

The Sovereignty of God in Missions

Acts 16:11-15

By Phillip G. Kayser

I think this story is a lovely illustration of the sovereignty of God. It ends with Lydia's heart being opened by the Lord and her entire family being set apart by God's grace. But it begins with God's sovereignty in where the Gospel will be brought, and who would be plucked out of the city of Philippi to salvation. There are only three conversions recorded in Philippi: Lydia, the demon possessed girl, and the Philippian jailer. And while I want to show the sovereign context leading up to Lydia's conversion, I will focus most of my attention on her regeneration because I think there are some wonderful truths we can learn from that.

I. Philippi – A Small Beginning, Yet A Momentous Turning Point

But first, let's look at the context. Paul's team has come a long way to minister to Lydia. And what I want you to do is to just imagine for a moment that you were a member of that team. Back in early June you had started to travel toward Laodicea and then to Ephesus – a very logical route. Those were major cities that Paul would later plant churches in. But in verse 6 God forbids the team from preaching the word in Asia. It rules out Laodicea and Ephesus, and it means a lot of travel that is ahead of them with no missions whatsoever. It may seem like wasted time, but you follow Paul's lead and you start traveling north to Bithynia in verse 7. If you can't go to Asia, Bithynia seems as good a place to go to as any. But just before you get there, the Spirit forbids you from entering that country. Why? There are lost people there too. But God is sovereign in missions.

All of these team members are hyped for missions. They want to preach. But they have to zip their lips for two months. So here they are, just south of Bithynia. If you look at the road maps of that time, there is only one option that they have – to cut across Asia towards Europe. But that means more time of no preaching. You get a bunch of preachers on a team, and that is a hard message to swallow. But these people trust the sovereignty of God. They head across Asia straight toward Troas. That's where the road leads. They know that they can't preach in Troas, because that is part of Asia. But

© Copyright 2008 by Phillip G. Kayser. Permission is granted to all readers to download, print, and distribute on paper or electronically any Sermons, provided that each reprint bear this copyright notice, current address, and telephone number, and provided that all such reproductions are distributed to the public without charge. They may not be sold or issued in book form, CD-ROM form, or microfiche without prior permission.

Phillip G. Kayser • Dominion Covenant Church • 307.N 41st Ave. Omaha, NE 68131 • 402.934.3300

in verse 10 they pick up a new team member who will prove to be an absolutely invaluable worker – Luke. We know it is Luke because verse 10 is the first time in the book that Luke uses the word “we.” And from here on Luke includes himself in the narrative. If God hadn’t slowed the team down, they would likely have not met Luke. If they had not gone north to Bithynia, they would likely not have gone to Troas. They would have gone to one of the southern towns and saved a pile of time. But God’s sovereignty governed even the extra wasted days of this journey for them to meet Luke. And of course, we will see in a moment that there are other reasons why God had them go north.

Verse 11 – **Therefore, sailing from Troas, we ran a straight course to Samothrace, and the next day came to Neapolis.** Finally, they are out of Asia. They cross the Dardanelles Straights, spend a night on the mountainous island of Samothrace, and then sail into Neapolis, the sea port for Philippi.

Verse 12 says, **and from there to Philippi.** I want to spend a bit of time giving background on this city, because it shows the sovereignty of God preparing the way for the next 1500 years. Philippi was just about 10 miles inland on the Via Egnatia highway. So it was a fairly easy trip. And Luke comments, **which is the foremost city of that part of Macedonia, a colony.** Every word in that statement is important. Liberals scoff at this statement, saying that Philippi was not the capital of Macedonia – Thessalonica was. But this doesn’t *say* it was the capital. It says it was *foremost*. And Philippi was indeed foremost in terms of a glorious history, Roman administration, finances and influence. It was a massive gold mining area, producing more than 1000 talents of gold every year. That’s 2,632,000 ounces/year. There was a leading medical school there. This was where many of the best Roman military officers were retired with beautiful estates. And so it was a city of influence. But it was also extremely hostile to what they considered cults. This is likely why these women are praying outside the city. Paul usually tried to find a city where a synagogue could be a starting point for preaching. But there was no such synagogue. And we will see why in a moment.

Verse 12 ends by saying, **And we were staying in that city for some days.** Apparently they just were not having success. I’ll jump ahead for a second and point out that Paul’s team only succeeds in winning Lydia’s family, the demon possessed girl and the jailer’s family before they are kicked out. It does not seem like a very auspicious beginning for their missions trip to Europe. And if you were on that team, would you have been disappointed? All that travel and all that work for these few converts?! But

Paul and Silas were not discouraged in the least. Even in jail in verse 25 they are praying and sing hymns of praise to God. Why? Because they fully trust the sovereignty of God in missions. There are no wasted moments in God's plan. Just as an example, we have already seen that Paul's sickness in Galatia was key to establishing churches there. Paul's quick travel through Asia helped him discover spots for his third missionary journey. I'm sure he was taking notes the whole time.

And even though the beginnings in Philippi seem small, we know that this wealthy businesswoman becomes a key inroad into this influential town, and the jailor becomes a point of contact for the military network of that city. If you can penetrate business and government, you have done pretty well. Philippi becomes one of the healthiest and strongest of the New Testament churches. But they didn't know that at the time. There are lots of things that we can figure out from hindsight, but Paul and Silas were able to trust God's sovereignty without seeing the momentous changes that would transpire when they went into Philippi. And in case you are not aware, this tiny beginning was the tiny tip of a massive fulcrum, which would quickly lead to the entire continent of Europe becoming Christian, and through Europe, missions spreading to the rest of the world. As one missions speaker said, "As we look back, across the intervening twenty centuries, we can see that this is one of the most important events of all time. It changed the whole course of Western civilization. Perhaps no single event since the cross of Christ has so affected the world as Paul's seemingly unpretentious decision to cross a narrow neck of water."

I bring all of that up because we many times get discouraged over small beginnings. We get discouraged over the detours, the financial setbacks and the slowdowns that God orchestrates into our lives. But if we would study the sovereignty of God, we would begin to be able to rejoice over these setbacks and realize that God is always doing something great. Zechariah 4:10 calls us not to despise the day of small things. You see, it's not the size of the things or cities or events that matters, but the greatness of our sovereign God who controls them all. Amen?

II. Gangites River – An Unlikely Preaching Point, Yet God's Ordained Penetration into Europe

The second unlikely thing in this passage is the Gangites River. They hadn't been doing too well in the city. They couldn't find a synagogue. So

they travel about one and a quarter miles outside the city gates to the banks of the river. Why would they do that?

I think the reasons are hinted at in verse 13. Verse 13 says, **And on the Sabbath day we went out of the city to the riverside, where prayer was customarily made; and we sat down and spoke to the women who met there.** There are two things to note: First, they couldn't find a single Jewish man. And actually, I don't think these were Jewish women. There weren't any Jews in the city. Given the size of this city, that is remarkable. Second, he speaks of it being customary for prayer to happen beside the river in such circumstances as these. Why would it be customary?

Let me comment on the second statement. Josephus records a Jewish decree that if there is no synagogue, people may gather on the Sabbath by the waterside for prayer (Antiquities 14:258). And because this was a decree, all Jews know where to go if they can't find any other Jews. It's a perfectly logical place for Paul to look on the Sabbath.

A second reason why they met outside the city may have been because of persecution. The year before (which was AD 49) Emperor Claudius had expelled the Jews from Rome because they were blamed for creating a religious disturbance. Acts 18:2 mentions this edict as the reason why Aquila had to leave Rome. Here's why that is significant. Luke mentions that this is a Roman colony. Colonies were treated as being outposts of Rome. They were districts directly under the control of Rome just like the District of Columbia is under the United States Congress. And so, it is almost certain that all the Jews were expelled from Philippi the year before as well.¹ A decree in Rome would have to be followed in Philippi. Well, that helps to explain verses 20-21. When Paul and Silas are dragged before the authorities in those verses, it is the same charge against them that was brought against the Jews in Rome the year before. They didn't want Jews in that city. So the likelihood is that any Jewish population that had been present in the past was now moved to another city in Macedonia. So if the Jews left, who were the women? Some of the commentators believe that these were Gentile God-fearers who weren't Jews yet, but who worshipped the God of the Jews. Because they haven't converted yet, would have been seen by the Romans as being Roman. John Polhill says, "If there were no Jews present and all the women were Gentile 'God-fearers' like Lydia, this may have made their gathering even more suspect in the city." (p. 348). But

¹ See comments in R.C.H. Lenski, *The Interpretation of the Acts of the Apostles* (Columbus: Wartburg, 1944), p. 655; Simon J. Kistemaker, *New Testament Commentary: Acts* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1990), p. 589.

because of God's sovereign expelling of the Jews, the lack of Jews spared the church of Philippi from all the Judaizing problems plaguing other churches. God knows what He is doing. There needs to be a strong base from which to go into the rest of Europe.

Because of the edict, Paul knows that the likelihood of finding any Jews praying by the river is slim. But when they get there to investigate, all they can find is some Gentile women. And yet this is God's penetration point into Europe. Out of weakness God brings strength. Out of the most unlikely circumstances, God creates what will become one of the strongest churches. God is sovereign.

III. Lydia's Household – An Unlikely Home, Yet the Launching Point for Missions

The third unlikely thing that we see is who gets converted. It's a single mom. And I love the way God works. Paul no doubt had his plans of what would be likely the best way to proceed. But God is sovereign, and He sometimes surprises us. Verses 14-15: **Now a certain woman named Lydia heard us. She was a seller of purple from the city of Thyatira, who worshipped God. The Lord opened her heart to heed the things spoken by Paul. And when she and her household were baptized, she begged us, saying, "If you have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come to my house and stay." So she persuaded us.**

There are three things that make Lydia's house an unlikely base of operations. First, she is a single mom. Second, her main home is not in this city. It is smack dab in the middle of Asia in the city of Thyatira. That means that she is a foreigner. That would lessen her influence. Third, she was friendly to Judaism, which made her suspect in the city (at least if they knew about it).

But think of what God was orchestrating: First, to be a seller of purple from Thyatira meant that she was quite wealthy. She becomes a supporter of Paul's team. Second, this was a product that only the wealthy of the city could afford, so this meant that she would have contacts in influential places in the city. It was a highly sought after product among the wealthy and influential. Third, since this is a second home for her when she traveled back and forth from Thyatira, this meant that Paul now has a contact for reaching Thyatira for Christ without even setting foot in that city. And in fact, it does become a city with a church in a very short time. One of the letters of Revelation was written to this church 16 years later. Fourth, because of her business connections (which are obviously international) there are numerous

other contacts that Paul will be able to make. So in hindsight, Lydia proves to be one of the best contacts that Paul could have made in this city. Though Paul's team is not able to live with her a long time before being kicked out of the city, her homes (plural) become bases of outreach throughout Asia and Europe. This is fantastic.

IV. God's Sovereignty

A. Over the trip (vv. 6-12)

So God was sovereign over every aspect of the trip.

B. Over finding the women at just the right time (v. 14)

God is sovereign over finding this woman. If she had been traveling to one of the cities she had distribution points at, Paul would never have met her. Both he and she had to be in the right place at the right time.

C. Over the influence Lydia would have as a business woman (v. 14)

God was sovereign over the success that Lydia had, the influence that she could exert, the bases of operation that she had in Europe and Asia. He was sovereign over causing her to be interested in Judaism. Though not converted, she was obviously greatly interested in worshipping the true God. God was sovereign over the fact that she did not get kicked out of Philippi when all the other Jews were. This was no doubt due to the fact that she hadn't converted to Judaism yet.

D. The regeneration, conversion and baptism as a crystallization of God's total sovereignty in salvation.

1. She was sovereignly chosen out of millions in the city (see Romans 9)

And finally, God was sovereign over the nature and timing of Lydia's conversion. And I want to spend the rest of the sermon looking at this marvelous story. Notice that verse 14 says, **The Lord opened her heart to heed the things spoken by Paul.** God could have opened her heart earlier,

but He chose not to do so. He could have opened the hearts of the other women, but he chose not to. He could have given success to the work of Paul and their team in the days earlier, but He chose not to. Out of the millions in that city, God chose to bring only three conversions while they were there – the conversion of Lydia, the slave girl and the Philippian jailer.

She no doubt heard God's Word many times before, but for the first time her heart was opened and she was riveted on the message of Paul. She could not help herself. The Word had come to life within her and she came to salvation. But God was sovereign in choosing her. As Romans 9 says, **I will have mercy on whomever I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whomever I will have compassion... Therefore He has mercy on whom He wills, and whom He wills He hardens.** Amazing grace that would save one thief on the cross twenty years before and leave the other in his sins. He could have left them both. There was nothing about that saved thief that would have drawn God's heart. There was no difference between the two thieves. They both heard the same things from Christ's lips. Both were criminals. Both started off mocking Jesus in unbelief. But God is sovereign in His election, and that one thief could not die before coming to salvation. Lydia was chosen to salvation, and to salvation she came by sovereign grace.

2. Her heart was no better than the hearts of the other women.

But let's dig deeper into that phrase. When verse 14 says, **The Lord opened her heart**, it implies that her heart had been closed. Right? O sure, she may have been a wonderful lady, but *her heart was closed*. That is a critical theological truth. Apart from God's grace, all hearts are closed to God. They cannot seek after God. We speak of this as being the depravity of man, the bondage of His will, the hardness of his heart. Even the most religious of men and women have hearts that are closed, and impregnable to the Gospel until God opens them. They cannot believe. They may go to church, yet their hearts are closed. They may come to prayer meetings like Lydia did, yet their hearts are closed. They may be caring parents like Lydia appears to be, yet their hearts are closed to the Gospel. Now if you had looked at Lydia apart from the Scriptures, you might have thought that she was a nice lady, a devout lady. Surely she could not be depraved. Surely she had a soft heart. And yet the Scripture is clear that her heart was slammed so tightly shut that it would take a sovereign work of God's grace to open it.

Why don't you flip with me to Genesis, and we will do a quick study on the closed heart of natural man and the opened hearts that God gives to

the elect. Turn first to Genesis 6:5. This describes the state of the heart of every man, woman and child that died in the flood. This is a description of the unregenerate.

Genesis 6:5 ¶ Then the LORD saw that the wickedness of man *was* great in the earth, and *that* every intent of the thoughts of his heart *was* only evil continually. There is nothing good in man – only evil continually. What does Isaiah 64 say? It says that all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags. Even the good things the unregenerate do are polluted and unacceptable to God. Lest you think that was only adults, look at Genesis 8:21.

Genesis 8:21 And the LORD smelled a soothing aroma. Then the LORD said in His heart, “I will never again curse the ground for man’s sake, although the imagination of man’s heart *is* evil from his youth; nor will I again destroy every living thing as I have done. From childhood man’s heart is evil. This is why Psalm 58:3 says, **The wicked are estranged from the womb; they go astray as soon as they are born, speaking lies.** Though the human hearts makes all kinds of counterfeit religion, it is closed to a true submission to God. Look at Deuteronomy 5:29.

Deuteronomy 5:29 Oh, that they had such a heart in them that they would fear Me and always keep all My commandments, that it might be well with them and with their children forever! Without an opened heart, they cannot fear God; cannot truly keep His commandments and cannot avoid judgment. Turn to Deuteronomy 29:4.

