

# The Ordo Salutis

## The Order of Salvation

### A Study

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## Introduction

**The Ordo Salutis** (Latin: *The Order of Salvation*) is an attempt at understanding what the Bible teaches about *how* God applies Redemption to His people. So, this is a Study- NOT merely on Salvation- but on the various *components* that make up Salvation. Another way of understanding this- is that the *Ordo Salutis* breaks down the various “Acts” and “Processes” that are used to bring unworthy sinners all the way into being glorified in Heaven at the end of time. And this is a very important task because, many times, the various words and terms that the Bible uses to describe Salvation or to describe one or more of the various *components* of Salvation are often used interchangeably- when they shouldn't.

For example- when the average person says that he is or has been "saved", what is actually meant- is that the individual has been “Justified” or “Forgiven and made Righteous”. And, many times, the term, “Born Again” is used *interchangeably* with “Justification” or even “Salvation” itself- that leads to great confusion. Also, there is a glaring lack of understanding about the life-long Process called, “Sanctification” by far too many in the modern Church. *The Ordo Salutis* will clarify these various terms and words. There is also much confusion concerning which parts of Salvation are a sovereign Work of God alone and which are the result of a *cooperation* between God and Man.

Now the reason all of this matters- is that using words and terms concerning Salvation incorrectly- gives the wrong impression- *especially* concerning important Issues such as:

- ✓ The relation of Sin in the life of a genuine believer
- ✓ The impact that Sin has on a believer's Salvation
- ✓ Whether Salvation is eternal or can be lost
- ✓ The Issue of the Sovereignty of God in Salvation
- ✓ The role that “Human Free Will” (Human Self-Determinism) plays in Salvation

The Bible is crystal clear that unworthy rebels are saved “by” the Grace of God. But the Bible is also clear that sinners are saved “through” Faith.

### **Ephesians 2:8&9**

**8 For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God;**

**9 not as a result of works, so that no one may boast.**

So, exactly what was the Apostle Paul teaching here? What does it mean to say that Salvation is “by” the Grace of God? And what does it mean to say that Salvation is “through” Faith? And from where did this Faith come? What did Paul mean when he said,

**... and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God;**

... in verse 8? And what did he mean when he said,

**... not as a result of works ...**

... in verse 9?

And *why* did Paul make it a point to teach that Salvation does NOT allow anyone to “boast”? Why was that an Issue that he stressed?

So, how does Grace and Faith operate together? The *Ordo Salutis* specifies the *ways* in which Grace is manifested “in” the believer while also teaching how this Grace cooperates with the Gift of Faith.

Many people believe that Salvation is eternal. But why do they believe this? Far too many, who honestly think that Salvation is eternal, have no idea what makes it so. Many others honestly believe that a genuinely saved person can lose his/her Salvation. Why do they believe that? The *Ordo Salutis* will help navigate through this Issue as well.

As we read through the Bible- we see several different aspects or "Steps" (the Order) that illustrate a portion of Salvation- from “Eternity Past” (before God created anything) all the way to Eternity Future” (in Heaven). Yet, most of the time- the believer is only aware of what happened to him at the moment he believed and trusted Christ for Salvation. And because they have never been taught about these Steps- the average believer simply ignores them.

But why are these things in the Bible if God doesn’t want us to understand them? The Scriptures tell us that the Lord God was very busy at work- before, during, and after the moment of our “Salvation”- to assure that we do receive Eternal Life. Yet, because most people have never pondered these things- they miss just how great and complete the Work of God in Salvation really is. And that Ignorance does NOT honor God.

Each of these “Steps” connect and overlap- since they are all parts of our Salvation. But they also maintain their distinctiveness in Scripture and in God's Redemptive Plan. So, God applies the various Steps of Redemption at just the right time- those He has chosen from all eternity. And when we begin to understand all of this- we will see that all of God’s Work in salvation is truly a glorious Display of His Grace- that is worthy of Praise.

Here are those various "Steps" or the *Order of Salvation*:

1. The Decree of God
2. Foreknowledge
3. Sovereign Election
4. The Incarnation
5. The Person and Earthly Work of Jesus
6. The Effectual Call of the Gospel
7. Regeneration (the New Birth)
8. Faith and Repentance
9. Justification
10. Adoption
11. Sanctification
12. Perseverance/Assurance

13. The Ongoing Heavenly Ministry of Jesus
14. Death and the Intermediate State
15. Glorification

Now ten of these Steps (#1-5, 7, 10, 13- 15) are “Sovereign” in that God carries them out-*sovereignly* (all by Himself), with NO Cooperation from human beings. And five of these Steps (#6, 8, 9, 11, & 12) require *some* degree of “Human Cooperation”. So, let's examine each one: