

# The Ordo Salutis

## The Order of Salvation

### A Study

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As of: 7/18/2021

#### Step 8: Faith and Repentance

“No sinner ever comes to Christ until the Holy Spirit first comes to him! And no sinner will savingly believe on Christ until the Spirit has communicated faith to him (**Ephesians 2:5; Colossians 2:12**); and even then, faith is an eye to discern Christ before it is a foot to approach Him.” — **Arthur W. Pink**

“Being persuaded that Christ and his promises are factual is not by itself saving faith. That is why some professing Christians will be shocked at the last day, when they hear him say, 'I never knew you,' even though they protest that he is 'Lord, Lord.' Believing that Christ and his promises are true, based on a testimony, is a necessary part of faith. But it is not sufficient to turn faith into saving faith.”- **John Piper**

“It is not the absence of sin but the grieving over it which distinguishes the child of God from empty professors” — **A.W. Pink**

“There are nine conditions that prove genuine saving faith, 1) Love for God 2) Repentance from Sin 3) Genuine Humility 4) Devotion to God’s Glory 5) Continual Prayer 6) Selfless Love 7) Separation from the World 8) Spiritual Growth 9) Obedience”- **John MacArthur**

“The Roman Catholic church teaches ‘Faith+ Works = Justification’. The Antinomian teaches ‘Faith = Justification – Works’ while the Bible teaches ‘Faith= Justification + Works.’”- **RC Sproul**

“The Bible doesn’t teach us to simply ‘Believe’ as though we could believe in anything. Rather the Bible teaches, ‘Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ’”- **RC Sproul**

“A sinner can no more repent and believe without the Holy Spirit's aid than he can create a world.”- **CH Spurgeon**

“There was a day when I died; died to self, my opinions, preferences, tastes and will; died to the world, its approval or censure; died to the approval or blame even of my brethren or friends; and since then I have studied only to show myself approved unto God.” – **George Mueller**

“If you have the data and you are persuaded that the information you have is true- is that

enough to save you? No. Because James tells us that believing to that extent qualifies us to be a demon.”- **RC Sproul**

“For we maintain that a man is justified by faith apart from works of the Law.”- **the Apostle Paul**

“... faith, if it has no works, is dead, being by itself... faith without works is useless ... a man is justified by works and not by faith alone.” – **James, the Less**

“Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen.”- **the writer of Hebrews**

“obtaining as the outcome of your faith the salvation of your souls.” – **the Apostle Peter**

“The Reformers taught that saving faith has three components (Latin) 1) *Noticia*; 2) *Assensus* 3) *Fiducia*”- **RC Sproul**<sup>1</sup>

“The recognition of sin is the beginning of salvation.” – **Martin Luther**

“Knowledge without repentance will be but a torch to light men to hell.”- **Thomas Watson**

“Repentance, as we know, is basically not moaning and remorse, but turning and change.” – **JI Packer**

“The vigor and power and comfort of our spiritual life depends on our mortification of deeds of the flesh.”- **John Owen**

“True repentance is no light matter. It is a thorough change of heart about sin, a change showing itself in godly sorrow and humiliation - in heartfelt confession before the throne of grace - in a complete breaking off from sinful habits, and an abiding hatred of all sin. Such repentance is the inseparable companion of saving faith in Christ.” – **JC Ryle**

“Repentance is the true turning of our life to God, a turning that arises from a pure and earnest fear of Him; and it consists in the mortification of the flesh and the renewing of the Spirit.”- **John Calvin**

“Some people do not like to hear much of repentance; but I think it is so necessary that if I should die in the pulpit, I would desire to die preaching repentance, and if out of the pulpit I would desire to die practicing it.”- **Matthew Henry**

“Regeneration precedes both Faith and Repentance- making both of them a Gift and a Response”- **RC Sproul**

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<sup>1</sup> 1) the Content, Information, or Data of what you are believing; the Object of Faith- Jesus 2) the intellectual affirmation of the Truth of the Information 3) actually trusting in what you say you believe to the point of having an Affection for Jesus

## Why Do We Believe?

What is “Faith”? *Why* do we believe? How did Belief and Faith come to you? Is believing simply a Choice or a Decision- or is there more to it? The Issue of Faith is so central to the Christian Message that the Bible refers to Christianity as the “Christian Faith”. And the Bible teaches that Salvation is totally *dependent* on Faith and yet it also tells us that lost people are pre-disposed to NOT believe. So, how is that dilemma resolved? *From where* does Faith come; and *to whom* does Faith come? Does *everybody* already have the ability to believe or is Belief a Gift? And if Faith is a Gift- why does God judge people to whom He has not given it?

