

Bible Doctrine I- TH-110

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Course Information

1. Course Description

A study of the persons of The Father, The Son and The Holy Spirit and their unified teaching of the doctrines of the Bible.

Survey of the Doctrines of the Bible

VII-Doctrine of Salvation

Regeneration

What does it mean to be born again?

EXPLANATION AND SCRIPTURAL BASIS

We may define regeneration as follows: 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](#)).

John 3:3-8 (NASB)

³ Jesus answered and said to him, “Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born again he cannot see the kingdom of God.”

⁴ Nicodemus said to Him, “How can a man be born when he is old? He cannot enter a second time into his mother’s womb and be born, can he?”

⁵ Jesus answered, “Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit he cannot enter into 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 be amazed 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 do not know where it comes from and where it is going; so is everyone who is born of the Spirit.”

A. Regeneration Is Totally a Work of God

The Sovereign Gospel

John 3:6 (NASB)

⁶ “That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.”

Because **“That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the spirit is spirit.”** Your flesh, and you’re just continuing to continue the process of the



Lecture # 31

flesh, until you go back to the very beginning, are born again spiritually by the Holy Spirit, then you can enter the Kingdom of God.

John 3:7 (NASB)

⁷“Do not be amazed that I said to you, ‘You must be born again.’”

So don’t be amazed that I say you must be born again.

Now at this particular point, you would say to someone, “I’m telling you, you need to be born again.” And if a person said to you, “How do I do that?” You would say, “Ah, pray this prayer,” right? “Repeat after me, pray this prayer. You just need to repent and believe.

What did Jesus say to Nicodemus? A really strange thing. **Verse 8**, “The wind blows where it wishes and you hear the sound of it, but do not know where it comes from and where it’s going, so is everyone who is born of the Spirit.”

John 3:8 (NASB)

⁸“The wind blows where it wishes and you hear the sound of it, but do not know where it comes from and where it is going; so is everyone who is born of the Spirit.”

What is that? If somebody came to you and said, “I think I need to be born again, I think we need to get out of this sort of relentless life of the flesh. I need a new birth. I need a new heart. I need a new Spirit. What do I do?”

Would you say to them, **“Can’t do anything...you can’t do anything. This is the work of the Spirit and He comes and goes when He wills on whom He wills.”**

What? So much for formula evangelism. So much for “pray this prayer.” **This is Jesus, this is not some novice who doesn’t quite get evangelistic technique. This is Jesus.**

What He’s saying to Nicodemus is, I just have to tell you, you need to be born again, you need to be born *anōthen*, literally from above and **you’re not in charge of when that happens.** What a statement.

I recognize what you need. I also recognize that you are not in charge of its reality. Wow!

The Spirit comes and goes as He wills. And that’s why people are born in the Spirit.

You say, **“That may be the most overlooked statement in Scripture on divine sovereignty in salvation.”** Wow, divine sovereignty, you can’t argue that.



Lecture # 31

But let's look a little further into this chapter, okay? Come down to [verse 27](#). **John the Baptist is also a Calvinist.** He didn't know that because very few Baptists are.

Listen to what John said.

[John 3:27 \(NASB\)](#)

²⁷ John answered and said, "A man can receive **nothing** unless it has been given him from heaven.

[Verse 27](#), "A man can receive...what?...**what's the next word?**...nothing unless it has been given him from heaven."

You can't receive anything unless it comes down from heaven. Yet John knew that. And John is the last of the Old Testament prophets. **Divine sovereignty**, absolutely, in salvation it's a divine work. **It's a work that heaven does.**

Now let's go back to [verse 15](#).

[John 3:15 \(NASB\)](#)

¹⁵ "So that **whoever** believes will in Him have eternal life."

Are you ready for this? "**So that whoever believes will in Him have eternal life.**"
What?

What's that "**whoever**" doing there? Whoever believes...will in him have eternal life.

[John 3:16-18 \(NASB\)](#)

¹⁶ "For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that **whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life.**

¹⁷ "For God did not send the Son into the world to judge the world, but that the world might be saved through Him.

¹⁸ "He who believes in Him is not judged; he who does not believe has been judged already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.

Why are people judged and go to hell? Because they aren't elected? **No, because they don't believe.**

[John 3:19-21 \(NASB\)](#)

¹⁹ "This is the judgment, that the Light has come into the world, and men loved the darkness rather than the Light, for their deeds were evil.

²⁰ For everyone who does evil hates the Light, and does not come to the Light for fear that his deeds will be exposed.

²¹ But he who practices the truth comes to the Light, so that his deeds may be manifested as having been wrought in God."

Drop down to verse...well, [verse 36](#).

[John 3:36 \(NASB\)](#)

³⁶ "He who believes in the Son has eternal life; but he who does not obey the Son will not see life, **but the wrath of God abides on him.**"



The eternal wrath of God falls on people because they do not...what?...believe.

