

JOHN 6 AND THE ORDER OF SALVATION¹

1. The Purpose of Online Bible School.

- a. For disciples and disciple-makers.

2. Three Verses in John 6.

3. The Concept.

- a. The order of salvation or *ordo salutis* is the temporal or logical sequence in which the various elements of salvation take place in the believer's life, from total depravity to glorification.

4. The Debate.

- a. Debate over the order of salvation centres on the question, who is responsible for a believer's salvation?
- b. Some Bible passages emphasise God's part in the process:
 - (1) **Jn 6:44** 44 No one can come to me [Jesus] unless the Father who sent me draws him.
 - (2) **Ro 3:9-12** 9 ... We have already charged that all, both Jews and Greeks, are under sin. 10 As it is written: None is righteous, no, not one. 11 No one understands. No one seeks for God. 12 All have turned aside. Together they have become worthless. No one does good, not even one.
 - (3) **Ro 8:29-30** 29 ... Those whom [God] foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the firstborn among many brothers. 30 And those whom he predestined he also called, and those whom he called he also justified, and those whom he justified he also glorified.
- c. Other Bible passages emphasise the believer's part in the process.
 - (1) **Jn 3:16-18** 16 ... God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life. ... 18 Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only Son of God.
 - (2) **Ac 17:26-27** 26 ... [God] made from one man every nation of mankind to live on all the face of the earth, having determined allotted periods and the boundaries of their dwelling place, 27 that they should seek God, and perhaps feel their way toward him and find him. Yet he is actually not far from each one of us....
 - (3) **1 Ti 2:4** 4 ... [God] desires all people to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.
- d. Can these verses be reconciled in a coherent way?

¹ "Ordo salutis."

The Biblical Solution

1. The Biblical Order in General.

2. Total Depravity.

- a. Total depravity means every aspect of our being has been damaged by the fall.
 - (1) **Is 1:5-6** 5 Why will you still be struck down? Why will you continue to rebel?
The whole head is sick, and the whole heart faint. 6 From the sole of the foot even to the head, there is no soundness in it, but bruises and sores and raw wounds.
They are not pressed out or bound up or softened with oil.
 - (2) Our physical bodies are corrupt, perishable (1 Co 15:42), and weak (1 Co 15:43).
 - (3) Our souls (imagination, conscience, memory, reason, emotions) are corrupt.
 - (4) Our spirits are dead/dormant/non-functioning.
- b. Total depravity does not mean we are as depraved as we possibly could be.
 - (1) Even in our depraved state, we still:
 - (a) Carry the image of God (Ge 9:6).
 - (b) Can produce human good but not divine good.
 - (c) Are still able to seek or “grope for” God (Ac 17:27).
 - 1) No one continually and successfully seeks for God (Ro 3:11), but this does not mean no one ever seeks for God, at certain times in their lives.
- c. Don't overstate total depravity. Unbelievers are not corpses.

3. God's Desire (Will).

- a. In the NT, learn to substitute “will” for “desire” (Gk. θέλημα).
- b. God desires every human being to be saved.
 - (1) **Eze 18:23** 23 Have I any pleasure in the death of the wicked, declares Lord Yahweh, and not rather that he should turn from his way and live?
 - (2) **Jn 3:16-17** 16 ...God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life. 17 For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him.
 - (3) **1 Ti 2:4** 4 ...[God] desires all people to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.
 - (4) **2 Pe 3:9** 9 The Lord is not slow to fulfil his promise as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing that any should perish, but that all should reach a change of heart.
- c. However, God doesn't force every human being to be saved.

4. Unlimited Atonement.

- a. Jesus' atonement extends to all personal sins of all men, past, present, and future.
 - (1) **Jn 3:16** 16 God so loved the world, that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.
 - (2) **2 Co 5:14-15** 14 One died for all, therefore all died. 15 And he died for all, so that they who live might no longer live for themselves but for him who died and rose again on their behalf.

- (3) **1 Ti 2:5-6** 5 ... There is one God, and one mediator also between God and men, the man Messiah Jesus, 6 who gave himself as a ransom for all.
 - (4) **1 Ti 4:10** 10 We have fixed our hope on the living God, who is the Saviour of all men, especially (μάλιστα) of believers.
 - (5) **1 Jn 2:2** 2 [Jesus] himself is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only, but also for the whole world.
- b. Because of unlimited atonement, we are able to say to all, “Jesus died for you.” Adherents of limited atonement are unable to say that.
 - c. The sin of disbelief in Jesus is a special category of sin.
 - (1) Refusing to believe in Jesus is the unforgivable sin.
 - d. Unlimited atonement makes belief or unbelief in Jesus the ultimate issue.

