8) The desire for a deeper walk with God. Matthew 5:8; John 14:21; 1 John 3:21-22; Psalm 66:18; Isaiah 59:2
- (9) The desire that angels would glorify God for our obedience. 1 Timothy 5:21
- (10) The desire for peace (Philippians 4:9) and joy (Hebrews 12:1-2) in our lives
- (11) The desire to do what God commands, simply because his commands are right, and we delight in doing what is right. Philippians 4:8; Psalm 40:8

## F. Grudem: The beauty and joy of sanctification

Galatians 5:22-23; 1 John 3:3; Hebrews 12:1-2

### Grudem: Questions for Personal Application (abbreviated)

1. Do you really believe that you are even now dead to the ruling power and love of sin in your life?
2. As you look back over the last few years of your Christian life, can you see a pattern of definite growth in sanctification? What are some things that you used to delight in which no longer interest you? What are some things that you used to have no interest in that now hold great interest for you?
3. In living the Christian life, have you maintained a balance between your passive role and your active role in sanctification, or have you tended to emphasize one aspect over the other, and why? What might you do to correct this imbalance, if there is one in your life?
4. Are there areas where you have struggled for years to grow in sanctification, but with no progress at all in your life? (For Christians who have serious discouragement over lack of progress in sanctification, it is very important to talk personally to a pastor or other mature Christian about this situation, rather than letting it go on for a long period of time.)

## Scripture Memory Passage

**Romans 6:11-14:** **11 Likewise you also, reckon yourselves to be dead indeed to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus our Lord. 12 Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body, that you should obey it in its lusts. 13 And do not present your members as instruments of unrighteousness to sin, but present yourselves to God as being alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness to God. 14 For sin shall not have dominion over you, for you are not under law but under grace.**

### Hymn: "Take Time to Be Holy" (William D. Longstaff, 1887)

Take time to be holy, speak oft with thy Lord;  
Abide in him always, and feed on his Word.  
Make friends of God's children; help those who  
are weak;  
Forgetting in nothing his blessing to seek.

Take time to be holy, the world rushes on;  
Spend much time in secret with Jesus alone.  
By looking to Jesus, like him thou shalt be;  
Thy friends in thy conduct his likeness shall see.

Take time to be holy, let him be thy guide,  
And run not before him, whatever betide;  
In joy or in sorrow, still follow thy Lord,  
And, looking to Jesus, still trust in his Word.

Take time to be holy, be calm in thy soul;  
Each thought and each motive beneath his  
control;  
Thus led by his Spirit to fountains of love,  
Thou soon shalt be fitted for service above.

### Alternate Hymn: "Trust and Obey" (John H. Sammis, 1887)

When we walk with the Lord in the light of His  
Word,  
What a glory He sheds on our way!  
While we do His good will, He abides with us  
still,  
And with all who will trust and obey.

Refrain:  
Trust and obey, for there's no other way  
To be happy in Jesus, but to trust and obey.

Not a shadow can rise, not a cloud in the skies,  
But His smile quickly drives it away;  
Not a doubt or a fear, not a sigh or a tear,  
Can abide while we trust and obey.

Not a burden we bear, not a sorrow we share,  
But our toil He doth richly repay;  
Not a grief or a loss, not a frown or a cross,  
But is blessed if we trust and obey.

But we never can prove the delights of His love  
Until all on the altar we lay;  
For the favor He shows, for the joy He bestows,  
Are for them who will trust and obey.

Then in fellowship sweet we will sit at His feet,  
Or we'll walk by His side in the way;  
What He says we will do, where He sends we  
will go;  
Never fear, only trust and obey.

# Systematic Theology

## Part 5: Application of Redemption

### Chapter 39: Baptism in and Filling With the Holy Spirit

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*Should we seek a “baptism in the Holy Spirit” after conversion? What does it mean to be filled with the Holy Spirit?*

#### Scripture Memory Passage Review

**Romans 6:11-14: 11 Likewise you also, reckon yourselves to be dead indeed to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus our Lord. 12 Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body, that you should obey it in its lusts. 13 And do not present your members as instruments of unrighteousness to sin, but present yourselves to God as being alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness to God. 14 For sin shall not have dominion over you, for you are not under law but under grace.**

#### Introduction

There is an order to the salvific process. This fifth major doctrine is a look at that order.

We have looked at common grace (blessings not part of salvation), predestination (election (choosing the saved) and reprobation (passing over the lost)), calling (both the Holy Spirit’s call and the gospel call), regeneration (being born again), conversion (turning from sin (repentance) and to Christ (faith)), justification (God declaring our sin forgiven and obtaining Christ’s righteousness), adoption (membership in God’s family), and sanctification (growing more like Christ).

Today, we will look at baptism in and filling with the Holy Spirit. These items are not on the list below because they are not historically included in an *ordo salutis*, but with the spread of Pentecostalism and the teaching that baptism in the Holy Spirit is a distinct work from regeneration, it is necessary. Chronologically, it looks something like this (taken from Grudem’s Sunday school class handout—I added ‘O. Common grace’):

- |                    |                         |                          |                          |
|--------------------|-------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| 0. Common grace    | 3. <b>Regeneration</b>  | 6. <b>Adoption</b>       | 9. <b>Death</b>          |
| 1. <b>Election</b> | 4. <b>Conversion</b>    | 7. <b>Sanctification</b> | 10. <b>Glorification</b> |
| 2. <b>Calling</b>  | 5. <b>Justification</b> | 8. <b>Perseverance</b>   |                          |

## Explanation and Scriptural Basis

### A. Grudem: The **traditional** Pentecostal understanding

Grudem: The topic of this chapter has become important today because many Christians say that they have experienced a “baptism in the Holy Spirit” that came after they became Christians and that brought great blessing in their lives. They claim that prayer and Bible study have become much more meaningful and effective, that they have discovered new joy in worship, and they often say that they have received new spiritual gifts (especially, and most frequently, the gift of speaking in tongues).

Two comments before we begin to deconstruct this view: (1) We will never shy away from or be scared of the truth of Scripture. Whatever God has laid out to be true is good, and good for us. (2) Not everything in the Bible is easy to understand. Some doctrines take a tremendous amount of prayer, illumination, and study to understand. Don't give up. Don't get lazy.

Scriptures used to support this view (a view we will disagree with later in today's lesson):

1. Assumption that the disciples were believers before **John 20:22** (when Jesus breathes on them)
2. **Acts 1:4-8**. Grudem: The disciples . . . waited in Jerusalem for the Holy Spirit to come upon them so that they would receive new empowering for witness and ministry.
3. **Acts 2:1-4**. Grudem: They received a baptism in (or with) the Holy Spirit. . . . That was subsequent to conversion and resulted in great empowering for ministry as well as speaking in tongues.
4. Grudem: Christians **today**, like the apostles, should ask Jesus for a “baptism in the Holy Spirit” and thus follow the pattern of the disciples' lives.
5. Grudem: Support for this pattern—in which people are first born again and then later are baptized in the Holy Spirit—is seen in several other instances in the book of **Acts**. **Acts 8, 10, 19**

Grudem: These examples . . . are cited by Pentecostals in order to show that a “baptism in the Holy Spirit” subsequent to conversion was a very common occurrence for New Testament Christians. Therefore, they reason, if it was common for Christians in **Acts** to have this second experience sometime after conversion, should it not be common for us today as well?

### B. Grudem: What does “baptism in the Holy Spirit” mean in the New Testament?

Grudem: There are only **seven** passages in the New Testament where we read of someone being baptized in the Holy Spirit. (The English translations quoted here use the word with rather than in.) The seven passages follow: In the first four verses, John the Baptist is speaking of Jesus and predicting that he will baptize people in (or with) the Holy Spirit: **Matthew 3:11; Mark 1:8; Luke 3:16; John 1:33**. Grudem: It is hard to draw any conclusions from these four passages with respect to what baptism with the Holy Spirit really is.

**Grudem:** The next two passages refer directly to Pentecost: **Acts 1:5; 11:16**. **Grudem:** These two passages show us that whatever we may understand baptism in the Holy Spirit to be, it certainly happened at the day of Pentecost as recorded in **Acts 2**. . . . It is important to realize that all six of these verses use almost exactly the same expression in Greek.

**Grudem:** The only remaining reference in the New Testament is in . . . **1 Corinthians 12:13**. . . . Now the question is whether **1 Corinthians 12:13** refers to the same activity as these other six verses. Put on your thinking caps and your hip waders—it's going to get deep.

**1 Corinthians 12:12-13:** **12 For as the body is one and has many members, but all the members of that one body, being many, are one body, so also is Christ. 13 For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body—whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free—and have all been made to drink into one Spirit.**

Pentecostals do **not** view **1 Corinthians 12:13** as being the same thing as baptism of the Holy Spirit. Because, if it was, then it is quite obvious that **1 Corinthians 12:13** occurs at conversion and not afterward. So, it matters whether or not this verse is referring to baptism of the Holy Spirit.

A side word about translations—all of our modern translations have a bent to particular theologies. And these bents impact the manner in which the words and phrases are translated. This is not to say that you cannot trust your translation—it is to say that every translator has a bias. Some are very good biases. Some are very bad biases. **1 Corinthians 12:13** is translated differently in English translations depending upon the theology of the translators—which is why we need to go to the original Greek.