As you can see, there are many Questions about Faith. And they all deserve an Answer. And we can thank God- that He has answered all of them in His Word. But we must take heed to ourselves because the Answers may surprise us. And if we are not careful, they may even offend us.

The closest thing we have in the Bible to a definition about just what Faith is- is found in **Hebrews 11:1&6** where the unknown writer of the **Epistle to the Hebrews** was “moved” by God the Holy Spirit to write:

### **Hebrews 11:1-3&6**

**1 Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen.**

**2 For by it the men of old gained approval.**

**3 By faith we understand that the worlds were prepared by the word of God, so that what is seen was not made out of things which are visible.**

**6 And 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 seek Him.**

Now **Hebrews 11** is NOT merely another part of the Bible. What this writer was “moved” by God the Holy Spirit to write here has to do with our lives in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. Now just a few verses back- in **Hebrews 10:34**- this writer said that some of the Christians of this small Church in what is now called, “Asia Minor” in the last third of the 1<sup>st</sup> Century (around 68AD) were imprisoned. And the other believers made the hard decision to identify with them and risk their own property and their lives. And verse 34 tells what happened.

**For you showed sympathy to the prisoners and accepted joyfully the seizure of your property, knowing that you have for yourselves a better possession and a lasting one.**

And this is the kind of life that the entire **Epistle of Hebrews** is trying to produce in us- a life that looks at the high price of Love (like the seizure of our property or some other kind of abuse or calamity as we can read in **Hebrews 13:3-6,13**), and then accepts that possibility- *joyfully*- and does what Love demands- no matter what. That's the “Abundant Life” that **Hebrews** is aiming at: all the glorious Truths about Jesus that we can see in this Epistle such as:

- ✓ Giving Himself once for all as a final Sacrifice for our sins (**Hebrews 9:14**)
- ✓ Perfecting us for all time by a single Offering (**Hebrews 10:14**)
- ✓ Giving us a clean conscience by His Own Blood (**Hebrews 9:14; 10:22**)
- ✓ Being our sympathetic High Priest before God (**Hebrews 4:14-16**)
- ✓ Interceding for us day after day in Heaven (**Hebrews 7:25**)

- ✓ Putting His Laws in our minds and writing them on our hearts and being our God (**Hebrews 8:10**),
- ✓ Remembering our Sins no more (**Hebrews 8:12**),
- ✓ Promising never to leave us or forsake us (**Hebrews 13:5&6**)

And all these great Truths are aimed at making us into this kind of people:

- Who risk property and life in order to bring the Love of God to others.
- Who do not look for comforts and ease and security as a necessary thing in life.
- Who are free from the American assumptions of style and safety and wealth and leisure.
- Who know there is one life to live and only what's done in the Name of Christ and for His Glory and for the eternal good of others will count in the end.

And what **Hebrews 10:34** makes clear is that the way that such a life comes about in our lives is through an unshakable Hope in God that is beyond anything in this life.

**(You) accepted joyfully the seizure of your property, knowing that you have for yourselves a better possession and a lasting one.**

And so, the Power to be joyfully sacrificial in the path of Love is "**knowing that you have for yourselves a better possession and a lasting one.**" beyond the grave. And if we don't live by this great Confidence that is brought about by this great Hope- we will be continually thinking about how much we are losing out every time we make a sacrifice for others. But if this life is a brief preparation for eternal Joy- if in this life you and I can reach a place in Jesus Christ where we understand and know that we have a "**better possession and a lasting one**" in Heaven- then we will be free to risk our lives and our possessions on behalf of others in this world because, as Paul said in **Romans 8:18**:

**For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that is to be revealed to us.**

So, the entire **Book of Hebrews** was written to give us an eternal and abiding Hope that transcends anything that this evil world has to offer. And this abiding Hope is the Foundation of a Life of radical, risk-taking, and sacrificial Love.