Are you having a little trouble putting that all together? Good. Because you need to have that trouble. That means you understand both. Don't find some middle ground that wipes out both of these truths.

Let's look at [John 6](#). Spurgeon was criticized for preaching this and somebody said, "Why don't you just preach to the elect?" He said, "Well if you'll pull up their shirttails so I can see if they have an **"E"** stamped on their back, I will." [John 6](#), and here we go back to this one I've commented on, [John 6:37](#), "All that the Father gives Me will come to Me."

John 6:37 (NASB)

³⁷ "All that the Father gives Me will come to Me, and the one who comes to Me I will certainly not cast out."

That's an absolute statement, isn't it? **There it is again, it comes down from heaven.** The work of the Spirit, the purpose of the Father, "**all the Father gives to Me will come to Me, the one who comes to Me I will certainly not cast out.**"

John 6:38-39 (NASB)

³⁸ "For I have come down from heaven, not to do My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me.

³⁹ This is the will of Him who sent Me, that of all that He has given Me I lose nothing, but raise it up on the last day."

So, look, I'm going to do what the Father wills Me to do and what He wills for Me to do is to receive the people that He gives Me, hold them and raise them to eternal glory. And since I came to do the will of the Father, that's exactly what I'm going to do.

Down to [verse 44](#), "**No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws Him.**" Did you get that? No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws Him and I will raise Him up on the last day. **That's our security, isn't it? That we are kept by Christ to eternal glory. He will lose none of them.**

John 6:44 (NASB)

⁴⁴ "No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him; and I will raise him up on the last day."

Go back to [verse 35](#), right in the middle of this passage, right in between what I've just read you essentially, or in and around what I've read.

John 6:35 (NASB)

³⁵ Jesus said to them, "I am the bread of life; he who comes to Me will not hunger, and he who believes in Me will never thirst."



Verse 35, "I'm the Bread of Life, he who comes to Me will not hunger. He who believes in Me will never thirst." Huh...on the one hand, no one can be saved unless it comes down from heaven by the will of the Father, unless someone is chosen by the Father, ordained from eternity past, name written in the Lamb's Book of Life, predestined by the purpose of God, uninfluenced by any behavior by anyone any time, no one will be saved apart from the divine sovereign work of God and yet I am the bread of life, Jesus says, **"He who comes to Me will not hunger. He who believes in Me will never thirst."**

Verse 36, "I said to you that you've seen Me and yet you do not believe." You do not believe.

John 6:36 (NASB)

³⁶ "But I said to you that you have seen Me, and yet do not believe."

Look at **verse 47, "Truly, truly I say to you, he who believes has eternal life." "He who believes."**

John 6:47 (NASB)

⁴⁷ "Truly, truly, I say to you, he who believes has eternal life."

Verse 57, "As the living Father sent Me and I live because of the Father, so he who eats Me, he also will live because of Me."

John 6:57 (NASB)

⁵⁷ "As the living Father sent Me, and I live because of the Father, so he who eats Me, he also will live because of Me."

The sum of it is in **verse 63,**

John 6:63-64 (NASB)

⁶³ "It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh profits nothing; the words that I have spoken to you are spirit and are life."

⁶⁴ "But there are some of you who do not believe." For Jesus knew from the beginning who they were who did not believe, and who it was that would betray Him.

And He was saying, **"For this reason I have said to you that no one can come to Me unless it has been granted from My Father."**

John 6:65 (NASB)

⁶⁵ And He was saying, "For this reason I have said to you, that no one can come to Me unless it has been granted him from the Father."

Those two things are intermingled without any explanation.

"You have to believe, you must believe, you're condemned because you don't believe."



Lecture # 31

And yet you can't believe unless you're called and drawn and given life by My Father."

And, folks, I promise you, I can't do any better than to show you what the Scripture says. I can preach with every ounce of passion I have in my heart on the glories of the doctrine of sovereign election.

And I can preach with the same passion, the realities of the doctrine of human responsibility.

I can tell you that unless you believe, you will die and go to hell. If you will believe, you will rise to enter heaven. And I can tell you that you must repent and you must believe and that's exactly what Scripture says. But I can also say it is a sovereign work of God.

There are other passages of Scripture that do this and I'm only trying to point out to you that the Bible doesn't try to explain this, it mixes it.

There's a good illustration in [Acts 2](#), do you want to look at that? Do you think the devil wanted Jesus crucified? No. No, the devil didn't want Him crucified, the devil came to Him and said, "Look, You can miss the cross, just bow down to me and I'll give You the kingdoms of the world," right?

Matthew 4:8-10 (NASB)

⁸ "Again, the devil took Him to a very high mountain and *showed Him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory;

⁹ and he said to Him, "All these things I will give You, if You fall down and worship me."

¹⁰ Then Jesus said to him, "Go, Satan! For it is written, 'YOU SHALL WORSHIP THE LORD YOUR GOD, AND SERVE HIM ONLY.'"

The devil didn't want Jesus on the cross. The devil was tempting Him in the Garden, right? "**Let this cup pass from Me.**"

Who wanted Jesus on the cross most? God, cause He was God's Lamb. He was God's Lamb.

"**Men of Israel,**" says Peter on the Day of Pentecost, his theology was so accurate,

Acts 2:22-23 (NASB)

²² "**Men of Israel,** listen to these words: Jesus the Nazarene, a man attested to you by God with miracles and wonders and signs which God performed through Him in your midst, just as you yourselves know—

²³ *this Man*, delivered over by the predetermined plan and foreknowledge of God, you nailed to a cross by the hands of godless men and put *Him* to death."



Lecture # 31

Godless men did God's work. You delivered Him over by the predetermined plan and foreknowledge of God, you nailed to a cross this man by Godless men, putting Him to death.

Was Israel guilty? You better believe it.

Jesus on the last day of Passion Week looks at the temple and says, **“Not one stone will be left upon another, right? Your house is left to you desolate.”**

Matthew 24:1-2 (NASB)

¹ Jesus came out from the temple and was going away when His disciples came up to point out the temple buildings to Him.

² And He said to them, “Do you not see all these things? Truly I say to you, not one stone here will be left upon another, which will not be torn down.”

Judgment came in the form of the Romans in **70 A.D.**, hundreds of thousands of Jews were massacred. They were massacred in the following years in 985 towns across the land of Israel, the Romans went and left dead bodies. Judgment came in a massive way. **And you have to understand that the judgment against Israel and its rejection of Messiah goes on even today.**

I don't know what you think when you look at the nation Israel today, it is not a nation under divine favor, it is a nation under divine judgment. And it will continue to be under divine judgment as it looks on Him who is pierced and mourns for Him as an only Son, and in the words of Zechariah:

Zechariah 13:1 (NASB)

¹ “**In that day a fountain will be opened for the house of David and for the inhabitants of Jerusalem, for sin and for impurity.**”

“A fountain of cleansing will be opened to Israel,” but until that happens that nation is under judgment but it's the same judgment precisely that any unredeemed sinner is under for the rejection of Jesus Christ. **In the case of the crucifixion of Christ, they did the will of God and yet they were godless men who were held fully accountable for what they did.**

I'm so comfortable with divine mystery because it means that God is so much greater than I am and that His ways are not my ways.

In **Acts chapter 4** and **verse 27**, “Truly in this city there were gathered together against your holy servant Jesus, whom you anointed both Herod and Pontius Pilate, along with the Gentiles, the peoples of Israel.”

Acts 4:27 (NASB)

²⁷ **“For truly in this city there were gathered together against Your holy servant Jesus, whom You anointed, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, along with the Gentiles and the peoples of Israel”**



Everybody got together in the death of Christ, didn't they? It wasn't just the Jews. Here it says, it was Herod, Pontius Pilate, Gentiles, people of Israel. If anybody ever asks you the question...Who is guilty of crucifying Christ?...take them to that verse.

But look at this. **Verse 28**, **"To do whatever," this is speaking to God, "to do whatever your hand and your purpose predestined to occur."**

Acts 4:28 (NASB)

²⁸to do whatever Your hand and Your purpose predestined to occur.

Here again you have full responsibility **in the case of Herod**, in the **case of Pontius Pilate**, in the **case of the Gentiles**, the **Romans**, in the **case of the Jews**, the **people of Israel**.

And yet they were doing the divine and sovereign work of God.

These are samples of Scripture's consistency in putting these kinds of things together **without ever trying to explain the inexplicable**. Do you remember the story of Judas? Was he responsible for what he did? Was it ordained of God that he do it?

He's even prophesied in the Old Testament. **"Mine own familiar friend who would lift up his heel against Me."**

Psalm 41:9 (NASB)

⁹"Even my close friend in whom I trusted, Who ate my bread, Has lifted up his heel against me."

And yet Jesus said, **"One of you is a devil."** And Jesus said he would die and he went to his own place.

Matthew 26:24 (NASB)

²⁴"The Son of Man is to go, just as it is written of Him; but woe to that man by whom the Son of Man is betrayed! It would have been good for that man if he had not been born."

John 6:70 (NASB)

⁷⁰"Jesus answered them, "Did I Myself not choose you, the twelve, **and yet one of you is a devil?"**

Look, we have to understand this, that everyone of us bears responsibility to believe and we're held accountable if we believe or if we don't believe. It has consequence eternally.

As believers, we're responsible for living our Christian lives and yet inexplicably anything good in us is the work of the Holy Spirit, anything bad is us.



Lecture # 31

On the other hand, we must also persevere in faith. But at the same time, we're being kept by the power of God in the hands of Christ. This is profound stuff. It's consistent through all of Scripture.

And I celebrate this. Look, I've been at this a long, long time. And the longer I live, the more I rejoice in these doctrines that I can't resolve because they speak of the greatness of God.