**Grudem:** In all the other six verses, Jesus is the one who baptizes people and the Holy Spirit is the “element” (parallel to water in physical baptism) in which or with which Jesus baptizes people. But here in **1 Corinthians 12:13** (so the Pentecostal explanation goes) we have something quite different—here the person doing the baptizing is not Jesus but the Holy Spirit. Therefore, they say, **1 Corinthians 12:13** should not be taken into account when we ask what the New Testament means by “baptism in the Holy Spirit.”

Summary: If **1 Corinthians 12:13** means the same thing as “baptism in the Holy Spirit” (like the other passages mean), then baptism in the Holy Spirit does not occur after salvation.

The only issue with the Pentecostal view is that the text does not line up with it. **Grudem:** Apart from one small difference (he refers to “one Spirit” rather than “the Holy Spirit”), all the other elements are the same: the verb is *baptizo*, and the prepositional phrase contains the same words (*en* plus the dative noun *pneumati*).

**Grudem:** **1 Corinthians 12:13** also refers to baptism “in” or “with” the Holy Spirit, and is referring to the same thing as the other six verses mentioned.

But again: if **1 Corinthians 12:13** means the same thing as “baptism in the Holy Spirit” (like the other passages mean), then baptism in the Holy Spirit does not occur after salvation. **1 Corinthians 12:13** does mean baptism in the Holy Spirit happens at conversion and not afterwards.

Grudem: But how, then, do we understand the references to baptism in the Holy Spirit in Acts 1:5 and 11:6, both of which refer to the day of Pentecost? Were these not instances where the disciples, having previously been regenerated by the Holy Spirit, now experienced a new empowering from the Holy Spirit that enabled them to minister effectively?

Grudem: The day of Pentecost was the point of **transition** between the old covenant work and ministry of the Holy Spirit and the new covenant work and ministry of the Holy Spirit.

Let's do a whirlwind tour of the working of the Holy Spirit throughout history. (see what I did there?)

- Grudem: Hovering over the waters. **Genesis 1:2** (Satan roams and seeks to take life. The Holy Spirit hovers and seeks to give life. Don't settle for the evil imitation—get the holy original.)
- Grudem: Empowering people for service to God and leadership and prophecy. **Exodus 31:1-4; 35:31; Deuteronomy 34:9; Judges 14:6; 1 Samuel 16:13; Psalm 51:11**, etc.
- Grudem: But during that time the work of the Holy Spirit in individual lives was, in general, a work of lesser power. **Numbers 11:29**
- Grudem: The equipping of the Holy Spirit for special ministries could be lost. **1 Samuel 16:14; Psalm 51:11**
- Grudem: In terms of spiritual power in the lives of the people of God, there was little power over the dominion of Satan, resulting in very little effective evangelism of the nations around Israel, and no examples of ability to cast out demons. The old covenant work of the Holy Spirit was almost completely confined to the nation of Israel.
- Grudem: The Old Testament people of God looked forward to a “new covenant” age when the work of the Holy Spirit would be much more powerful and much more widespread. **Numbers 11:29; Jeremiah 31:31-33; Ezekiel 36:26-27; Joel 2:28-29**
- Grudem: When the New Testament opens, we see John the Baptist as the last of the Old Testament prophets. **Matthew 11:11-14; John 1:33**
- Grudem: In the life of Jesus, we first see the new covenant power of the Holy Spirit at work. **Luke 3:21-22; Luke 4:14, 16-44**

Grudem: The disciples, however, do not receive this full new covenant empowering for ministry until the Day of Pentecost. **Acts 1:8; 2:16, 33**

Grudem: This new covenant power gave the disciples more effectiveness in their witness and their ministry (**Acts 1:8; Ephesians 4:8, 11-13**), much greater power for victory over the influence of sin in the lives of all believers (note the emphasis on the power of Christ's resurrection at work within us in **Romans 6:11-14; 8:13-14; Galatians 2:20; Philippians 3:10**), and power for victory over Satan and demonic forces that would attack believers (**2 Corinthians 10:3-4; Ephesians 1:19-21; 6:10-18; 1 John 4:4**). This new covenant power of the Holy Spirit also resulted in a wide and hitherto unknown distribution of gifts for ministry to all believers (**Acts 2:16-18; 1 Corinthians 12:7, 11; 1 Peter 4:10; cf. Numbers 11:17, 24-29**). These gifts also had corporate implications because they were intended not to be used individualistically but for the corporate building up of the body of Christ (**1 Corinthians 12:7; 14:12**). It also meant that the gospel was no longer effectively limited to the Jews only, but that



all races and all nations would hear the gospel in power and would be united into the church, to the glory of God (Ephesians 2:11-3:10). The Day of Pentecost was certainly a remarkable time of transition in the whole history of redemption as recorded in Scripture. It was a remarkable day in the history of the world, because on that day the Holy Spirit began to function among God's people with new covenant power. . . . It is not to be taken as a pattern for us, for we are not living at a time of transition in the work of the Holy Spirit. . . . Rather, we are in the same position as those who became Christians in the church at Corinth: when we become Christians we are all "baptized in one Spirit into one body" (1 Corinthians 12:13).

### C. Grudem: How should **we** understand the "second experiences" in Acts?

**Grudem:** Are there not other examples of people who had a "second experience" of empowering of the Holy Spirit after conversion, such as those in Acts 8 (at Samaria), Acts 10 (Cornelius' household), and Acts 19 (the Ephesian disciples)?

**Grudem:** First, the expression "baptism in the Holy Spirit" is not ordinarily used to refer to any of these events, and this should give us some hesitation in applying this phrase to them.

Grudem's rebuttal to Acts 8:4-25 implying that it was a second experience applicable to us today:

**Grudem:** God, in his providence, sovereignly waited to give the new covenant empowering of the Holy Spirit to the Samaritans directly through the hands of the apostles (Acts 8:14-17) so that it might be evident to the highest leadership in the Jerusalem church that the Samaritans were not second-class citizens but full members of the church. . . . So that it might be evident to all that the full new covenant blessings and power of the Holy Spirit had come to this group of people as well, and were not confined to Jews only.

Grudem's rebuttal to Acts 10 implying that it was a second experience applicable to us today:

**Grudem:** It is not even clear that Cornelius was a genuine believer before Peter came and preached the gospel to him.

Grudem's rebuttal to Acts 19:1-7 implying that it was a second experience applicable to us today:

**Grudem:** They had been baptized into the baptism of John the Baptist (Acts 19:3) . . . as a sign that they were repenting of their sins and preparing for the Messiah who was to come. They certainly had not heard of Christ's death and resurrection, for they had not even heard that there was a Holy Spirit (Acts 19:2). . . . These "disciples" in Ephesus did not have new covenant understanding or new covenant faith, and they certainly did not have a new covenant empowering of the Holy Spirit—they were "disciples" only in the sense of followers of John the Baptist who were still waiting for the Messiah. When they heard of him they believed in him, and then received the power of the Holy Spirit that was appropriate to the gospel of the risen Lord Jesus Christ.

**Grudem:** There are no New Testament texts that encourage us to seek for a second experience of "baptism in the Holy Spirit" that comes after conversion. Jim's note: none of these three passages are applicable to us as we are not in any of those situations today.

**D. Grudem: What terms shall we use to refer to an empowering by the Holy Spirit that comes after conversion?**

Words matter. Let's act like it theologically too.

If it's not, "baptism in the Holy Spirit," what is it? And Grudem: What is actually happening to the millions of people who claim that they have received this 'baptism in the Holy Spirit' and that it has brought much blessing to their lives? . . . Might it be that there are other biblical expressions and biblical teachings that point to this kind of work of the Holy Spirit after conversion and help us understand it more accurately?

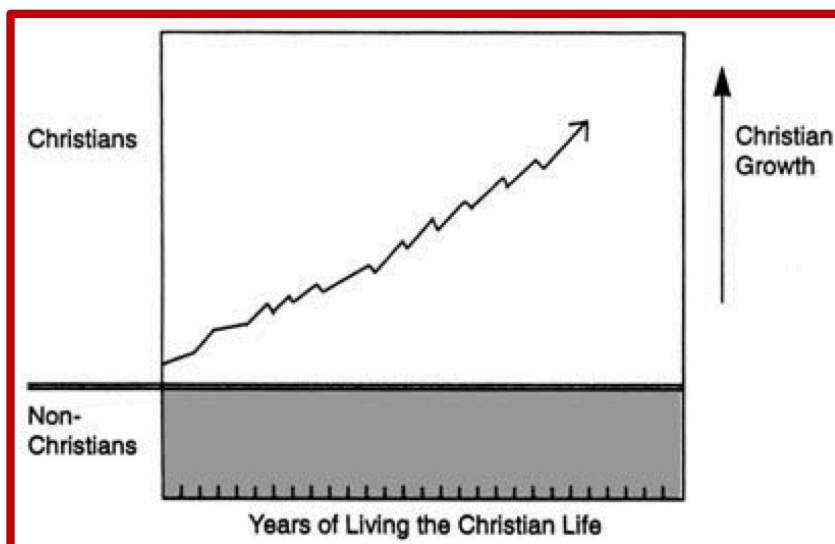
**1. Grudem: Harm comes to the church from teaching two-class Christianity**

Some view the world this way (or in some variation of this): (modified from Grudem's Figure 39.3)

Christians	Spirit-baptized Christians	Spiritual Christians	Sanctified Christians	Truly Reformed	"Disciples"	Saints
	Ordinary Christians	Ordinary Christians	Ordinary Christians	Ordinary Christians	Ordinary Christians	Ordinary Christians
Non-Christians						

Grudem: What is the problem with viewing Christians as existing in two categories like this? The problem is that it contributes to a "we-they" mentality in churches, and leads to jealousy, pride, and divisiveness. . . . Even if they are not proud in their hearts (and it seems to me that most are not) with respect to this experience, such a conviction that there is a second category of Christians will inevitably give an impression of pride or spiritual superiority. . . . The major objection to this position is that the New Testament itself teaches no such two-level or two-class Christianity.

**2. Grudem: There are many degrees of empowering, fellowship with God, and personal Christian maturity**



Grudem: There are Christians at all points along a scale of increasing Christian maturity (sanctification), increasing closeness of fellowship in their walk with God (an aspect of adoption), and greater experiences of the power of the Holy Spirit at work in their lives and ministries. The Christian life should be one of growth in all of these areas as we progress throughout life.

a. **Grudem: How should we understand contemporary experience? Grudem: We must understand first what is commonly taught about the need to prepare for baptism in the Holy Spirit. Very often people will be taught that they should confess all known sins, repent of any remaining sin in their lives, trust Christ to forgive those sins, commit every area of their lives to the Lord's service, yield themselves fully to him, and believe that Christ is going to empower them in a new way and equip them with new gifts for ministry. Then after that preparation, they are encouraged to ask Jesus in prayer to baptize them in the Holy Spirit.**

**Grudem: But what does this preparation do?** It will either result in growth or salvation! It does not put you in another category of Christianity, though. It merely moves you closer to Christ—an experience that is always beneficial and noticed by the believer.

b. **Grudem: What terms should we use today?** If “baptism of the Holy Spirit” occurs at conversion, then we need another term. **Grudem: There might be several terms that we could use, so long as they allow for repetition, varying degrees of intensity, and further development beyond that one experience, and so long as they do not suggest that all truly obedient Christians should have the same experience.**

c. **Grudem: What is “being filled with the Spirit”?** **Grudem: This seems to me to be the best term to use to describe genuine “second experiences” today (or third or fourth experiences, etc.). Ephesians 5:18-6:9; Acts 2:4; 4:8, 23; 7:55; 6:3; 11:24**

**Grudem: Someone might object that a person who is already “full” of the Holy Spirit cannot become more full—if a glass is full of water no more water can be put into it. But a water glass is a poor analogy for us as real people, for God is able to cause us to grow and to be able to contain much more of the Holy Spirit's fullness and power. A better analogy might be a balloon, which can be “full” of air even though it has very little air in it. When more air is blown in, the balloon expands and in a sense it is “more full.” So it is with us: we can be filled with the Holy Spirit and at the same time be able to receive much more of the Holy Spirit as well.**

**Grudem: There is nothing wrong with teaching people to pray and to seek this greater infilling of the Holy Spirit.**

**3. Grudem: Being filled with the Holy Spirit does not always result in speaking in tongues**  
Examples of speaking in tongues after being filled with the Holy Spirit: [Acts 2:4; 10:46; 19:6](#)

Examples of not speaking in tongues after being filled with the Holy Spirit: [Luke 4:1, 14, 41-45, 67-79; Acts 4:31; 6:3; 4:8; 7:55; 11:24](#)

### **Grudem: Questions for Personal Application (abbreviated)**

1. **Has your own Christian life included one or more events that you could call “a large step of growth” in some area or another in the Christian life? Or has it rather been one of small but**

continuing steps in sanctification, in fellowship with God, and in use of spiritual gifts and power in ministry?

2. We all realize that it is possible to overemphasize something good in the Christian life to such an extent that our lives become unbalanced and not as effective in ministry as they might be. If we think of the various ways in which we can grow in the Christian life (knowledge of the Word and sound doctrine, prayer, love for God, love for other Christians and for non-Christians, trust in God each day, worship, holiness of life, use of spiritual gifts, effective power of the Holy Spirit in our witness and ministry, daily fellowship with God, etc.), in what areas do you think you need to ask God for more growth in your own life? Would it be appropriate to ask him for a new fullness of the Holy Spirit to accompany growth in those areas?

### Scripture Memory Passage

**1 Corinthians 12:12-13:** **12 For as the body is one and has many members, but all the members of that one body, being many, are one body, so also is Christ. 13 For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body—whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free—and have all been made to drink into one Spirit.**

#### Hymn: “Spirit of God, Descend Upon My Heart” (George Croly, 1854)

Spirit of God, descend upon my heart;  
Wean it from earth, through all its pulses move;  
Stoop to my weakness, mighty as thou art,  
And make me love thee as I ought to love.

Hast thou not bid us love thee, God and King?  
All, all thine own, soul, heart, and strength and mind.

I see thy cross— there teach my heart to cling:  
O let me seek thee, and O let me find.

Teach me to feel that thou art always nigh;  
Teach me the struggles of the soul to bear,  
To check the rising doubt, the rebel sigh;  
Teach me the patience of unanswered prayer.

Teach me to love thee as thine angels love,  
One holy passion filling all my frame;  
The baptism of the heav’n descended dove  
My heart an altar, and thy love the flame.

#### Alternative hymn: “Spirit of the Living God” (Daniel Iverson, 1926)

Spirit of the living God,  
Fall afresh on me.  
Spirit of the living God,  
Fall afresh on me.  
Melt me, mold me, fill me, use me.  
Spirit of the living God,  
Fall afresh on me.

# Systematic Theology

## Part 5: Application of Redemption

### Chapter 40: The Perseverance of the Saints (Remaining a Christian)

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*Can true Christians lose their salvation? How can we know if we are truly born again?*

#### Scripture Memory Passage Review

**1 Corinthians 12:12-13: 12** For as the body is one and has many members, but all the members of that one body, being many, are one body, so also is Christ. **13** For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body—whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free—and have all been made to drink into one Spirit.

#### Introduction

There is an order to the salvific process. This fifth major doctrine is a look at that order.

We have looked at common grace (blessings not part of salvation), predestination (election (choosing the saved) and reprobation (passing over the lost)), calling (both the Holy Spirit's call and the gospel call), regeneration (being born again), conversion (turning from sin (repentance) and to Christ (faith)), justification (God declaring our sin forgiven and obtaining Christ's righteousness), adoption (membership in God's family), sanctification (growing more like Christ), and baptism in and filling with the Holy Spirit (not a part of salvation).

Today, we will look at the perseverance of the saints (remaining a Christian). Chronologically, it looks something like this (taken from Grudem's Sunday school class handout—I added 'O. Common grace'):

- |                    |                         |                          |                          |
|--------------------|-------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| 0. Common grace    | 3. <b>Regeneration</b>  | 6. <b>Adoption</b>       | 9. <b>Death</b>          |
| 1. <b>Election</b> | 4. <b>Conversion</b>    | 7. <b>Sanctification</b> | 10. <b>Glorification</b> |
| 2. <b>Calling</b>  | 5. <b>Justification</b> | 8. <b>Perseverance</b>   |                          |

#### Explanation and Scriptural Basis

**Grudem: How do we know that we shall continue to be Christians throughout our lives? Is there anything that will keep us from falling away from Christ, anything to guarantee that we will remain Christians until we die and that we will in fact live with God in heaven forever?**

*Grudem: The perseverance of the saints means that all those who are truly born again will be kept by God's power and will persevere as Christians until the **end** of their lives, and that only those who persevere until the **end** have been truly born again.*

*Grudem: Two parts. . . . First . . . there is assurance to be given to those who are truly born again. . . . Second . . . continuing in the Christian life is one of the evidences that a person is truly born again.*

*Grudem: Most Baptists have followed the Reformed tradition at this point; however, they have frequently used the term "eternal security" or the "eternal security of the believer" rather than the term "perseverance of the saints." Grudem argues against the phrase *eternal security of the believer*, but I argue against *perseverance of the saints* (because perseverance is hard to spell). 'Perseverance' implies opposition and effort on our part. 'Eternal security' can imply a cruise control type mentality.*

### A. Grudem: All who are truly born again **will** persevere to the end

**John 6:38-40**; (Grudem: Everyone who truly believes in Christ will remain a Christian up to the day of final resurrection into the blessings of life in the presence of God.); **John 10:27-29**; **3:36**; **5:24**; **10:28**; **1 John 5:13**; **Romans 8:1, 30**; **Ephesians 1:13-14**; **Philippians 1:3-6**; **1 Peter 1:3-5** (Grudem: The word guarded (Gk. *phroureo*) can mean both "kept from escaping" and "protected from attack," and perhaps both kinds of guarding are intended here: God is preserving believers from escaping out of his kingdom, and he is protecting them from external attacks. The present participle that Peter uses gives the sense "You are continually being guarded.")

*Grudem: If God's guarding has as its purpose the preservation of believers until they receive their full, heavenly salvation, then it is safe to conclude that God will accomplish that purpose and they will in fact attain that final salvation. . . . Attainment of final salvation depends on God's power.*

### B. Grudem: Only those who persevere to the **end** have been truly born again

*Grudem: While Scripture repeatedly emphasizes that those who are truly born again will persevere to the end and will certainly have eternal life in heaven with God, there are other passages that speak of the necessity of continuing in faith throughout life. They make us realize that what Peter said in **1 Peter 1:5** is true, namely, that God does not guard us apart from our faith, but only by working through our faith so that he enables us to continue to believe in him. In this way, those who continue to trust in Christ gain assurance that God is working in them and guarding them.*

**John 8:31-32**; **Matthew 10:22**; **Colossians 1:21-23** (Grudem: Those whose faith is not real will eventually fall away from participation in the fellowship of the church); **Hebrews 3:14**

*Grudem: In all of the passages where continuing to believe in Christ to the end of our lives is mentioned as one indication of genuine faith, the purpose is never to make those who are presently trusting in Christ worry that some time in the future they might fall away (and we should never use these passages that way either, for that would be to give wrongful cause for worry in a way that Scripture does not intend). Rather, the purpose is always to warn those who are thinking of falling away or have fallen away that if they do this it is a strong indication that they were never*

saved in the first place. **1 John 2:19**. The proof of my Christianity is not today—it is at the end of my life when I have been found faithful. This is why the funeral of a believer is such a beautiful thing.

### C. Grudem: Those who finally fall away may give **many** external signs of conversion

Grudem: For example, Judas. **John 6:70**

**Galatians 2:4-5** (there is a larger plan at work by Satan); **2 Corinthians 11:26** (Grudem: Some unbelievers in the church will be false brothers and sisters sent to disrupt the fellowship, while others will simply be unbelievers who will eventually come to genuine saving faith. In both cases, however, they give several external signs that make them look like genuine believers.); **Matthew 7:21-23** (real Christianity is not shiny, sparkly, or flashy); **Mark 4:5-6, 16-17** (sparkler Christianity); **John 15:1-7** (Grudem: The point of the imagery is simply that those who bear fruit thereby give evidence that they are abiding in Christ; those who do not, are not abiding in him); **Hebrews 6:4-8** (Grudem spends two pages on this text. His summary: Grudem: These are no doubt people who have been affiliated closely with the fellowship of the church. They have had some sorrow for sin (repentance). They have clearly understood the gospel (they have been enlightened). They have come to appreciate the attractiveness of the Christian life and the change that comes about in people's lives because of becoming a Christian, and they have probably had answers to prayer in their own lives and felt the power of the Holy Spirit at work, perhaps even using some spiritual gifts in the manner of the unbelievers in **Matthew 7:22** (they have become "associated with" the work of the Holy Spirit or have become "partakers" of the Holy Spirit and have tasted the heavenly gift and the powers of the age of come). They have been exposed to the true preaching of the Word and have appreciated much of its teachings (they have tasted the goodness of the Word of God). But then in spite of all this, if they "commit apostasy" and "crucify the Son of God on their own account and hold him up to contempt" (**Hebrews 6:6**), then they are willfully rejecting all of these blessings and turning decidedly against them. Perhaps all of us have known in our own churches people who (sometimes by their own profession) have long been affiliated with the fellowship of the church but are not themselves born-again Christians. They have thought about the gospel for years and have continued to resist the wooing of the Holy Spirit in their lives, perhaps through an unwillingness to give up lordship of their lives to Jesus and preferring to cling to it themselves. Now the author tells us that if these people willfully turn away from all of these temporary blessings, then it will be impossible to restore them again to any kind of repentance or sorrow for sin. Their hearts will be hardened and their consciences calloused. What more could be done to bring them to salvation? If we tell them Scripture is true they will say that they know it but they have decided to reject it. If we tell them God answers prayer and changes lives they will respond that they know that as well, but they want nothing of it. If we tell them that the Holy Spirit is powerful to work in people's lives and the gift of eternal life is good beyond description, they will say that they understand that, but they want nothing of it. Their repeated familiarity with the things of God and their experience of many influences of the Holy Spirit has simply served to harden them against conversion. . . . The author of Hebrews . . . wants to warn them that, though they have participated in the fellowship of the church and experienced a number of God's blessings in their lives, yet if they fall away after all that, there is no salvation for them. . . . He wants to use the strongest language possible to say, "Here is

how far a person can come in experiencing temporary blessings and still not really be saved.” He is warning them to watch out, because depending on temporary blessings and experiences is not enough.); **Hebrews 10:26-31** (Grudem: The passage does not talk about someone who is . . . saved, but someone who has received some beneficial moral influence through contact with the church)

#### D. Grudem: What can give a believer genuine assurance?

Grudem: We can list three categories of questions that a person could ask of himself or herself.

1. Grudem: Do I have a **present** trust in Christ for salvation?

**Colossians 1:21-23**; **Hebrews 3:14-15**; **6:11-12** (this is my prayer for each of us); **John 3:16** (**believe** = present active participle → **continues believing**—my Christianity is about today)

2. Grudem: Is there evidence of a regenerating work of the Holy Spirit in **my** heart?

**Romans 8:15-16**; **1 John 4:13**. Grudem: A subjective testimony of the Holy Spirit within our hearts bearing witness that we are God’s children

**Galatians 5:22-23**. Grudem: The question is not, “Do I perfectly exemplify all of these characteristics in my life?” but rather, “Are these things a general characteristic of my life? Do I sense these attitudes in my heart? Do others (especially those closest to me) see these traits exhibited in my life? Have I been growing in them over a period of years?” **Matthew 7:16-20**

**1 John 2:23-24**; **4:6**. Grudem: Continuing to believe and accept the sound teaching of the church

**1 John 2:4-6**; **3:9-10, 24**; **5:18**. Grudem: A life of obedience to God’s commands. . . . A perfect life is not necessary, of course. John is rather saying that in general our lives ought to be ones of imitation of Christ and likeness to him in what we do and say.

**1 John 2:10**; **3:14, 17**; **4:7**. Grudem: Love for fellow Christians

**1 John 2:19**. Grudem: Continuing in Christian fellowship

**1 John 3:17**; **Matthew 25:31-46**. Grudem: Giving to a brother in need

3. Grudem: Do I see a long-term pattern of **growth** in my Christian life?

**2 Peter 1:5-11**. Grudem: The way that we confirm our call and election, then, is to continue to grow in “these things.”

Grudem: The doctrine of the perseverance of the saints will be a tremendously comforting doctrine. No one who has such assurance should wonder, “Will I be able to persevere to the end of my life and therefore be saved?” Everyone who gains assurance through such a self-examination should rather think, “I am truly born again; therefore, I will certainly persevere to the end, because I am being guarded ‘by God’s power’ working through my faith (**1 Peter 1:5**) and therefore I will never be lost. Jesus will raise me up at the last day and I will enter into his kingdom forever” (**John 6:40**).

Grudem: On the other hand, this doctrine of the perseverance of the saints, if rightly understood, should cause genuine worry, and even fear, in the hearts of any who are “backsliding” or straying



away from Christ. Such persons must clearly be warned that only those who persevere to the end have been truly born again.

So what is the answer for someone who has never been saved? Grudem: You must **repent** of your sins and **trust** in Christ for your salvation!

### Grudem: Questions for Personal Application (abbreviated)

1. Do you have assurance that you are truly born again? What evidence do you see in your own life to give you that assurance? . . . Have you seen a pattern of growth in your Christian life over time? Are you trusting in your own power to keep on believing in Christ, or in God's power to keep your faith active and alive?
2. If you have doubts about whether you are truly born again, what is it in your life that is giving reason for those doubts? What would Scripture encourage you to do to resolve those doubts (see 2 Peter 1:5-11; also Matthew 11:28-30; John 6:37)?
3. Is it possible that people would profess agreement with every true Christian doctrine and still not be born again?

### Scripture Memory Passage

**John 10:27-28: 27 My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me. 28 And I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; neither shall anyone snatch them out of My hand.**

### Hymn: "Call Jehovah Thy Salvation" (James Montgomery, 1822)

Call Jehovah thy salvation, rest beneath th' Almighty's shade,  
In his secret habitation dwell, and never be dismayed:  
There no tumult shall alarm thee, thou shalt dread no hidden snare:  
Guile nor violence can harm thee, in eternal safeguard there.

From the sword at noonday wasting, from the noisome pestilence,  
In the depth of midnight blasting, God shall be thy sure defence:  
He shall charge his angel legions watch and ward o'er thee to keep;  
Though thou walk through hostile regions, though in desert wilds thou sleep.

Since, with pure and firm affection thou on God hast set thy love,  
With the wings of his protection he will shield thee from above:  
Thou shalt call on him in trouble, he will hearken, he will save;  
Here for grief reward thee double, crown with life beyond the grave.

# Systematic Theology

## Part 5: Application of Redemption

### Chapter 41: Death and the Intermediate State

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*What is the purpose of death in the Christian life? What happens to our bodies and souls when we die?*

#### Scripture Memory Passage Review

**John 10:27-28: 27 My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me. 28 And I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; neither shall anyone snatch them out of My hand.**

#### Introduction

There is an order to the salvific process. This fifth major doctrine is a look at that order.

We have looked at common grace (blessings not part of salvation), predestination (election (choosing the saved) and reprobation (passing over the lost)), calling (both the Holy Spirit's call and the gospel call), regeneration (being born again), conversion (turning from sin (repentance) and to Christ (faith)), justification (God declaring our sin forgiven and obtaining Christ's righteousness), adoption (membership in God's family), sanctification (growing more like Christ), baptism in and filling with the Holy Spirit (not a part of salvation), and the perseverance of the saints (remaining a Christian).

