

The Doctrine of Salvation

A Study of the Ordo Salutis

July 1 - Oct. 7, 2018

The Ordo Salutis

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Conversion: Repentance and Faith

- The first act of a regenerated sinner's new nature is the conscious decision to repent of sin and believe in Christ for salvation. Finally furnished with the ability to perceive reality as it is, the newborn soul necessarily and immediately turns away in revulsion from sin and eagerly runs to embrace Christ. - MacArthur, pg. 590
- Turning away from sin = repentance
- Turning to Christ = faith
- This is one act and repentance and faith are inseparable, two sides of the same coin of conversion. You cannot turn away from something without turning toward something else.

What is Faith?

- Saving faith is a fundamental commitment of the whole person to the whole Christ; with his mind, heart, and will, the believer embraces Jesus as Savior, Advocate, Provider, Sustainer, Counselor, and Lord God. - MacArthur, pg. 596
- The mind embraces knowledge, a recognition and understanding of the truth concerning the Person and Work of Christ. The heart gives assent, or the settled confidence and affirmation that Christ's salvation is suitable to one's spiritual need. The will responds with trust, the personal commitment to and appropriation of Christ as the only hope for eternal salvation. - MacArthur, pg. 596
- Hebrews 11:1, 6 - Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen. But without faith *it is* impossible to please *Him*, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and *that* He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him.

Where Does Faith Come From?

We will examine Romans 10:17; Ephesians 2:8-9; Galatians 5:22-23; and several other key texts that will help us identify where saving faith comes from. But in order to do that effectively, in order to affirm the positive about where faith comes from, we must first expose the negative, that is, we must explain where faith does not come from. Not only will this sweep away several myths floating around the evangelical world, it will also give us a clean foundation upon which to build with the Word of God as we answer the question about where faith really does originate.

So what are a few of the incorrect answers out there about where faith comes from and how do we know that they are indeed wrong answers? Let's look to the Scriptures and allow the Spirit to expose doctrinal error where we find it.

Faith does not come from the Heart

The first error, or wrong answer we will examine is the idea that faith is produced in the hearts of men. This would be explained as if every man, fallen or saved, has the ability in his own heart without any input or influence from the outside to chose to believe or not believe the Word of God or the gospel. Faith is there, lying dormant until awakened by the yearning of the heart.

Does every person have the ability to just believe? Is faith really there deep in the heart of every man, woman, and child, as if all they have to do is dig deep enough and be persuaded to search hard enough to find it, bring it up to the surface, and use it? Does faith originate in the hearts of men?

Since we have already identified this as a wrong answer then of course the answer to these questions is "No." Human beings do not get faith from deep down in their hearts. The Bible is clear about the condition of the hearts of men without Christ. Consider what the Scriptures say:

Faith does not come from the Heart

- The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked; who can know it? - Jeremiah 17:9
- For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies. These are the things which defile a man.. - Matthew 15:19-20
- But, you might say then that there is another verse that may apply. What about Luke 6:45? A good man out of the good treasure of his heart brings forth good; and an evil man out of the evil treasure of his heart brings forth evil. For out of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaks.

Faith does not come from the Heart

- Ah. Yes. The Bible does say that a good man out of the treasure of his heart brings forth good things. But hold one for just one second. How many men are good? Outside of Jesus Christ, how many good men are there who bring forth good things from their hearts?
- They have all turned aside, They have together become corrupt; There is none who does good, No, not one. - Psalm 14:3
- They have all turned aside; They have together become unprofitable; There is none who does good, no, not one.” - Romans 3:12
- No one is good but One, that is, God. - Matthew 19:17
- So how many good men are there who can bring forth good or faith from their own heart? None. Left to ourselves all our heart can bring forth is sin and wickedness and evil. Even the things we think are righteous are nothing but filthy rags in God's sight - that is how Holy He is and how sinful we are without Jesus Christ. We see that faith does not originate in the hearts of men.

Faith does not come from the Mind

- Is faith a product of the minds of men? Just as we asked about the heart, what about the mind? Is faith there in the mind waiting to be drawn out? Is it a matter of hearing and deciding to believe what you hear?
- God asks, "Who has put wisdom in the mind?" (Job 38:36). Wisdom is defined as having the right perspective. Can we have faith without a perspective that sees what is real and what is not? Can we get wisdom on our own? No. Wisdom is a gift from God, and we must ask for it. (James 1:5). So if we cannot even have a proper perspective without God's intervention then how do we expect to be able to believe God as if faith was already there and just had to be discovered?

Faith does not come from the Mind

- The mind, left to itself, only thinks of evil, for it is the Spirit that leads the mind to think on spiritual matters. In fact, the carnal mind (the mind of fallen man) cannot be subject to the Law of God, meaning left on our own, our minds cannot be made to obey God's Word. Lost men's minds are blinded and unable to see. Their minds are defiled.
- For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit, the things of the Spirit. - Romans 8:5
- Because the carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, nor indeed can be. - Romans 8:7
- But even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing, 4 whose minds the god of this age has blinded, who do not believe, lest the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine on them. - 2 Cor 4:3-4
- And you, who once were alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now He has reconciled. - Col 1:21
- To the pure all things are pure, but to those who are defiled and unbelieving nothing is pure; but even their mind and conscience are defiled. - Titus 1:15

Faith does not come from the Mind

- Further we know that as fallen men our minds need to be renewed:
- And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God. - Romans 12:2
- ..be renewed in the spirit of your mind.. - Eph 4:23
- So we cannot trust that faith is there in the recesses of men's minds. The mind is as lost as the heart. Defiled, an enemy of God, incapable of believing on its own.

Faith does not come from the Spirit of Man

- Each of us has a physical (material) part and a spiritual (immaterial) part. We are by design spiritual beings with physical bodies. And while our physical bodies will die (or be glorified at the Second Coming) our spirit lasts forever.
- So does each person have faith resting down in their spirit, waiting to be brought out and exercised? Is faith there in all of us? Is it a spiritual matter that we can manipulate or persuade? Does faith come from the spirit of a man?
- Again, the answer is "No." The spirit of a man is dead. He is conceived in sin and born a sinner and dead spiritually. The spirit is not sick, or weak, or malnourished. The spirit of a fallen man is dead. He is dead in sin. So can a dead spirit produce living faith? Can something that is alive come from something that has no life?

Faith does not come from the Spirit of Man

- Just as Adam died spiritually when he sinned in the garden, now we inherit that original sin and are born spiritually dead. That is why we need to be "born again." We were dead in trespasses and sin and were by our very nature children of wrath. Consider these verses:
- Therefore, just as through one man sin entered the world, and death through sin, and thus death spread to all men, because all sinned.. - Rom 5:12
- And you He made alive, who were dead in trespasses and sins, in which you once walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit who now works in the sons of disobedience, among whom also we all once conducted ourselves in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, just as the others. - Eph 2:1-3
- Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think of anything as being from ourselves, but our sufficiency is from God - 2 Cor 3:5
- Before being born again we are spiritually dead. That which is dead spiritually surely cannot do anything good and cannot bear spiritual fruit. In our sinful fallen state we can only bear bad fruit, the works of the flesh (Gal 5:19-21).

Faith does not come from the Emotions

- Is faith just a feeling that we have to work up? It is that we need to use soft lights and soft music and whisper to people with "every head bowed and every eye closed" so that "no one is looking around"? Can it be manipulated? I mean, if faith is a matter of feeling then we could logically manipulate people into trusting in Jesus, right?
- Sadly this is the result of Charles Finney's man centered evangelistic methods, where he stated that if we plug in the right sequence of events then we can arrive at the desired spiritual result, guaranteed. So we had lengthy invitations and begging and pleading, and manipulation brought into the church. It has devolved even to the point that in some circles ministers and evangelists will give children money and candy if they will come forward, pray a prayer, and be baptized.
- But can faith be worked up as a feeling? "No." Faith is not a feeling, simply put. We defined what faith is, it is trust, and trust is not an emotion. Besides that, when it comes to sin and faith, the lost man is "beyond feeling."

Faith does not come from the Emotions

- This I say, therefore, and testify in the Lord, that you should no longer walk as the rest of the Gentiles walk, in the futility of their mind, 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; who, being past feeling, have given themselves over to lewdness, to work all uncleanness with greediness.
- There are no heart strings to tug - when it comes to faith, those who walk in the futility of their minds (without Christ) are past feeling. They only seek to feel good in their flesh, to please themselves, and pleasing God does not please our flesh. In fact, we know that a lost man cannot generate faith in his own in any way shape or form. How do we know this, beyond the evidence already presented?

Faith does not come from the Emotions

- Remember Hebrews 11:6? "Without faith it is impossible to please God." Add to that the fact that a lost man, those in the flesh, with carnal minds, cannot please God. That means they do not have and cannot have faith on their own.
- So then, those who are in the flesh cannot please God. - Rom 8:8
- Without Christ, lost, dead in sin, with darkened futile minds, fallen man cannot please God - that is as plain as stating, "Fallen man cannot produce his own faith." It is impossible.

Faith does not come from Others

- There is one more popular answer. Even after looking at these wrong answers already given some persist. When asked where faith originates or comes from they answer that faith is inherited. We get it from our parents and their faith, or from our upbringing. Is the faith of a parent automatically handed down to their children? Can we inherit faith? What do we inherit from our parents in this regard?
- But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name: who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God. - John 1:12-13
- For they are not all Israel who are of Israel, nor are they all children because they are the seed of Abraham; but, “In Isaac your seed shall be called.” That is, those who are the children of the flesh, these are not the children of God; but the children of the promise are counted as the seed. - Rom 9:6-8
- Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; nor does corruption inherit incorruption. - 1 Cor 15:50

Conclusion for Part 2

- We have asked the question, "Where does faith come from?" and we examined a few answers that run contrary to the Word of God so that we could see where faith does not come from. As we learned, faith does not come from men. We cannot say it more simply that this - faith is not produced by, inherent in, or available to any person without outside intervention.
- So where does faith come from? If it is not something we already have and can pull out and use *at will*, then where do we get faith? We know that the gospel must be believed for people to be saved, so where does the ability to trust God come from? Where does saving faith originate?
- The answer, as we will see next week, is that faith is a gift from God given through the hearing of the Word of God applied by the power of the Holy Spirit as He produces spiritual fruit in our lives.