

<b>DOCTRINE OF SALVATION – Part 1</b> <i>Ref: The Westminster Shorter Catechism, G I Williamson</i>
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**1 How Are Sinners Saved?** God uses the preaching of the gospel of Jesus Christ to save sinners (1 Cor 1:21). Hence, Christ instructed the church to go into all the world to preach the gospel to every nation and man (Mt 28:18-20). For faith comes by hearing the word of God (Rom 10:17), “the gospel of Christ ... the power of God unto salvation” (Rom 1:16).

**2 *The Ordo Salutis* [latin], or Order of the application of Redemption:**

- 1) Election – God choosing to save some by His grace.
- 2) Effectual calling
  - Calling – the gospel is preached to sinners; salvation freely offered to all.
  - Regeneration – the Holy Spirit creates a new nature in a sinner as he sees the truth of the gospel (sight given to the blind).
- 3) Conversion – turning of a sinner unto Christ:
  - Repentance – the whole man turns away from sin;
  - Faith – the whole man turns unto Jesus Christ for salvation.
- 4) Justification – when a sinner trusts in Christ, he is accepted as righteous.
- 5) Adoption – a justified sinner is incorporated into God’s family.
- 6) Sanctification – from conversion to death, the Holy Spirit enables a believer to fight against sin and for holiness.
- 7) Glorification – when Christ returns, believers will be made perfect in body & soul.

Romans 8:29-30. For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren. Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified.

**3 How does the Spirit apply to us the redemption purchased by Christ?** (WSC Q. 30).

Answer: The Spirit applies to us the redemption purchased by Christ (Jn 6:63), by working faith in us (Eph 2:8), and thereby uniting us to Christ in our effectual calling (1 Cor 1:9).

- Jn 6:63 “It is the spirit that quickeneth [i.e. makes alive]; the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, *they* are spirit, and *they* are life.”
- Eph 2:8 “For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: *it is* the gift of God:”
- 1 Cor 1:9 “God *is* faithful, by whom ye were called unto the fellowship of his Son Jesus Christ.”

**4 What is Effectual Calling?** (Westminster Shorter Catechism Q. 31). Answer: Effectual

calling is the work of God’s Spirit (2 Tim 1:8-9), whereby, convincing us of our sin and misery (Acts 2:37), enlightening our minds in the knowledge of Christ (Acts 26:18), and renewing our wills (Ezek 11:19), he persuades and enables us to embrace Jesus Christ freely offered to us in the gospel (Jn 6:44).

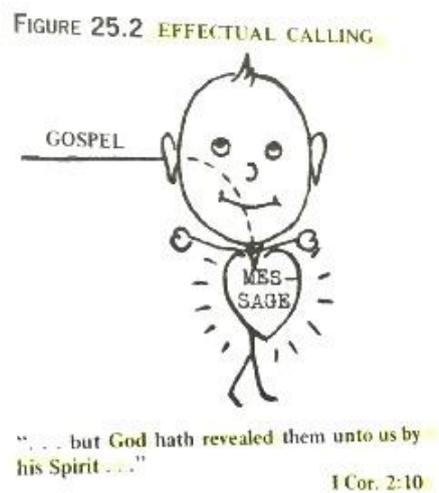
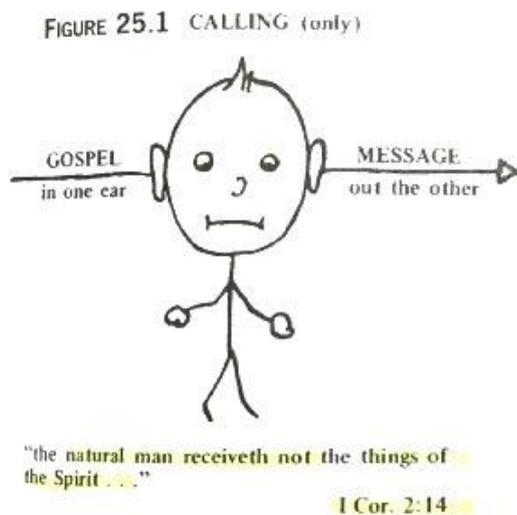
- 2 Tim 1:7-9 “For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love ... of the gospel by the power of God; Who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, ...”
- Acts 2:37 “Now when they heard *this*, they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men *and* brethren, what shall we do?”
- Acts 26:18 Jesus said to Saul, “To open their eyes, *and* to turn *them* from darkness to light, and *from* the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me.”
- Ezek 11:19 “And I will give them one heart, and I will put a new spirit within you; and I will take the stony heart out of their flesh, and will give them an heart of flesh:”
- Jn 6:44 Jesus said, “No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him:”