Today, we will look at death. Chronologically, it looks something like this (taken from Grudem's Sunday school class handout—I added 'O. Common grace'):

- |                    |                         |                          |                          |
|--------------------|-------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| 0. Common grace    | 3. <b>Regeneration</b>  | 6. <b>Adoption</b>       | 9. <b>Death</b>          |
| 1. <b>Election</b> | 4. <b>Conversion</b>    | 7. <b>Sanctification</b> | 10. <b>Glorification</b> |
| 2. <b>Calling</b>  | 5. <b>Justification</b> | 8. <b>Perseverance</b>   |                          |

## Explanation and Scriptural Basis

### A. Grudem: Why do Christians die?

#### 2. Grudem: Death is the final outcome of living in a fallen world

Grudem: We still live in a fallen world and our experience of salvation is still incomplete.

Grudem: The last aspect of the fallen world to be removed will be **death**. **1 Corinthians 15:26**; 54-55

Grudem: Related to the experience of death are other results of the fall that harm our physical bodies and signal the presence of death in the world—Christians as well as non-Christians experience aging, illnesses, injuries, and natural disasters (such as floods, violent storms, and earthquakes).

#### 3. Grudem: God uses the experience of death to **complete** our sanctification

**Romans 8:28** (our framework). Grudem: We should see all the hardship and suffering that comes to us in life as something that God brings to us *to do us good* strengthening our trust in him and our obedience, and ultimately increasing our ability to glorify him.

If we lived forever, we would never look like Jesus. **Philippians 3:7-11**. Current → suffering → death → resurrection (we can endure because of the resurrection at the end). Grudem: Paul thought about the way in which Jesus died, and made it his goal to exemplify the same characteristics in his life when it came time for him to die—that in whatever circumstances he found himself, he, like Christ, would continue obeying God, trusting God, forgiving others, and caring for the needs of those around him, thus in every way bringing glory to God even in his death. **Philippians 1:19-20**

Grudem: The understanding that death is . . . something God brings us through in order to make us more like Christ, should be a great encouragement to us. It should take away from us the fear of death that haunts the minds of unbelievers. . . . Nevertheless, although God will bring good to us through the process of death, we must still remember that death is not natural; it is not right; and in a world created by God it is something that ought not to be. It is an enemy, something that Christ will finally destroy.

#### 5. Grudem: Our obedience to God is more important than preserving our own **lives**

**Acts 21:13; 20:24; 2 Corinthians 2:11:23-27; Hebrews 11:35-40; Acts 5:29; Revelation 2:10-11**

Grudem: The persuasion that we may honor the Lord even in our death, and that faithfulness to him is far more important than preserving our lives, has given courage and motivation to martyrs throughout the history of the church. When faced with a choice of preserving their own lives and sinning, or giving up their own lives and being faithful, they chose to give up their own lives. . . . Even in times where there is little persecution and little likelihood of martyrdom, it would be good for us to fix this truth in our minds once for all, for if we are willing to give up even our lives for faithfulness to God, we shall find it much easier to give up everything else for the sake of Christ as well. Recommended reading: (New) *Foxe's Book of Martyrs* (modern edition)

## B. Grudem: How should we think of our own death and the death of others?

### 1. Grudem: Our own death

Grudem: The New Testament encourages us to view our own death . . . with **joy** at the prospect of going to be with Christ. **2 Corinthians 5:8**; **Philippians 1:21-23**

Grudem: Believers need have no fear of death. **Romans 8:38-39**; **Psalm 23:4**; **Hebrews 2:14-15**

Grudem: A clear testimony to our lack of fear of death will provide a strong witness for Christians in an age that tries to avoid talking about death and has no answer for it.

### 2. Grudem: The death of Christian friends and relatives

Grudem: We will experience genuine **sorrow**—but mixed with joy that they have gone to be with the Lord. . . . It is not wrong to express real sorrow at the loss of fellowship with loved ones who have died, and sorrow also for the suffering and hardship that they may have gone through prior to death. **Acts 8:2**; **John 11:35**; **Acts 20:37-38**; **2 Samuel 1:11-27**; **1 Thessalonians 4:13**; **Psalm 116:15** (God Himself and looks at the death of a believer and it is precious to Him—because the end of our lives is a demonstration of His faithfulness to us and our perseverance to Him); **1 Corinthians 15:55-57** (Paul is trash-talking death because Paul is looking at something beyond death—the resurrection. We can taunt death as well because it has no victory over us.)

Grudem: Worship is especially important at this time. **2 Samuel 12:20**; **Job 1:20-21**

### 3. Grudem: The death of unbelievers

**Romans 9:1-3**

Grudem: When unbelievers die, the sorrow we feel is **not** mingled with the joy of assurance that they have gone to be with the Lord forever.

Grudem: Yet it also must be said that we often do not have absolute certainty that a person has persisted in refusal to trust in Christ all the way to the point of death.

Grudem: Nevertheless, after a non-Christian has died, it would be wrong to give any indication to others that we think that person has gone to heaven. This would simply be to give misleading information and false assurance, and to diminish the urgency of the need for those who are still alive to trust in Christ. . . . In fact, the times when we are able to talk as a friend to the loved ones of an unbeliever who has died are often times when the Lord will open up opportunities to talk about the gospel with those who are still living.

Grudem: Speak with genuine thankfulness about the good qualities . . . in the life of the person who has died. **2 Samuel 1:19-25** (King David does this of King Saul)

## C. Grudem: What happens when people die?

### 1. Grudem: The souls of believers go immediately into **God's** presence

**Grudem:** Death is a temporary cessation of bodily life and a **separation** of the soul from the body. Once a believer has died, though his or her physical body remains on the earth and is buried, at the moment of death the soul (or spirit) of that believer goes immediately into the presence of God with rejoicing. **2 Corinthians 5:8** (there is no delay here); **Philippians 1:23**; **Luke 23:43** (there is no paperwork to be processed for us to enter into heaven)

**Grudem:** However, as we shall see in more detail in the next chapter, God will not leave our dead bodies in the earth forever, for when Christ returns the souls of believers will be reunited with their bodies, their bodies will be raised from the dead, and they will live with Christ eternally.

#### a. Grudem: The Bible does not teach the doctrine of purgatory

**Grudem:** The fact that the souls of believers go immediately into God's presence means that *there is no such thing as purgatory*. In Roman Catholic teaching, purgatory is the place where the souls of believers go to be further purified from sin until they are ready to be admitted into heaven. According to this view, the sufferings of purgatory are given to God in substitute for the punishment for sins that believers should have received in time, but did not. . . . The Roman Catholic Church has found support for this doctrine, not in the pages of canonical Scripture as we defined it in chapter 3 above, and as Protestants have accepted it since the Reformation, but in the writings of the Apocrypha, particularly in 2 Maccabees 12:42-45: [Judas Maccabeus, the leader of the Jewish forces] also took a collection, man by man, to the amount of 2,000 drachmas of silver, and sent it to Jerusalem to provide for a sin offering. In doing this he acted very well and honorably, taking into account the resurrection. For if he were not expecting that those who had fallen would rise again, it would have been superfluous and foolish *to pray for the dead*. But if he was looking to the splendid reward that is laid up for those who fall asleep in godliness, it was a holy and pious thought. Therefore *he made atonement for the dead, that they might be delivered from their sin*.

**Grudem:** This passage in 2 Maccabees is difficult to square even with Roman Catholic teaching, because it teaches that soldiers who had died in the mortal sin of idolatry (which cannot be forgiven, according to Catholic teaching) should have prayers and sacrifices offered for them with the possibility that they will be delivered from their suffering.

**Grudem:** An even more serious problem with this doctrine is that it teaches that we must add something to the redemptive work of Christ, and that his redemptive work for us was not enough to pay the penalty for all our sins.

#### b. Grudem: The Bible does not teach the doctrine of "soul sleep"

**Grudem:** The fact that souls of believers go immediately into God's presence also means that *the doctrine of soul sleep is incorrect*. This doctrine teaches that when believers die they go into a state of unconscious existence, and the next thing that they are conscious of will be when Christ returns

and raises them to eternal life. This doctrine has been taught occasionally by one person or another in the history of the church, including some Anabaptists at the Reformation, and some of the Irvingites in England in the nineteenth century. In fact, one of John Calvin's first writings was a tract against this doctrine.

Grudem: Support for the doctrine of soul sleep has generally been found in the fact that Scripture several times speaks of the state of death as "sleep" or "falling asleep" (Matthew 9:24; 27:52; John 11:11; Acts 7:60; 13:36; 1 Corinthians 15:6, 18, 20, 51; 1 Thessalonians 4:13; 5:10). Moreover, certain passages seem to teach that the dead do not have a conscious existence (see Psalm 6:5; 115:17 [but see v. 18!]; Ecclesiastes 9:10). But when Scripture represents death as "sleep" it is simply a metaphorical expression used to indicate that death is only temporary for Christians, just as sleep is temporary. John 11:11-13. Grudem: The other passages that speak about people sleeping when they die are likewise to be interpreted as simply a metaphorical expression to teach that death is temporary.

2 Corinthians 5:8; Philippians 1:23; Luke 23:43; Hebrews 12:23. Grudem: The souls of believers go immediately into God's presence and enjoy fellowship with him there . . . there is conscious existence and fellowship with God immediately after death for the believer.

Grudem: Jesus did not say, "Today you will no longer have consciousness of anything that is going on," but, "**Today you will be with me in Paradise**" (Luke 23:43). Certainly the conception of paradise understood at that time was not one of unconscious existence but one of great blessing and joy in the presence of God. Paul did not say, "My desire is to depart and be unconscious for a long period of time," but rather, "**My desire is to depart and be with Christ**" (Philippians 1:23)—and he certainly knew that Christ was not an unconscious, sleeping Savior, but one who was actively living and reigning in heaven. To be with Christ was to enjoy the blessing of fellowship in his presence, and that is why to depart and be with him was "**far better**" (Philippians 1:23). That is why he says, "**We would rather be away from the body and at home with the Lord**" (2 Corinthians 5:8).

Hebrews 12:1. Grudem: Those who have died and gone before have some awareness of what is going on in the earth.

Revelation 6:9-11; 7:9-10. Grudem: Clearly show the souls or spirits of those who have died and who have gone to heaven praying and worshiping

Grudem: All of these passages deny the doctrine of soul sleep, for they make it clear that the souls of believers experience conscious fellowship with God in heaven immediately upon death.

c. Grudem: Did Old Testament believers enter immediately into God's presence?

Grudem: Some have said that, although the souls of believers *since Christ's resurrection* go immediately into God's presence in heaven, the souls of believers who died *before Christ's resurrection* did not enjoy the blessings of heaven but went into a place of waiting for Christ's work of redemption to be complete. Sometimes this is called the *limbus patrum* or simply limbo. This view has been especially common in Roman Catholic theology, but it has also been held by some

Lutherans. Some of the support for this doctrine comes from a particular view of the idea of Christ's descent into hell, which we discussed in an earlier chapter.

Grudem: Not many Scripture references talk about the state of Old Testament believers after they had died, but those that give us any indication of their state all point in the direction of immediate conscious enjoyment in the presence of God, not of a time of waiting away from God's presence. [2 Kings 2:11](#); [Matthew 17:3](#); [Psalm 23:6](#); [17:15](#); [115:18](#); [Matthew 22:32](#); [Luke 16:25](#)

Grudem: Therefore it seems likely that Old Testament believers also entered immediately into heaven and enjoyed a time of fellowship with God upon their death. However, it may well have been true that additional rich blessings and much greater rejoicing came to them when Christ returned to heaven at his ascension.

d. Grudem: Should we pray for the dead?

Grudem: Finally, the fact that the souls of believers go immediately into God's presence means that *we should not pray for the dead*. Although this idea is taught in [2 Maccabees 12:42-45](#) (see above), it is nowhere taught in the Bible itself.

Grudem: Once *believers* die they enter into God's presence and they are in a state of perfect happiness with him. . . . The souls of *unbelievers* who die go to a place of punishment and eternal separation from the presence of God. . . . To pray for the dead therefore is simply to pray for something that God has told us has already been decided. Moreover, to teach that we should pray for the dead, or to encourage others to do so, would be to encourage false hope that the destinies of people might be changed after they die.

2. Grudem: The souls of unbelievers go immediately to **eternal** punishment

Grudem: Scripture never encourages us to think that people will have a second chance to trust in Christ after death. [Luke 16:24-26](#); [Hebrews 9:27](#); [Matthew 25:31-46](#); **[Romans 2:5-10](#)** (there is no delay for unbelievers—just like there's no delay for believers); [2 Corinthians 5:10](#)

Grudem: We cannot accept as faithful to Scripture the doctrine of *annihilationism*. This is a doctrine that says that unbelievers, either immediately upon death, or else after suffering for a period of time, will simply cease to exist—God will “annihilate” them and they will no longer be. Although the idea initially sounds attractive to us, and it avoids the emotional difficulty connected with affirming eternal conscious punishment for the wicked, such an idea is not explicitly affirmed in any passages of Scripture. This sounds compassionate, but it is a lie—it is just wrong. Not believing in hell sounds compassionate too, but it's just not true.

Grudem: Although unbelievers pass into a state of eternal punishment immediately upon death, their bodies will not be raised until the day of final judgment. On that day, their bodies will be raised and reunited with their souls, and they will stand before God's throne for final judgment to be pronounced upon them in the body (see [Matthew 25:31-46](#); [John 5:28-29](#); [Acts 24:15](#); and [Revelation 20:12, 15](#)).

## Grudem: Questions for Personal Application (abbreviated)

1. Have you thought very much about the possibility of your own death? Has there been an element of fear connected with those thoughts? What, if anything, do you fear about death? Do you think that these fears have come from the influence of the world around you or from Scripture?
2. Can you honestly contemplate [death] now as something that will bring you nearer to Christ and increase your own trust in God and faithfulness to him?
3. Have you settled in your own mind that obedience to Christ is more important than preserving your own life? What would make you hesitant to believe this or act on this conviction?
4. If you have experienced the death of a believer who was close to you, do you think that your reaction to that death was one of sorrow mingled with joy?
5. If death itself is viewed as part of the process of sanctification, then how should we view the process of growing older and weaker in this world? Is that the way the world views aging?

## Scripture Memory Passage

**Philippians 1:20-24:** **20** according to my earnest expectation and hope that in nothing I shall be ashamed, but with all boldness, as always, so now also Christ will be magnified in my body, whether by life or by death. **21** For to me, to live *is* Christ, and to die *is* gain. **22** But if I live on in the flesh, this *will mean* fruit from my labor; yet what I shall choose I cannot tell. **23** For I am hard-pressed between the two, having a desire to depart and be with Christ, *which is* far better. **24** Nevertheless to remain in the flesh *is* more needful for you.

## Hymn: “My Jesus I Love Thee” (William R Featherstone, 1864)

My Jesus, I love thee, I know thou art mine;  
For thee all the follies of sin I resign.  
My gracious Redeemer, my Savior art thou;  
If ever I loved thee, my Jesus 'tis now.

I love thee because thou hast first loved me,  
And purchased my pardon on Calvary's tree.  
I love thee for wearing the thorns on thy brow;  
If ever I loved thee, my Jesus, 'tis now.

I'll love thee in life, I will love thee in death;  
And praise thee as long as thou lendest me  
breath;  
And say, when the death-dew lies cold on my  
brow:

If ever I loved thee, my Jesus, 'tis now.

In mansions of glory and endless delight,  
I'll ever adore thee in heaven so bright;  
I'll sing with the glittering crown on my brow:  
If ever I loved thee, my Jesus, 'tis now.



# Systematic Theology

## Part 5: Application of Redemption

### Chapter 42: Glorification (Receiving a Resurrection Body)

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*When will we receive resurrection bodies? What will they be like?*

#### Scripture Memory Passage Review

**Philippians 1:20-24:** **20** according to my earnest expectation and hope that in nothing I shall be ashamed, but with all boldness, as always, so now also Christ will be magnified in my body, whether by life or by death. **21** For to me, to live *is* Christ, and to die *is* gain. **22** But if I live on in the flesh, this *will mean* fruit from my labor; yet what I shall choose I cannot tell. **23** For I am hard-pressed between the two, having a desire to depart and be with Christ, *which is far better*. **24** Nevertheless to remain in the flesh *is* more needful for you.

#### Introduction

There is an order to the salvific process. This fifth major doctrine is a look at that order.

We have looked at common grace (blessings not part of salvation), predestination (election (choosing the saved) and reprobation (passing over the lost)), calling (both the Holy Spirit's call and the gospel call), regeneration (being born again), conversion (turning from sin (repentance) and to Christ (faith)), justification (God declaring our sin forgiven and obtaining Christ's righteousness), adoption (membership in God's family), sanctification (growing more like Christ), baptism in and filling with the Holy Spirit (not a part of salvation), the perseverance of the saints (remaining a Christian), and death.

Today, we will look at glorification (receiving a resurrection body). Chronologically, it looks something like this (taken from Grudem's Sunday school class handout—I added 'O. Common grace'):

- |                    |                         |                          |                          |
|--------------------|-------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| 0. Common grace    | 3. <b>Regeneration</b>  | 6. <b>Adoption</b>       | 9. <b>Death</b>          |
| 1. <b>Election</b> | 4. <b>Conversion</b>    | 7. <b>Sanctification</b> | 10. <b>Glorification</b> |
| 2. <b>Calling</b>  | 5. <b>Justification</b> | 8. <b>Perseverance</b>   |                          |

## Explanation and Scriptural Basis

**Romans 8:18-25**: The **redemption of our body** in v. 23 is coming—and we **eagerly wait for it** (v. 25). Our salvation is not complete with the salvation of our souls—our bodies will be perfected too. Both will be in heaven with God. The process of salvation is not over until God has redeemed it all.

**What do we eagerly wait for in life?** Christmas, wedding day, etc. Because of a gift of a new thing. This is not the place for Eeyore Christianity.

**Romans 8:30**. The verbs are in the past tense. **Why?** Maybe because this is so certain (and perhaps in God's eyes also completed since He exists outside of time), that when Paul describes it in, he uses the past tense.

**Grudem: Glorification is the final step in the application of redemption. It will happen when Christ returns and raises from the dead the bodies of all believers for all time who have died, and reunites them with their souls, and changes the bodies of all believers who remain alive, thereby giving all believers at the same time perfect resurrection bodies like his own.**

### B. Grudem: Old Testament support for glorification

Support is not as strong a word, but the Old Testament support set up the New Testament evidence to be quickly received. The Old Testament tees up the concept/framework for resurrection, but it doesn't provide a lot of details.

First, New Testament support for 'Old Testament' believers:

- **Grudem: Jewish people living at the time of Christ had some hope of a future bodily resurrection. John 11:23-24** (Martha's theology was reflective of only having the Old Testament—where the concept of resurrection is scattered)
- **Hebrews 11:8-10, 13-16**

Second, Old Testament support: **Job 19:25-26** (this sounds like bodily resurrection); **Psalm 49:15; 73:24-25; Proverbs 23:13-14; Isaiah 26:19** (in order to stand before our Redeemer, our bodies have to get out of the ground); **Daniel 12:2** (not everyone is going to the same location); **Ezekiel 37:1-14**

### A. Grudem: New Testament evidence for glorification

Evidence is a strong word. We get the framework filled in with lots of details about resurrection now.

**1 Corinthians 15:12-28; 35-58** (Jim to read; focus: **20: firstfruits**—the first fruit sets the standard for all other pieces; **38: as He pleases**—God will do it the way that He wants to do it; **39: all flesh is not the same**—our new flesh will not be exactly like this flesh; **51: mystery**—don't expect to understand it all now); **1 Thessalonians 4:13-18** (**Grudem: This only makes sense if it is the souls of believers who have gone into Christ's presence who return with him, and if it is their bodies that are raised from the dead to be joined together with their souls, and then to ascend to be with Christ.**); **John 5:28-29; 6:39-40, 44, 54** (there is a theme here); **Romans 8:11; 2 Corinthians 5:1-10; Philippians 3:20-21**

### C. Grudem: What will our resurrection bodies be like?

Grudem spends considerable time answering this question since most people are OK with the idea of the resurrection and really just want to get to the details.

**1 Corinthians 15:42: incorruption:** incorruptibility, unending existence, immortality (lasting forever); **Grudem:** They will not wear out or grow old or ever be subject to any kind of sickness or disease. They will be completely healthy and strong forever. . . . No sign of aging. . . . No evidence of disease or injury.

**1 Corinthians 15:43: in glory:** with dignity, glorious, honorable, praiseworthy (worth valuing); Grudem argues for bright/glowing on the basis of **Matthew 13:43; Daniel 12:3; Exodus 34:35; Matthew 17:2;** and **1 Corinthians 15:49**, but I'm not sure the evidence is definitive to say this, but it may be true)

**1 Corinthians 15:43: in power:** miraculous power, ability, might, strength (extremely strong); **Grudem:** Fullness of strength and power—not infinite power like God, of course . . . but nonetheless full and complete human power and strength, the strength that God intended human beings to have in their bodies when he created them. . . . Strength that is sufficient to do all that we desire to do in conformity with the will of God.

**1 Corinthians 15:44: spiritual body:** Spirit-filled (righteous); **Grudem:** Raised to the degree of perfection for which God originally intended it.

That is a great list of characteristics! This is a doctrine to be excited about. But it gets better . . .

**1 John 3:2: Grudem:** When Christ returns he will give us new resurrection bodies to be like his resurrection body. In **Matthew**, Jesus came wrapped in flesh, but in **Revelation**, Christ is revealed. We will be like Christ in the end, and this is spectacular! We do not have to understand everything about this to believe it. **1 Corinthians 15:49; Romans 8:29: conformed** (Standard Register; printing/forging/hitting/striking/smacking—we are not the printing press; we are the paper—but the paper is better because of the printing process; we will be hit until we look like Jesus—and the destination is worth the journey; God won't leave us alone because He loves us; He's going to make us look like Jesus—and that is an act of love)

Moving into the tactical questions . . . **Will we know each other in heaven?**

**Grudem:** What kind of continuity will there be between our present bodies and our future resurrection bodies? Will our bodies look exactly the same and have exactly the same characteristics, or will they be somewhat different, or will they be almost entirely different?

**1 Corinthians 15:** there is a seed example used—which implies the thing that grows from the seed will have some semblance to the seed itself

**Grudem:** We must also clearly note that Christ's own resurrection body, though it differed somewhat from the body he had before he died, so that the disciples did not immediately recognize him in every situation, was similar enough in appearance for the disciples to know who it

was rather quickly. . . . On the other hand, significant continuity between Jesus' body before and after the resurrection is seen in the fact that even the nail prints in his hands and feet and the wound in his side remained in his resurrection body (John 20:20, 27).

**Grudem:** People will recognize and know one another in heaven. Matthew 8:11; Luke 9:30, 33: God does something to allow us to recognize those who we have never met.

**But what about people who have been dead for centuries? What about their bodies? Grudem:** Even though we may not understand exactly *how* God will bring this about in every case, we should still believe it. The God who created the universe and created each one of us, and who sovereignly rules over every bit of this creation at every moment, and who carries along all things by his word of power, can certainly keep track of the parts of our physical bodies that he wishes to preserve. Rearranging all of the atoms in the universe is not hard to God. He rearranges a few in front of us and we lose our minds over miracles. He is going to do this with every believer in history.

**Grudem:** It is important to insist on the resurrection of a real, physical body, not only for the reasons above, but also because this provides a clear affirmation of the goodness of God's physical creation. We will live in bodies that have all the excellent qualities God created us to have, and thereby we will forever be living proof of the wisdom of God in making a material creation that from the beginning was "very good" (Genesis 1:31). We will live as resurrected believers in those new bodies, and they will be suitable for inhabiting the "new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells" (2 Peter 3:13).

**E. Grudem:** The **unbelieving** dead will be raised for judgment on the day of final judgment

John 5:24-29; Acts 24:15; Matthew 25:31-46; Daniel 12:2. (we will look at this in more detail in chapter 56)

**D. Grudem:** The **entire** creation will be renewed as well

Genesis 3:17-19: The fall wrecked Earth. Romans 8:19-23: Creation (v. 22) longs for its restoration. Perhaps the earth groaning look like earthquakes and tornadoes and natural disasters—perhaps.

**Grudem:** In this renewed creation, there will be no more thorns or thistles. . . . There will be a productive earth, an earth that will blossom and produce food abundantly for our enjoyment. (we will look at this in more detail in chapter 57)

**Grudem: Questions for Personal Application (abbreviated)**

1. Is the hope of a future resurrection of your body one of the major things you look forward to?
2. 1 Corinthians 15:19, 32. Do you have a great longing for the future resurrection that gives you this kind of sentiment in your heart as well? If not, why?

## Scripture Memory Passage

**1 Corinthians 15:42-44:** **42** So also is the resurrection of the dead. *The body is sown in corruption, it is raised in incorruption.* **43** It is sown in dishonor, it is raised in glory. It is sown in weakness, it is raised in power. **44** It is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body. There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body.

## Hymn: “Ten Thousand Times Ten Thousand” (Henry Alford, 1867)

Ten thousand times ten thousand in sparkling raiment bright,  
The armies of the ransomed saints throng up the steeps of light:  
'Tis finished, all is finished, their fight with death and sin:  
Fling open wide the golden gates, and let the victors in.

What rush of alleluias fills all the earth and sky!  
What ringing of a thousand harps bespeaks the triumph nigh!  
O day, for which creation and all its tribes were made;  
O joy, for all its former woes a thousand-fold repaid!

O then what raptured greetings on Canaan's happy shore;  
What knitting severed friendships up where partings are no more!  
Then eyes with joy shall sparkle, that brimmed with tears of late;  
Orphans no longer fatherless, nor widows desolate.

Bring near thy great salvation, thou Lamb for sinners slain;  
Fill up the roll of thine elect, then take thy pow'r, and reign:  
Appear, desire of nations, thine exiles long for home;  
Show in the heav'n thy promised sign; thou Prince and Saviour, come.

# Systematic Theology

## Part 5: Application of Redemption

### Chapter 43: Union with Christ

---

*What does it mean to be “in Christ” or “united with Christ”?*

#### Scripture Memory Passage Review

**1 Corinthians 15:42-44: 42** So also is the resurrection of the dead. *The body is sown in corruption, it is raised in incorruption. 43 It is sown in dishonor, it is raised in glory. It is sown in weakness, it is raised in power. 44 It is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body. There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body.*

#### Introduction

There is an order to the salvific process. This fifth major doctrine is a look at that order.

We have looked at common grace (blessings not part of salvation), predestination (election (choosing the saved) and reprobation (passing over the lost)), calling (both the Holy Spirit’s call and the gospel call), regeneration (being born again), conversion (turning from sin (repentance) and to Christ (faith)), justification (God declaring our sin forgiven and obtaining Christ’s righteousness), adoption (membership in God’s family), sanctification (growing more like Christ), baptism in and filling with the Holy Spirit (not a part of salvation), the perseverance of the saints (remaining a Christian), death, and glorification (receiving a resurrection body).

