

*Ordo Salutis*—The Order of Salvation  
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“How many kinds of grace are there<sup>1</sup>?” she asked. We sing “Amazing Grace” and all agree it is a wonderful thing. We even declare saved by grace through faith in Christ alone as a brand of reformed credo—and some would add “Through **the word of God**, or Scripture alone.”<sup>2</sup> That order of salvation, or redemption is presented in Romans 8:26-30:

**26 Now in the same way the Spirit also helps our weakness; for we do not know what to pray for as we should, but the Spirit Himself intercedes for us with [wordless groanings] groanings too deep for words; 27 and He who searches the hearts knows what the mind of the Spirit is, because He intercedes for the [holy ones] saints according to the will of God.**

**28 And we know that God [in all things works together with those who love God and are called according to his purposes for good] causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose. 29 For those whom He foreknew, He also predestined to become conformed to the image of His Son, so that He would be the firstborn among many brothers and sisters; 30 and these whom He predestined, He also called; and these whom He called, He also justified; and these whom He justified, He also glorified.**

Predestined, called, justified and glorified . . . yes, those are major stages, but not all the workings of grace, along that trajectory, are mentioned. We will attempt to address that deficiency in a moment. Dr. Lloyd-Jones’ cautions about being too chronological, or too sequentially rigid are well-taken.

And because we are most concerned to deal with the Apostle Paul, there is another order of redemption situated in Acts 26:17-18 (which amplifies the Lord’s

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<sup>1</sup> This question “How many kinds of grace are there?” grew out of my weekly lecture series on the Great Doctrines of the Bible (by Martin Lloyd Jones) and Particularly Chapters 6 (“The Work of The Holy Spirit in Redemption,” pp. 59-62) & 7 (on “Effectual Calling,” p. 65) of Book Two). But I sense that “the order of salvation” might prove to be of interest to the wider body and as I researched for this sermon, I was directed to Spurgeon Sermon #656 on “Prevenient Grace” (preached in 1865 while he was still in his twenties). That sermon is an inspiring fount of information on Paul’s conversion and on the question of the day: how many kinds of grace are there involved in redemption? Still I will follow Spurgeon’s catalogue of the seven (7) kinds of grace in this message *and while this is more complete listing, it is not exhaustive*.

<sup>2</sup> And, finally, others say, “Through the atoning work of Christ on the cross by which those who believe in God are forgiven their sins.” And I agree with each of these articles of belief as stated—there are other articles such as those enshrined in “The Apostles’ Creed” (or the Nicene Creed) and in the historic confessions of faith (the Westminster Confession, the Belgic, and the 1689 Baptist Confession of Faith). Now the “Ordo Salutis” is not, to my awareness covered in order, or sequence in these credo’s and confessions.

interposition on the Damascus Road mentioned in Acts 9:1-22, but especially vv. 15-16 there): **17 rescuing you from the *Jewish* people and from the Gentiles, to whom I am sending you, 18 to open their eyes so that they may turn from darkness to light, and from the [a]power of Satan to God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins and an inheritance among those who have been sanctified by faith in Me.'**

This order of redemption includes **the opening of eyes, turning from darkness to light, from the power of Satan unto God that they might receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance amongst those sanctified by faith.** The "order" is expressed in different terms and it is also incomplete—leaving much to be filled in. They are: 1. Formative Grace; 2. Preventive Grace; 3. Restraining Grace; 4. Preparatory Grace (Dr. John Owen); 5. Tender Conscience; 6. Grace of Dissatisfaction; and 7. Grace of Appetite and Thirst. Now, because this is a lot to carry in one's short-term memory bank, I propose to expound on each of these graces in terms of the life of Paul—exploring his spiritual biography with you as best we can parse it from the biblical record and the inferences drawn therefrom. ***This study will help you pray with more specificity and focus for those you sense may be called of God—abetting their spiritual growth and maturation.*** Here is an acronym for the seven: FORPROTOCOLAD- AT (repeat) It's no harder to memorize than a drug name on your prescription. It's refillable, and it's free . . . pick up your supply to *forprotocad* at today!