**5 Why Do Some Believe While Others Do Not?**

- a) The reason is not in the gospel itself. Jesus Christ is freely offered to all, and “whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved” (Rom 10:13).
- b) If one man accepts the gospel and another man does not, it is not because one man had a better nature than the other, or one man was more sinful than the other. The Bible tells us

that all men were dead in sins and trespasses (Eph 2:1). And there is no man who will ever receive the gospel on his own natural will. “The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them” (1 Cor 2:14).

- c) Those who accept the gospel offer are *effectually called* because they not only hear the true gospel preached, but also are regenerated by the Holy Spirit:
- The gospel is preached to a group of persons. All who hear the gospel are dead in sin. They cannot believe it because they consider it to be foolish.
  - Then in the case of some, the Holy Spirit performs a mighty work called “quickenings” (Eph 2:5 or make alive), “creating” (Eph 2:10), “being born again” (Jn 3:4, 7) and “being raised up from the dead” (Eph 2:6). It is a miracle that restores man spiritually, as much as the miracles of Christ during his earthly ministry restored physical ability to the blind, deaf, lame, etc.
  - The result of this regenerating work of the Holy Spirit is that the gospel has a powerful effect in the heart of a sinner. What seemed foolishness now pricks the heart (Acts 2:37). What seemed like the word of men is now received “as it is in truth, the word of God, which effectually worketh” in them “that believe” (1 Thes 2:13).



## 6 What is Regeneration?

- a) *Man does not want to be saved through Jesus Christ alone:* “the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit.” (1 Cor 2:14).
- b) **Regeneration is not an act of coercion** (forcing man to act against his will) **but rather an act of creation** (creating in man a new will). When we speak of this as a work of irresistible grace we do not mean that God makes people do what they don't want to do. Rather, God changes people so that they want to do what they did not want to do before.

## 7 Two Dangers to be Avoided

- a) **The first danger is to make some emotional feeling, or some particular crisis in our religious experience the basis of our assurance that we are effectually called.**
  - Men may have very strong feelings, and experiences, without being regenerated.
  - Mt 13:5, 20-21 “5 Some fell upon stony places, where they had not much earth: and forthwith they sprung up, because they had no deepness of earth: ... 20 But he that received the seed into stony places, the same is he that heareth the word, and anon with joy receiveth it; 21 Yet hath he not root in himself, but dureth for a while: for when tribulation or persecution ariseth because of the word, by and by he is offended.” Also Heb 6:4-8.
  - Effectual calling may be sudden or gradual.
- b) **The second danger is the temptation to excuse ourselves from our duty to accept the gospel because we do not “feel” regenerated.** People sometimes say that they will repent

and believe if only they could. But they say they could not believe because God has not given them the Spirit. What they mean is that they must first *feel* that they have the Spirit before they can have the duty to repent and believe. But this is not true. God calls all men to repent and believe. And it is the duty of all men to repent without delay. Furthermore, it is not given to men to first know that he is regenerated, and then to repent and believe. It is only by obeying the gospel invitation that we can ever be sure that we have been regenerated by the Holy Spirit. Jn 7:17 If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or *whether* I speak of myself.