Deuteronomy 29:4 Yet the LORD has not given you a heart to perceive and eyes to see and ears to hear, to this *very* day. Notice that God is the giver of a heart that can perceive, see and hear spiritually. And yet this verse speaks of God’s sovereignty. He had decided not to give them such a heart. Look at Deuteronomy 30:6. This verse indicates that when God does heart surgery, people will always come to God irresistibly. The result of faith flows irresistibly from regeneration.

Deuteronomy 30:6 And the LORD your God will circumcise your heart and the heart of your descendants, to love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul, that you may live. What is the only way that we can have life? It is for God to do open heart surgery on us. We call this regeneration. Look at 1 Samuel 10:9.

1Samuel 10:9 ¶ So it was, when he had turned his back to go from Samuel, that God gave him another heart; and all those signs came to pass that day. God gave him another heart. The old heart cannot respond properly. We’ve got to have a heart transplant. Romans 8:7 says, **the carnal mind is hostile to God, for it is not subject to the law of God, nor indeed can it be.** Romans 3:11 says, **there is none who understands.** 1

Corinthians 2:14 says, **But the natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God for they are foolishness to him; nor can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.** Most people do not understand the extent to which their own hearts are depraved. They fool themselves into thinking they are good; that they don't need a heart transplant (which involves a new mind, will, conscience and emotions). This is why Jeremiah 17:9 says, **“The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked; who can know it?”** The unregenerate are so self-deceived that they don't even know our own hearts.

Turn next to 1 Kings 8:38. This is the prayer of Solomon at the dedication of the temple.

1Kings 8:38 whatever prayer, whatever supplication is made by anyone, or by all Your people Israel, when each one knows the plague of his own heart, and spreads out his hands toward this temple: Notice that phrase, “knows the plague of his own heart.” That's a sign of regeneration. Only God can give us the insight we need to see how lost we are in our sins and how terribly ugly our heart looks. Unregenerate man has a plague in his heart and doesn't know it. Only regeneration can enable us to know the plague of our heart.

Turn to Jeremiah 24:7, which describes this regeneration. **Then I will give them a heart to know Me, that I am the LORD; and they shall be My people, and I will be their God, for they shall return to Me with their whole heart.** How can there be a whole hearted return to God? Only if God gives them a new heart. Look at Ezekiel 11:19.

Ezekiel 11:19 Then I will give them one heart, and I will put a new spirit within them, and take the stony heart out of their flesh, and give them a heart of flesh, Can you see the imagery? Every metaphor of regeneration shows that we are passive, unable to turn to God, and that God is the sovereign who works on our hearts. Regeneration is likened to a resurrection from the dead. Ephesians 2:1 says, **And you He made alive, who were dead in trespasses and sins.** A corpse can do nothing but lie there. It is God who raises the spiritual corpse. The Bible speaks of this regeneration of the heart as being a new creation. How did God create the world? Did it come into existence on its own through evolutionary means? No. God spoke it into existence. And 2 Corinthians 4:6 says, it is **the God who commanded light to shine out of darkness, who has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.** It's a sovereign work of God. We call this monergism, which means that He alone is active in regeneration.

I have had people object to this Calvinistic doctrine of a closed heart, and they will say that churchgoers are obviously seekers who have hearts that are soft to God. But think of Lydia. She worshipped God, but her heart was closed. Look at Matthew 15:8.

Matthew 15:8 “**These people draw near to Me with their mouth, And honor Me with their lips,**

But their heart is far from Me. Do you see that people can outwardly look like Christians; they can go to every meeting of the church; they can be very religious like Lydia was, yet have closed hearts. I knew one man in our previous church that always looked like he was in ecstasy as he sang the worship songs. His face just radiated. You would have been absolutely convinced that his heart was open to God. Yet when he couldn't get his girl who attended our church, he left the church and left the faith altogether. God had never opened his heart. Like these religious people, he drew near to God with his mouth and honored God with his lips, but his heart was far from God. Look at 2 Corinthians 3:15.

2Corinthians 3:15 **But even to this day, when Moses is read, a veil lies on their heart.** What an amazing description of closed hearts. There is a veil completely covering the heart, keeping the light of the Gospel out. No wonder Romans 3 says,

Romans 3:10 ¶

“There is none righteous, no, not one;

Romans 3:11 *There is none who understands;*

There is none who seeks after God.

Romans 3:12 *They have all turned aside;*

They have together become unprofitable;

There is none who does good, no, not one.”

Romans 3:13 *“Their throat is an open tomb;*

With their tongues they have practiced deceit”;

“The poison of asps is under their lips”;

Romans 3:14 *“Whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness.”*

Romans 3:15 *“Their feet are swift to shed blood;*

Romans 3:16 *Destruction and misery are in their ways;*

Romans 3:17 *And the way of peace they have not known.”*

Romans 3:18 *“There is no fear of God before their eyes.”*

Ephesians 4:18 describes the heart of Lydia and every other person who is not yet regenerated when it says, **having their understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God, because of the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart;**

Now this has been a long list of Scripture, but I think it is important background to understand what is going on in the life of Lydia. Go back to Acts 16:14. **Now a certain woman named Lydia heard us.** [There was nothing wrong with her physical ears. It was her heart that had to be changed. It goes on.] **She was a seller of purple from the city of Thyatira, who worshiped God.** [Notice that you can worship God and be as lost as sin. Some of you may be in the state of Lydia – worshippers with closed hearts. But praise God, the text goes on to describe His sovereign mercy.]

3. God sovereignly regenerated her heart (see Eph. 2:1)

The Lord opened her heart [It doesn't say that she opened her heart, or that Paul opened her heart. This is a sovereign act of God in bringing open-heart surgery. The *Lord* opened her heart. This was the first sign of life in her. She could not respond until He touched her heart.

4. God sovereignly gave her faith – it came as a result of her regeneration (heart surgery) (see Psalm 110:3; see the gift of faith in John 6:29,35-39,44,45,64,65; Acts 3:16; 18:27; Rom. 12:3; Eph. 1:19; 3:12; Gal. 5:22; Phil. 1:29; 3:9; 2 Pet. 1:1,5,3; the gift of repentance in Acts 5:31; 11:18; 2 Tim. 2:25)

But notice that as soon as she is regenerated, God gives her faith. The text says, **The Lord opened her heart to heed the things spoken by Paul.** That's faith. Arminians say that faith results in regeneration. They say that when you believe you get born again. But Scripture is quite clear that there can be no faith without there first being life. Let me give you some examples of regeneration resulting in faith and repentance and love. I have the Scriptures written out on the back of your outline. The first one is this text, but look at the second one. Jeremiah 24:7 says, **Then I will give them a heart** [there's the regeneration] **to know me that I am the Lord...** [There's the resultant conversion.] Until you are given new life, you can livingly exercise faith. 1 John 5:1 uses the perfect tense for being born again, and the present tense for the belief. The perfect tense means that the being born again always occurs beforehand. **Whoever believes that Jesus is the Christ has been born of God.** This means that no person can have even a second of faith without already having been born. And you can read some of the other Scriptures for yourself. These highlight the fact that salvation is 100%

of God and we can take no credit because we didn't make the first move. It's no wonder that the Bible over and over says that faith and repentance are a gift of God's grace. He sovereignly gives faith to some and keeps it from others. John 6:44 says, **No one can come to Me [that's faith] unless the Father who sent Me draws him...** Acts 3:16 speaks of **the faith which comes through Him...** Acts 18:27 speaks of **those who had believed through grace.** Ephesians 1:19 speaks of **us who believe according to the working of His mighty power.** We couldn't believe without His mighty power working in us. Ephesians 2:8 calls faith a gift of God. Acts 5:31 says that God gives repentance and Acts 11:18 says God grants repentance.

5. God sovereignly led her to good works (v. 15; Ephesians 2:10; Phil. 2:12-13; Tit. 2:14)

Even the sudden interest in good works that Lydia shows in Acts 16:15 flows from a regenerated heart and a work of God's grace. Ephesians 2:10 says, **For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.** He chose every one of our good works. He is sovereign. Philippians 2:13 (the letter written to this church) says, **for it is God who works in you both to will and to do for His good pleasure.** It's all of grace; sovereign grace.