Today, we finish this series by looking at union with Christ—not a part of the order of salvation, but a connected topic. Chronologically, it looks something like this (taken from Grudem’s Sunday school class handout—I added ‘O. Common grace’):

- |                    |                         |                          |                          |
|--------------------|-------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| 0. Common grace    | 3. <b>Regeneration</b>  | 6. <b>Adoption</b>       | 9. <b>Death</b>          |
| 1. <b>Election</b> | 4. <b>Conversion</b>    | 7. <b>Sanctification</b> | 10. <b>Glorification</b> |
| 2. <b>Calling</b>  | 5. <b>Justification</b> | 8. <b>Perseverance</b>   |                          |

#### Explanation and Scriptural Basis

**Grudem: Although we have now completed our study of the steps in the application of redemption. . . . Every aspect of God’s relationship to believers is in some way connected to our relationship with Christ [Jim’s note: this lesson only applies to the believer—the unbeliever has no part in this]. . . . In one sense the entire study of the application of redemption could be included in this subject.**

*Grudem: Union with Christ is a **phrase** used to summarize several different relationships between believers and Christ, through which Christians receive every benefit of salvation. These relationships include the fact that we are in Christ, Christ is in us, we are like Christ, and we are with Christ.*

## A. Grudem: We are in **Christ**

*Grudem: “In Christ” does not have one single sense, but refers to a variety of relationships. We will look at several different time periods to show believers have always been in Christ.*

### 1. Grudem: In God’s eternal plan

**Ephesians 1:3-12** (emphasis on v 4 and v 11); **2 Timothy 1:8-9**

*Grudem: God, looking into the future and knowing that we would exist, thought of us being in a special relationship with Christ. He did not first choose us and later decide to relate us to Christ. Rather, while choosing us, he at the same time thought about us as . . . being “in Christ.”*

### 2. Grudem: During Christ’s life on Earth

*Grudem: Whatever Christ did as our representative, God counted it as being something we did, too. . . . God *thought of us* as going through everything that Christ went through, because he was our representative.*

- Our righteousness: **Romans 5:19**; **1 Corinthians 1:30**; **Philippians 3:8-9**
- Our sin: **2 Corinthians 5:21**; **Isaiah 53:6**; **1 Peter 2:24**; **Romans 4:25**; **1 Corinthians 15:3**; **Colossians 2:14**; **Hebrews 9:28**
- Our selves: **Romans 6:4-8**; **7:4**; **Galatians 2:20**; **2 Corinthians 5:14**; **Colossians 2:12, 20**; **3:3**; **2 Timothy 2:11**; **Ephesians 2:6**
- Our blessings: **1 Peter 1:3-5**; **Ephesians 1:3**

### 3. Grudem: During our lives now

*Grudem: Once we have been born . . . the benefits of salvation can be applied to our lives. The richness of our present life in Christ can be viewed from four slightly different perspectives:*

1. *Grudem: We have died and been raised with Christ.* **Colossians 2:11-13**; **3:1-3**; **Romans 7:6**; **Galatians 2:20** (Grudem: We become so unresponsive to the pressures, demands and attractions of our previous, sinful way of life, that Paul can say we are “dead” to these influences, because we have died with Christ.); **Galatians 5:24**; **6:14**; **Romans 6:4, 11-19**; **1 Peter 1:3**; **2:24** (Grudem: We find ourselves wanting to serve God much more, and able to serve him with greater power and success.); **2 Corinthians 5:14-17**
2. *Grudem: We have new life in Christ.* **1 John 5:11**; **2 Timothy 1:13**; **2:1**; **Colossians 2:1-3**; **Philippians 4:19**; **1 Corinthians 1:30**; **Ephesians 1:3**; Grudem: Every stage of the application of redemption is given to us because we are “in Christ.” **Ephesians 2:10**; **Romans 8:1**; **2 Corinthians 5:21**; **Ephesians 1:7**; **Philippians 3:9**; **1 Thessalonians 4:16**
3. *Grudem: All our actions can be done in Christ.* **Romans 9:1**; **2 Corinthians 12:19**; **Philippians 4:10, 13**; **3:1**; **4:1-4**; **1 Corinthians 15:58**; **Ephesians 6:1, 10**; **Colossians 3:18**; **2:6-7**; **1 Thessalonians 3:8**; **2 Timothy 3:12**; **1 John 2:28**; **3:6, 24**; **John 15:5**

4. **Grudem: All Christians together are one body in Christ.** **Romans 12:5**; 1 Corinthians 12:12-27; Galatians 3:28; **Ephesians 2:19-22**; John 17:21 (Grudem: This analogy with the . . . Trinity . . . warns us against thinking that union with Christ will ever swallow up our individual personalities. . . . Father, Son, and Holy Spirit have perfect and eternal unity, yet they remain distinct persons. In the same way, even though we shall someday attain *perfect unity* with other believers and with Christ, yet we shall forever remain *distinct persons*.)

## B. Grudem: Christ is in **us**

**John 15:5**; **Galatians 2:20**; Colossians 1:27 (Grudem: There is a real, personal dwelling of Christ in us. . . . *He is in us and remains in us*); Matthew 25:40; 1 John 3:24

## C. Grudem: We are **like** Christ

First, we imitate Him (which results in being like Him)

**1 John 2:6** (Grudem: Union with Christ implies that we should imitate Christ)

Here are some other ways we can imitate Christ: **Romans 15:7**; **Ephesians 5:25**; **Colossians 3:13**; **1 John 3:16**; **Ephesians 5:2**; **Philippians 2:5-11**

**Grudem: Our suffering is connected with sharing in Christ's glory when he returns: Romans 8:16-17; Hebrews 2:18; 4:15-16; Revelation 3:21**

Then, after imitating Him, we become like Him. **Grudem: The far deeper purpose is that in imitating him we are becoming more and more like him: *when we act like Christ we become like Christ*.**

**1 John 3:7; 4:17**; **Ephesians 4:11-16**; **2 Corinthians 3:18**; **Romans 8:29**; **1 Corinthians 15:49**; **1 John 3:2**

**Grudem: Yet in all of this we never lose our individual personhood. We become perfectly *like* Christ, but *we do not become Christ* and we are not absorbed into Christ or lost forever as individuals. 1 Corinthians 13:12; Revelation 22:3-5**

**Grudem: A proper biblical perspective will allow each believer to say not only, "We Christians are important to Christ," but also, "I am important to Christ: he knows my name, he calls me by name, he gives me a new name which is mine alone" (John 10:3; Revelation 2:17).**

## D. Grudem: We are **with** Christ

### 1. Grudem: Personal fellowship with Christ

**Grudem: It makes little difference whether we say that we are with Christ or that Christ is with us, for both phrases represent the same truth. Matthew 18:20; 28:18-20; 2 Corinthians 6:1; Philippians 3:8-11; 2 Thessalonians 2:16-17; 3:16; Matthew 11:29; 1 Corinthians 1:9; 2 Timothy 4:22; 1 John 1:1-3**

**Grudem: Our fellowship with him will be greater yet when we die. 2 Corinthians 5:8; Philippians 1:23; 1 Thessalonians 5:9-10. Grudem: And even greater still once Jesus returns. 1 Thessalonians 4:17. Grudem: Christ actually desires to have us with him. John 17:24**



## 2. Grudem: Union with the Father and with the Holy Spirit

**Grudem:** We are *in the Father* (John 17:21; 1 Thessalonians 1:1; 2 Thessalonians 1:1; 1 John 2:24; 4:15-16; 5:20) and *in the Holy Spirit* (Romans 8:9). *The Father is in us* (John 14:23) and *the Holy Spirit is in us* (Romans 8:9, 11; 1 Corinthians 3:16; 6:19; 2 Timothy 1:14). We are *like the Father* (Matthew 5:44-45, 48; Ephesians 4:32; 1 Peter 1:15-16) and *like the Holy Spirit* (Romans 8:4-6; Galatians 5:22-23; John 16:13 (Grudem's verses here do not appear to make his intended point)). We have *fellowship with the Father* (1 John 1:3; Matthew 6:9; 2 Corinthians 6:16-18) and *with the Holy Spirit* (Romans 8:16; 2 Corinthians 13:14; Ephesians 4:30). (Jim's note: the 'in the Holy Spirit' and 'the Holy Spirit is in us' verses were mixed up in Grudem's text—I have corrected them in the quote above; other verses were removed that were not strongly supportive of the points Grudem was making)

**Grudem:** Both now and in eternity we relate to the Father in his distinct role as our heavenly Father, to the Son in his distinct role as our Savior and Lord, and to the Holy Spirit in his distinct role as the Spirit who empowers us and continually applies to us all the benefits of our salvation.

## Grudem: Questions for Personal Application (abbreviated)

1. In what ways can the ideas of having died with Christ and having been raised with him be an encouragement in your present efforts to overcome sin that remains in your life?
2. Have you previously thought of doing the actions that you do each day "in Christ"?
3. How can the idea of union with Christ increase your love and fellowship for other Christians?

## Scripture Memory Passage

**Galatians 2:20:** I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me.

## Hymn: "Jesus, Thou Joy of Loving Hearts" (Bernard of Clairvaux, c. 1150)

Jesus, thou joy of loving hearts,  
Thou fount of life, thou light of men,  
From the best bliss that earth imparts  
We turn unfilled to thee again.

Thy truth unchanged hath ever stood;  
Thou savest those that on thee call;  
To them that seek thee thou art good,  
To them that find thee all in all.

We taste thee, O thou living bread,  
And long to feast upon thee still;

We drink of thee, the fountain-head,  
And thirst our souls from thee to fill.

Our restless spirits yearn for thee,  
Where'er our changeful lot is cast;  
Glad when thy gracious smile we see,  
Blest when our faith can hold thee fast.

O Jesus, ever with us stay,  
Make all our moments calm and bright;  
Chase the dark night of sin away,  
Shed o'er the world thy holy light.