It is only when we “give diligence to make our calling and election sure” (2 Pet 1:10) that we can be sure that we are effectually called of Christ.

### 8 What is Faith in Jesus Christ? [Q.86, WSC]

Answer: Faith in Jesus Christ is a saving grace (Eph 2:8) whereby we receive and rest upon him alone for salvation, as he is offered to us in the gospel (Jn 1:12; Gal 2:16).

- Eph 2:8 For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: *it is* the gift of God:
- Jn 1:12 But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, *even* to them that believe on his name:
- Gal 2:16 Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the law: for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified.

### 9 What is Repentance unto Life? [Q.87, WSC]

Answer: Repentance unto life is a saving grace (Acts 11:18), whereby a sinner, out of a true sense of his sin, and apprehension of the mercy of God in Christ (Acts 2:37-38), doth, with grief and hatred of his sin, turn from it unto God (Ezek 36:31), with full purpose of, and endeavor after, new obedience. (2 Cor 7:10a,11a; Ps 51:1-3, 7)

- Acts 11:18 Then hath God also to the Gentiles granted repentance unto life.
- Acts 2:37-38 Now when they heard *this*, they were pricked [pierced through] in their heart, and said unto Peter ... what shall we do? Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized...
- Ezek 36:31 Then shall ye remember your own evil ways, and your doings that *were* not good, and shall lothe yourselves in your own sight for your iniquities and for your abominations.
- 2 Cor 7:10a,11a For godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of ... For behold this selfsame thing, that ye sorrowed after a godly sort, ...
- Ps 51:1-3a, 7b Have mercy upon me, O God, according to thy lovingkindness: according unto the multitude of thy tender mercies blot out my transgressions. Wash me thoroughly from mine iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin. For I acknowledge my transgressions: ... wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.

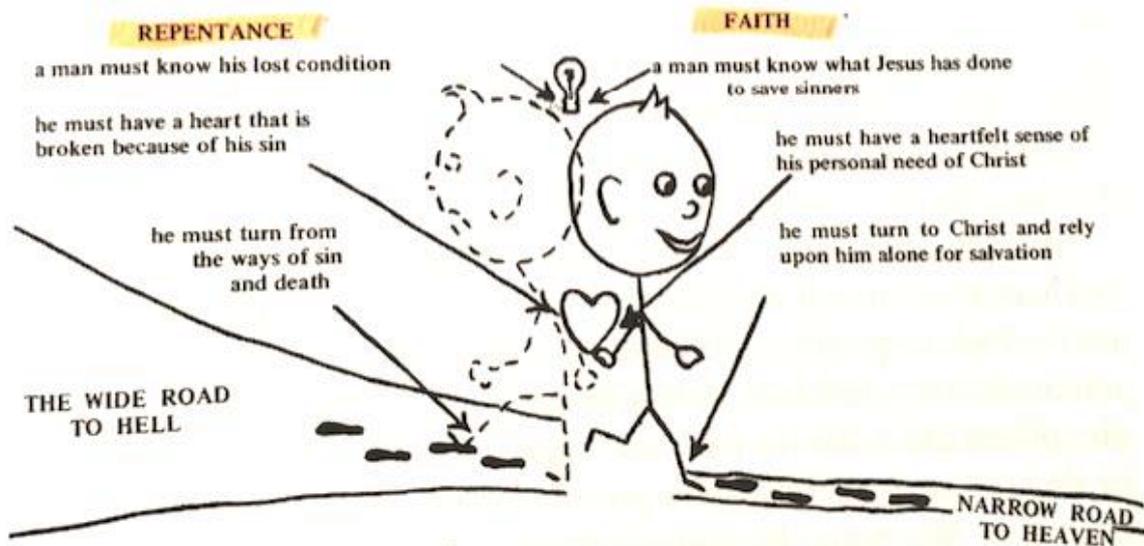
### Warnings regarding repentance:

1. <b>Commands to Repent</b>	Ezek 18:30-31 ... I will judge you, ... every one according to his ways, saith the Lord GOD. <u>Repent, and turn yourselves from all your transgressions</u> ; so iniquity shall not be your ruin. Cast away from you all your transgressions, ... for why will ye die ... ?	Acts 3:19 <u>Repent ye therefore, and be converted</u> , that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord;	Joel 2:12-13a now, saith the LORD, <u>turn ye even to me with all your heart</u> , and with fasting, and with weeping, and with mourning: And <u>rend your heart</u> , and not your garments, and <u>turn unto the LORD your God</u> : for he <i>is</i> gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness, and repenteth him of the evil.
2. <b>Promises to those who do</b>	1 Jn 1:9 If we confess our sins, <u>he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins</u> , and to <u>cleanse us from all unrighteousness</u> .	Ps 34:18 The LORD <i>is</i> nigh unto them that are of a broken heart; and <u>saveth such as be of a contrite spirit</u> .	Isa 55:7 Let the wicked forsake his way, ... and let him return unto the LORD, and <u>he will have mercy upon him</u> ; and to our God, for <u>he will abundantly pardon</u> .
3. <b>Warnings to those who do not</b>	Rom 2:5 But after thy hardness and impenitent heart treasurest up unto thyself wrath against the day of wrath and revelation <u>of the righteous judgment of God</u> ;	Prov 29:1 He, that being often reprov'd hardeneth <i>his</i> neck, shall <u>suddenly be destroyed, and that without remedy</u> .	Lk 10:13 <u>Woe unto thee, Chorazin!</u> woe unto thee, Bethsaida! for if the mighty works had been done in Tyre and Sidon, which have been done in you, they had a great while ago repented, sitting in sackcloth and ashes.

**Examples of true repentance:** King Josiah (2 Ki 22:19); Ezra (Ezr 10:1); Job (Job 42:1, 5, 6); Peter (Lk 22:61-62); The prodigal son (Lk 15:18-21); Publican (Lk 18:13); Asaph (Ps 73:21-22); David (Ps 51:1-3, 7); Daniel (Dan 9:3-5); Nehemiah (Neh 1:6-7).

## 10. What is Conversion?

- a) Conversion is a complete change in the mind (or heart, or soul) of man, whereby a sinner turns from all self-confidence to trust in Christ alone for salvation.
- b) **There must be a correct knowledge of self and of Jesus.** The dead sinner (now made alive by the Holy Spirit) sees his true lost condition as a sinner and understands the gospel and his need of Christ for salvation. As a blind man whose sight has been restored will see the beauty of the sunset, so this man will be able to see the beauty and glory of the gospel of Jesus Christ.
- c) **There must be a feeling of genuine sorrow of heart (confession) for personal sin and love towards Christ as Saviour.** He will feel a deep conviction as to his own unworthiness and guilt before God and his need of Jesus as his substitute who died to pay the price of his sin. This feeling of a broken heart may not necessarily be experienced all at once, nor will all believers experience it the same way or in the same degree (2 Cor 7:10a “godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation”).



- d) **The sinner must turn from sin (repentance), and turn to Christ in trust and dependence (faith)** on Christ's ability to cleanse him from sin. It is only when a sinner has done this that we can say he is truly converted (Ps 51:1-3). Conversion is the act of the sinner. Hence the preacher of the gospel makes clear that the sinner must repent and believe in order to be saved. But it is God alone who effectually calls ; there is no place for any praise to the sinner. He will want to do this because he now realizes his own need. Thus the work of the Holy Spirit is not to force men to be saved, but “to open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith” (Acts 26:18).

Conversion can sometimes be gradual. Many true believers do not know their date of conversion. The proof of conversion is not in the date of saying the sinner's prayer, but in following Christ daily in repentance and faith, make our calling sure (2 Peter 1:10). If you have not trusted in Jesus, repent and believe in Jesus today!