6. God sovereignly chose her household (See Gen. 17)

When you begin to see that God's sovereignty covers it all, then infant baptism begins to make sense. It's not our choice that counts, but God's choice of us. And God has chosen to include our children in the covenant. God symbolized His choice by having us baptize babies before they even know what is going on. They are passive. In these verses it is only Lydia who believes, yet her whole household is baptized. On what basis? God's choice. He said, **I will be a God to you and to your descendants after you.** But think of the implications. If it is based on His choice, it is so encouraging. If God has chosen to have our children placed in the covenant, then we can have confidence that our children will grow up to be regenerated and believe. It's not by accident that over the past 2000 years, the vast majority of new believers come from parents who are believers. Rejoice in God's sovereign choice. It gives you comfort for your children.

7. “Salvation is of the Lord.” (Jonah 2:9)

This is why Jonah says, **Salvation is of the Lord.** We can rest in His sovereign mercy; His sovereign goodness; His sovereign grace. And once you have tasted of that sovereign grace, you cannot help but devote your life to serving His people as Lydia does in verse 15. **And when she and her household were baptized, she begged us, saying, “If you have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come to my house and stay.” So she persuaded us.** Brothers and sisters: I call you to glory in the doctrine of sovereign grace. Amen.

Text	Regeneration	Resultant faith/obedience
Acts 16:14	“...whose heart the Lord opened, so that	she heeded the things which were spoken by Paul”
Jer. 24:7	“Then I will give them a heart	to know me, that I am the Lord: and they shall be my people, and I will be their God...”
1 John 5:1	has been born ¹ of God.	Whoever believes that Jesus is the Christ
Deut. 30:6	“And the LORD your God will circumcise your heart, and the heart of your descendants,	to love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul, that you may live.”
John 6:45	“Therefore everyone who has heard and learned from the Father	comes to me.”
1 John 5:20	“...the Son of God has come, and has given us an understanding	that we may know him who is true, and we are in him who is true...”
Eze. 11:19,20	“Then I will give them one heart, and I will put a new spirit within them, and take the stony heart out of their flesh, and give them a heart of flesh	that they may walk in My statutes and keep My judgments and do them; and they shall be My people, and I will be their God.
Ezek 36:26-27	I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; I will take the heart of stone out of your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. I will put My Spirit within you and cause you	to walk in my statutes, and you will keep My judgments and do them.
Jeremiah 32:39	then I will give them one heart and one way	that they may fear Me forever
Matt 12:33	make the tree good	and his fruit good
Acts 26:18	to open their eyes and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God	that they may receive forgiveness of sins and an inheritance among those who are sanctified by faith in Me.
Romans 8:15	but you received the Spirit of adoption, by whom	we cry out ‘Abba, Father.’
2 Cor. 4:6	For it is the God who commanded light to shine out of darkness who has shone in our hearts	to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.
Ephesians 2:10	For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus	for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.
1 Cor. 2:12	Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God	that we might know the things that have been freely given to us by God.
John 6:44	the Father who sent Me draws him.	No one can come to Me unless
John 8:47	he who is of God	hears God’s words
John 10:27	My sheep	hear My voice

¹ “is born” or “has been born” (depending on translation) is the Greek perfect tense. The perfect tense indicates a past action with an abiding result. The use of the perfect tense clearly indicates that the act of regeneration happened in the past. In other words, anyone who believes already has been born of God. Compare the perfect tense in 1 John 4:7 which indicates that those who love have already been born of God. Likewise the perfect tense in 1 John 3:9 indicates that those who keep themselves from sin already have been born of God. Likewise the perfect tense in 1 John 2:29 indicates that those who practice righteousness have already been born of God. These four passages use the perfect tense of “to be born” to show that belief, love and obedience flow from regeneration.