What more could the writer say than he has already said to help us have this Hope so that we live out this radical Love? The writer has surely written plenty- but he isn't finished. And now he writes Chapter 11 to give us even more:

In **Hebrews 11**- the writer gives us several real- life examples of real people who actually laid hold on the future reward of Joy with God to such an extent that it not only revolutionized their lives then- but it also makes a great difference in our lives 21 centuries later if we would believe.

That's what **Chapter 11** is all about. It is meant to deepen our Confidence in God's Promises to the extent that we will turn from the fleeting pleasures of Sin and live out the radical kind of Love that comes from having our Hope in God.

Now like all things that are true about God- the writer of **Hebrews** was not the only one who understood this. The Apostle Paul also wrote about what this great Hope would produce is those who had it- so let's read what he wrote about this by looking at **Colossians 1:4&5**:

**4 since we heard of your faith in Christ Jesus and the love which you have for all the saints;  
5 because of the hope laid up for you in heaven, of which you previously heard in the word of truth, the gospel**

Now notice here that verse 5 begins with the word, "**Because**", which also means "**for**" or "**due to**". So, what Paul is saying here is that "**because**" or "**due to**" the fact that the people of the Church at Colosse had laid hold on this great Hope in Heaven- they were able and willing to exercise their Faith and Love toward the people who were struggling against Sin and Persecution.

And what was it that built up that kind of Faith that promoted this kind of sacrificial Love and Good Works? Paul tells us here that the people of this Church had heard the Word of God preached through the Gospel even as you and I are hearing it right this minute.

#### **Romans 10:17**

**...faith comes from hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ.**

So, hearing about the great and mighty Promises of God that God has made to us through the preaching and teaching of the Word of God and believing that those great and mighty Promises are true- *emboldens* us to take hold of this great transcendent Hope. And it is this Hope that brings about radical, risk taking, and sacrificial Love.

So, **Hebrews 11** begins with a definition of Faith that links it with Hope and then goes on to show how this Hope gave Power for all kinds of radical Obedience by people all throughout the Bible. So, I want to read **Hebrews 11:1-3** again together:

**1 Now faith is the assurance of *things* hoped for, the conviction of things not seen.**

**2 For by it the men of old gained approval.**

**3 By faith we understand that the worlds were prepared by the word of God, so that what is seen was not made out of things which are visible.**

So, the first very important thing that we can do today is to forget all the nonsense that we have been taught about what Faith is; and what Faith does; and look at what God's Word says about Faith- so that we may lay hold on eternal Life.

The writer of **Hebrews** is telling us by these inspired and inerrant and infallible Words that the Power to sacrifice in the Cause of Love; and the Power to joyfully accept the seizure of our property- and even the loss of our lives, which we saw in **Hebrews 10:34**, is something that the Holy Spirit calls "Faith."

That is what Faith is- the Power to willingly and joyfully and sacrificially accept the seizure of our property and even the loss of our lives because we *know*- we don't guess or wonder- we *know* through the hearing of the Word of God preached about the great and mighty Promises of God and we believe that God's Word is true and that hearing mixed with believing produces a great and enduring Hope in us that we have an abiding and a lasting Possession in

Heaven- that God gave to us; that cannot be altered; and that cannot be diminished; and that cannot ever be taken away from us. And this Hope *emboldens* us to act with a radical Love that the world does not know; and that the world does not possess.

The writer says here in **Hebrews 11:1** that Faith is the “**assurance of things hoped for**” - that word, “**assurance**”- remember that word? It is the very *same* word that he used back in **Hebrews 10:34** to tell us about a “Possession” in Heaven that was both “better” than anything else on this earth and “better” than anything that was promised under the Old Covenant; and it was also “lasting”- meaning that it is eternal. This is what the song writer meant when he said,

“I have a home in Glory Land that outshines the Sun”

So, the writer tells us here in **Hebrews 11:1** that Faith is the Confidence that “**you have a better possession and a lasting one**” or in other words, Faith is the Confidence that we believe that what God’s Word promises us in Heaven is a far better and a far more abiding Possession than anything that this earth could ever hope to give.

Now there's the link between the Life of the sacrificial kind of Love that **Hebrews 10:34** describes and the Hall of Fame in Chapter 11. Chapter 11 is a catalogue of people who illustrate that this kind of Faith - the “Assurance” or the “Confidence” of things hoped for - really *does* make a difference in human lives.

So, the first task that we have in this new chapter is to understand more exactly what Faith is. That's what verse 1 gives us - a *twofold* definition of Faith. So, let's look at both parts, one at a time. The Holy Spirit moved upon the writer to write that Faith is:

1. The Assurance of things hoped for
2. The Conviction of things not seen.

Now there is more here than meets the eye at first. The Greek word for “**assurance**” in the first definition (“**the assurance of things hoped for**”) and the word for “**conviction**” in the second definition (“**the conviction of things not seen**”), are very unusual Greek words that are very difficult to translate into English. But if we are to understand what the writer is telling us- we are going to have to struggle with this for a moment.

These two words “**assurance**” and “**conviction**” are, in fact, very serious and important translations. And the importance is not merely academic. So, in order to see just how important all of this is just ask yourself these four simple questions:

1. Do you have Faith?
2. How do you *know* that you have Faith?
3. What exactly *is* Faith- so that you may know if you have it?
4. What hangs in the balance on whether you have Faith or not?

So, we can see that these Questions are *very* practical and *very* relevant to our lives. So, let's get into this and I want to start with the *second* definition of Faith that the writer of **Hebrews** describes for us first:

**Faith is the conviction of things not seen."**

Now the Greek word that was translated here as, "**conviction**" in **Hebrews 11:1**- is not used anywhere else in the entire New Testament. But *outside* the New Testament- in other ancient Greek literature, the normal use of this word throughout the world back in the 1<sup>st</sup> Century would be to talk about "Proof" or "Argument" or "Conviction" - something that is very objective. In other words, this Greek word would have to do with objective facts about how the world really is- rather than how a person might subjectively *feel* about the world. And that is how this particular Greek word would have normally been used in literature other than the Bible.

So, what about the meaning here in verse 1? Most modern translations of the Bible don't use the old word, "Proof" or "Evidence" like the KJV does because it doesn't seem to make sense to them. How can Faith *be* "Evidence" or "Proof"? Faith actually *needs* Evidence, doesn't it?

And in order to try to figure this Mystery out- let's look at the illustration of this definition of Faith that we find in **Hebrews 11:3** because verse 3 is directly related to this definition of Faith in verse 1 as "the conviction of things not seen." **Hebrews 11:3** says:

**By faith we understand that the worlds were prepared by the word of God, so that what is seen was not made out of things which are visible.**

Now I hope you can see the connection here. The end of verse 1 says that "**Faith is the conviction of things not seen,**" and then verse 3 says that Faith understands that the worlds – in other words- the physical universe that is seen- was made out of what is *not* seen - or in other words- the Word of God. So, verse 3 is a specific illustration which was given to us by the Holy Spirit to help us to understand just what the writer meant when he wrote verse 1.

So, here's the question:

*How do we know that God made the world out of nothing that is seen?*

Not only were we not there when Creation occurred- but even if we *had* been there- we would not have been able to actually "see" the Act of Creation, because you can't see the Word of God until that Word is written down. So how in the world can we "know" or "understand" that the worlds were made by the Word of God? How can we know "**that what is seen was not made out of things which are visible**"- namely the Word of God?

And verse 3 answers that question: "by" or "through" Faith.

**By faith we understand that the worlds were prepared by the word of God**

Now this starts to sound a little more understandable. Because if it is true that "**Faith is the conviction of things not seen,**" then it might make sense to say, "By faith (or by this conviction) we understand that the worlds were made or prepared by the Word of God."