5. General Call

- a. The general call is to every member of the human race.
 - (1) **Ac 17:30** 30 The times of ignorance God overlooked, but now he commands all people everywhere to repent.
- b. The Five Cs of the General Call are:
 - (1) Consciousness.
 - (a) God-consciousness is when a person begins to make volitional decisions away from or toward God. This happens at a relatively young age.
 - (2) Creation.
 - (a) **Ps 19:1-4** 1 The heavens declare the glory of God, and the sky above proclaims his handiwork. 2 Day to day pours out speech, and night to night reveals knowledge. 3 There is no speech, nor are there words, whose voice is not heard. 4 Their voice goes out through all the earth, and their words to the end of the world.
 - (b) **Ro 1:19-23** 19 ... What can be known about God is plain to them, because God has shown it to them. 20 For his invisible attributes, namely, his eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly perceived, ever since the creation of the world, in the things that have been made. So they are without excuse. 21 For although they knew God, they did not honour him as God or give thanks to him, but they became futile in their thinking, and their foolish hearts were darkened. 22 Claiming to be wise, they became fools, 23 and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images resembling mortal man and birds and animals and creeping things.
 - (3) Conscience.
 - (a) **Ro 2:14-15** 14 When Gentiles, who do not have the law, by nature do what the law requires, they are a law to themselves, even though they do not have the law. 15 They show that the work of the law is written on their hearts, while their conscience also testifies, and their conflicting thoughts accuse or even excuse them.
 - (b) “General revelation is sufficient to alert a man to his need of God and to condemn him if he rejects what he can learn through nature, but only faith in Christ is sufficient to save (Ac 4:12). If this does not seem fair, look at it this way: Suppose you knew of a student who needed \$400 to pay his school bill, and you gave him \$3 to help pay that debt (the \$3 being more than you could

really afford). If he returned it to you, asking sarcastically what good that little bit would do toward a \$400 debt, would you feel any obligation at all to give him \$100 the next day if you received a large gift in the mail? Undoubtedly not. But if he gratefully took the \$3 you offered, you would be anxious to help him further as soon as you were able. Just so, God's general revelation if rejected brings just condemnation; but if accepted, then He will bring the further necessary message of the gospel in order that that man might be saved (Ac 10:3-6)."²

- (c) If one responds positively to general revelation, God will provide special revelation.
 - (d) **Ac 10:34-35** 34 So Peter opened his mouth and said: Truly I understand that God shows no partiality, 35 but in every nation anyone who fears him and does what is right is acceptable to him.
- (4) Conversation.
- (a) To be saved, general revelation isn't enough. Special revelation is needed.
 - 1) **Ro 10:14-17** 14 How then will they call on him in whom they have not believed? And how are they to believe in him of whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without someone preaching? 15 And how are they to preach unless they are sent? ... 17 So faith comes from hearing, and hearing through the word of Messiah.
 - (b) This is where evangelism and apologetics comes in.
 - 1) Ac 18.4; 19.8; 26:28; 2 Co 5:11
- (5) Conviction of the Spirit
- (a) **Jn 16:8-11** 8 ...[W]hen [the Spirit] comes, he will convict the world concerning sin, righteousness, and judgment: 9 concerning sin, because they do not believe in me [Jesus]; 10 concerning righteousness, because I go to the Father, and you [disciples] will see me no longer; 11 concerning judgment, because the ruler of this world [Satan] is judged.

6. Negative and Positive Volition.

- a. God carefully observes every person's heart response to his general call.
 - (1) **1 Sa 16:7** 7 Man looks on the outward appearance, but Yahweh looks on the heart.
 - (2) **Pr 15:11** 11 Sheol and Abaddon lie open before the Lord. How much more the hearts of the children of man!
 - (3) **Lk 16:15** 15 ... You are those who justify yourselves before men, but God knows your hearts.
- b. Negative volition = pride toward God.
 - (1) God allows people to reject his purpose for themselves (Lk 7:30).
 - (2) People respond negatively to God's general call because they:
 - (a) Love the darkness rather than the light (Jn 3:19).
 - (b) Hate the light (Jn 3:20; Jn 5:40).
 - (c) Don't want their evil works exposed (Jn 3:20).
 - (d) Receive glory from other people (Jn 5:44).
- c. Positive volition = humility toward God.

² C. C. Ryrie, *A Survey of Bible Doctrine*, Kindle ed. (Moody, []), 37-38.

- (1) God observes which persons have positive volition in their souls.
 - (a) **Ac 17:27** 27 ... That they should seek God, and perhaps feel their way toward him and find him. Yet he is actually not far from each one of us.
- (2) Positive volition is indicated when one:
 - (a) Seeks the glory that comes from the only God (Jn 5:44).
 - (b) Desires to do God's desire (Jn 7:17).
 - (c) Believes God exists and that he rewards those who seek him (Heb 11:6).
 - (d) Draws near to God (Jas 4:8).
- d. Negative and positive volition really are about pride and humility.
 - (1) **2 Sa 22:28** 28 You save a humble people, but your eyes are on the haughty to bring them down.
 - (2) **Jas 4:6** 6 God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble.

7. Foreknowledge.

- a. In eternity past, God foreknew those who would respond positively to his general call.
 - (1) **Jn 6:64-65** 64 ... There are some of you [disciples] who do not believe. (For Jesus knew from the beginning who those were who did not believe, and who it was who would betray him.) 65 And he said, This is why I told you that no one can come to me unless it is granted him by the Father.
 - (2) **Ro 8:28-30** 28 We know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are [specially] called according to his purpose. 29 For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the firstborn among many brothers. 30 And those whom he predestined he also [specially] called, and those whom he called he also justified, and those whom he justified he also glorified.
 - (3) **1 Pe 1:1-2** 1 Peter, an apostle of Jesus Messiah, To those who are elect exiles of the Dispersion in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia, 2 according to the foreknowledge of God the Father....

8. Predetermination.

- a. **Ro 8:29-30** 29 ... Those whom [God] foreknew he also predetermined to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the firstborn among many brothers. 30 And those whom he predetermined he also [specially] called, and those whom he called he also justified, and those whom he justified he also glorified.
 - (1) In eternity past God developed a general predetermined plan for believers.
- b. **2 Ti 1:9** 9 [God] saved us and [specially] called us to a holy calling, not because of our works but because of his own [predetermined] purpose and grace, which he gave us in Messiah Jesus before the ages began.
- c. "By predestination we mean the eternal decree of God, by which he determined with himself whatever he wished to happen with regard to every man. All are not created on equal terms, but some are preordained to eternal life, others to eternal damnation; and, accordingly, as each has been created for one or other of these ends, we say that he has been predestinated to life or to death. This God has testified, not only in the case of single individuals; he has also given a specimen of it in the whole posterity of

Abraham, to make it plain that the future condition of each nation lives entirely at his disposal....”³

9. Election/Choosing.

- a. These foreknown, predetermined ones are God’s elect or chosen ones.
- b. **2 Th 2:13** 13 We ought always to give thanks to God for you, brothers and sisters beloved by the Lord, because God [specially] chose you as the firstfruits to be saved, through sanctification by the Spirit and belief in the truth.
- c. **1 Pe 1:1-2** 1 Peter, an apostle of Jesus Messiah, To those who are [specially] elect exiles of the Dispersion in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia, 2 according to the foreknowledge of God the Father....
(1) Foreknowledge precedes election.
- d. Based on foreknowledge, predetermination, and election, the Father has already gifted every believer to his Son (Jn 6:37, 39; 10:29; 17:2, 6, 9, 12, 24).
- e. All whom the Father gifted to his Son will certainly believe in the Son (Jn 6:37).
(1) **Jn 6:37** 37 All that the Father gives me will come to me, and whoever comes to me I will never cast out.

10. Special Call.

- a. God specially calls/draws the elect to believe in Jesus.
(1) **Ro 8:28-30** 28 We know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are [specially] called according to his purpose. 29 For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the firstborn among many brothers. 30 And those whom he predestined he also [specially] called, and those whom he called he also justified, and those whom he justified he also glorified.
- b. This special call is absolutely necessary.
(1) **Jn 6:44** 44 No one can come to me [Jesus] unless the Father who sent me draws (ἐλκύω, aor. subj.)⁴ him. And I will raise him up on the last day.
(a) “Hard Calvinists say this word [ἐλκύω] means ‘he drags.’ In their view total depravity means not only that man is incapable of coming to God on his own, but also that God must drag the unbeliever kicking and screaming into the kingdom. God forces the unbeliever against his will. ... More moderate Calvinists correctly interpret Jn 6:44 to say that the Father draws the unbeliever to Christ. It is more the idea of wooing or persuading. Jn 6:44 is very important to include with our other passages dealing with man’s ability or lack thereof. Without the aid of the Father and the Holy Spirit in the wooing process, it would be accurate to say that man, on his own, cannot come to

³ John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion* (Bellingham, WA: Logos Bible Software, 1997).

⁴ “[T]o move an object from one area to another [a pulling motion, *draw*, with implication that the object being moved is incapable of propelling itself or in the case of pers. is unwilling to do so voluntarily, in either case with implication of exertion on the part of the mover τὴ *some*th....to draw a pers. in the direction of values for inner life, *draw*, *attract*...” (BDAG, 318).

Christ. But it would also be inaccurate to say that the Father forces or drags....”⁵

- c. We can’t come to Jesus unless it is granted us by the Father (Jn 6:65).
 - (1) **Jn 6:65** 65 ...This is why I [Jesus] told you that no one can come to me unless it is granted him by the Father.
 - (2) The Father grants people to come to Jesus based on their pride/humility toward him, as discussed above.
- d. The elect hear and learn from the Father as they come to Jesus.
 - (1) **Jn 6:45** 45 Everyone who has heard and learned from the Father comes to me.

11. The Spirit’s Illumination.

- a. Closely associated with the Father’s special call is the Spirit’s illumination.
- b. **1 Co 2:12-13** 12 ...We have received not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we might understand the things freely given us by God. 13 And we impart this in words not taught by human wisdom but taught by the Spirit, interpreting spiritual truths to those who are spiritual.
- c. **2 Th 2:13** 13 We ought always to give thanks to God for you, brothers and sisters beloved by the Lord, because God chose you [election] as the firstfruits to be saved, through sanctification by the Spirit [illumination] and belief [faith] in the truth.

12. Repentance.

- a. **Ac 11:17-18** 17 If then God gave the same gift to them as he gave to us when we believed in the Lord Jesus Messiah, who was I that I could stand in God’s way? 18 When they heard these things they fell silent. And they glorified God saying, Then to the Gentiles also God has granted repentance that leads to life.
- b. **Ac 17:30-34** 30 The times of ignorance God overlooked, but now he commands all people everywhere to repent, 31 because he has fixed a day on which he will judge the world in righteousness by a man whom he has appointed, and of this he has given assurance to all by raising him from the dead. 32 Now when they heard of the resurrection of the dead, some mocked. But others said, We will hear you again about this. 33 So Paul went out from their midst. 34 But some men joined him and believed, among whom also were Dionysius the Areopagite, a woman named Damaris, and others with them.
- c. Repentance and turning are essentially synonyms.
- d. Repentance may be seen as a component of faith, not a separate step.
 - (1) That’s why John never uses the term “repentance” in *John*.
- e. Faith in Jesus implies repentance.

13. Faith.

- a. **Jn 3:16** 16 ...That whoever believes in [the Son] should not perish but have eternal life.
- b. **Jn 3:18** 18 Whoever believes in [the Son] is not condemned....

⁵ D. R. Anderson, *Free Grace Soteriology*, Kindle Locations 845-859.

- c. **2 Th 2:13** 13 We ought always to give thanks to God for you, brothers and sisters beloved by the Lord [Jesus], because God chose you as the firstfruits to be saved, through sanctification by the Spirit and belief in the truth.

14. Regeneration.

- a. **Jn 3:5-7** 5 Jesus answered, Truly, truly, 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.

15. Justification.

- a. The *33 Things* happen immediately at the moment of faith in Jesus, including:
 - (1) Justification (Ro 8:30). The new believer is imputed with God's own righteousness and declared righteous.
 - (2) Eternal security (Jn 6:37).

16. Sanctification.

17. Glorification.

- a. All believers will enter (Jn 3:5) and see (Jn 3:3) the future kingdom of God.
- b. God chooses and calls believers for ultimate glorification (2 Th 2:13-14).
 - (1) **2 Th 2:13-14** 13 God [specially] chose you as the firstfruits to be saved, through sanctification by the Spirit and belief in the truth. 14 To this he [specially] called you through our gospel, so that you may obtain the glory of our Lord Jesus Messiah.