So, the crucial question is this: Precisely how is Faith the "**conviction**" of things unseen, namely, that God created the worlds by His Word? And I take my clue from the only other place in the New Testament where God's invisible Attributes are said to be "**clearly seen**" by Man, namely, **Romans 1:20**- so let's read that verse together:

**For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes, His eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly seen, being understood through what has been made, so that they are without excuse.**

Now what is interesting is that the word "understood" that Paul used here in **Romans 1:20** is the very *same* word that the writer of **Hebrews** used in **Hebrews 11:3**:

**By Faith we understand that the worlds were prepared by the Word of God.**

So there in **Romans 1:20** it says that,

"We *understand* the invisible Attributes of God by what has been made."

And here in **Hebrews 11:3** it says that,

"We *understand* the invisible Word of God behind Creation- by Faith."

So, **Romans 1:20** *seems* to say that the "Conviction" that Faith gives us- that God did indeed make the Universe- is the very things themselves that have been made. In other words- the "Conviction" that things have obviously been made clearly points to the indisputable fact that there *must* be a Maker. And so, **Hebrews 11:3** *seems* to say that the "Conviction" that God made the Universe- is what Faith is.

Now think about that for just a moment. What should we conclude from this? Well, here's what I conclude from all this. Faith - at least in part - is the spiritual "seeing" or the spiritual "perceiving" of the Fingerprints of God on the things that God has made. So, the Fingerprints of God on the things that God has Created- the order of the Universe; the beauty of Creation; the vastness and greatness of Creation; the undeniable complexity of Creation (the "irreducible complexity" (as Michael Behe says, in his book, *Darwin's Black Box*) – all of those things are the "conviction" that God did indeed make the worlds.

But does that then mean that our spiritual "seeing" or our spiritual "perceiving" of those Fingerprints is a kind of "conviction". Yes exactly. Because it's just the other side of the coin.

In other words- if you ask me, "*How do you know that Focus on the Family has a headquarters located in Colorado Springs,*" I could say- "*Well I just believe it is*" and leave it at that. But I *won't* say that. What I *will* say is "*I believe that because I saw it myself when Rhonda and I went there a few years ago*". So, my "seeing" is the "Conviction" that it is there.

And I think that is the way that Faith is the "Conviction" of things that are not seen. So, for example, we all look at the very same Fingerprints of God. And some people are blessed to "see"; and believe- while others do not see; and they do not believe. And those who do see have the Conviction- or the Testimony- in themselves. But how can that be?

Here is an analogy at the physical level. A few years ago, one of the fads going around America was hidden 3-D images. These are pieces of art that, on one level, are one thing, but at another level are something quite different. At first glance all you see is the surface presentation. But if you let your eyes focus more deeply, or more distantly, you may see a train or a boxing kangaroo or a globe not only appearing, but actually standing up off from the page.

Now some people stare at these pages for several minutes and see absolutely nothing but color and chaos. But others almost immediately see the head of Beethoven or a lamb. So, if

someone asks, "*How do you know a lamb is there?*" the answer is, "***Because I see it.***" So, your *seeing* is the conviction. *They* may not see what you see- but that won't change anything in your mind- because you *do* see.

Now this is what it is like for some to look at God's Creation. Some, like the poor pathetic atheists can stare at a mountain or a galaxy or the eyes of a child their entire life- time and yet see absolutely nothing but random accidents and evolution.

But others, who may very well not be as intellectually astute as the atheist, have a much deeper "view" and when they look at Creation- they "see" God's Fingerprints come into clear focus. And by "seeing" God's Fingerprints- these people know without any doubt at all- that God Almighty created all things.

But just what is the conviction that these people can offer? Nothing other than they can see it. It is as clear to them as the nose on their face and no one can talk them out of it. Why? Because they actually see it- they perceive it- God has graciously shown it to them and the seeing of it is the conviction. That is what the writer of **Hebrews** is talking about here.

And this tells us that Faith or the ability to believe; the Assurance of things hoped for and the Conviction of things NOT seen- is a wondrous Gift of God.