We should start with the fact that Paul was a Jew, a 100 % Jew from the start. Jesus was also a Jew—although in a different spiritual league(!)—but they shared a Jewish upbringing in the setting of a Jewish family<sup>3</sup> (category #1). And this is true despite the cultural and social dislocations represented by the stark differences between Nazareth (where Jesus was raised in a town on a trade route) and Tarsus in Cilicia, Turkey.

As a boy (Paul), he learned the family business—making and repairing tents—from his father. Saul's family were faithful Jews. They prayed that God would soon keep his promise to send the Messiah. When Saul was a young man, he was sent to Jerusalem to study Jewish law.

When he returned home, Saul began to hear about a prophet named Jesus who claimed to be the Messiah. People said that this man had risen from the dead and that he had worked miracles as a sign that he was sent by God<sup>4</sup>.

Saul began to persecute Jesus' followers. [With youthful zeal/idealism], he demanded that they give up their new faith. <http://saintsresource.com/paul-of-tarsus>

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<sup>3</sup> A strong family life/cultural is a social asset. It is a factor in poverty where the lack of social relationships translates into decreased opportunity. See Asian versus Black American success which dispels the racist explanation. Furthermore Paul was not homeless and his family was not propertyless (Holdings in Tarsus, and Jerusalem!)

<sup>4</sup> The fragility of the Jewish state, fear of Roman repression must have struck Paul during his student days. Jesus was 1. a religious/political threat to their power/status quo and 2. not what they were looking for(!). *It is very striking that most of those who hate Jesus have never met him!*

Jesus also learned his family trade, his father was a carpenter. At the age of thirty, he divested himself of that business and took up the role of an itinerate rabbi.

Additionally, Paul studied under Gamaliel, the master teacher of that age (!), and was of Pharisaical persuasion; he called himself **a Hebrew of Hebrews** (See Philippians 3:4-6)—and would have vied with Nathaniel for the title of **a true Israelite** (John 1:47):

**...4 though I myself could have such confidence. If anyone else thinks he has grounds for confidence in the flesh, I have more: 5 circumcised on the eighth day, of the people of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin; a Hebrew of Hebrews; as to the law, a Pharisee; 6 as to zeal, persecuting the church; as to righteousness in the law, faultless.**

It occurred to me that Paul's rabbinical training resembles the training of what we would label as a philologist (a linguist absorbed in the close study of literature and history of language (both texts and oral traditions!). He was doubtlessly multilingual! Philology<sup>5</sup> has the root meaning of "love of learning."

"It appears from my text, however that there is another part of Paul's history which deserves our attention quite as much as the *suddenness* of his conversion (**the opening of eyes**), namely, the fact that although he was suddenly converted, yet God had thoughts of mercy towards him from his very birth. . .that he might, by and by be **called by grace, and have Jesus revealed in him.**" (CHS p.1 P 2) This is "*preceding, or prevenient grace—that is, formative grace, see categories #1 & 4.* This is the grace that comes before regeneration and conversion. Paul was **predestined** and **foreknown**, before he was **called** (Romans 8:30)! And, or, **called out of darkness into the light** (Acts 26:18)—they specify the same moment(?), or step. There are seven kinds of grace. Let's take them in order.

Preventive Grace, another form, or subset of prevenient grace is category #2. This saw him out of danger, escapes and deliverances (remember, **from the Gentiles and his own people**)! Just in time out of Damascus, out of Lystra (where he was stoned, Acts 14:28), out of Jerusalem (Acts 23:23-24). Saved from other perils, shipwrecks and venomous snakes (Acts 28:4-6). It is also found in the interposition of God on the Damascus Road. Paul was a persecutor of the church—then the event on the Damascus Road happened (Acts 9:1-22). It was a miraculous interposition. And it left him blind, for three days, during which **he fasted and prayed** (v.11) **and drank no water**. He saw, in a vision, a man (Ananias) **coming and laying on his hands so that he might regain his sight**. (v.12) There fell from his eyes as it were, **something like scales**. (vv.18, 17) and **he was filled with the Holy Spirit**! This was very sudden and distinctive, and yet "at the same time, it is no exception the general rule of conversion, but rather is a type, or model, or pattern of the way in which God shows forth his long-suffering to them who are led to believe on Him. That's all in categories #1 and #2.

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<sup>5</sup> Philology was a department in the ancient universities. Linguistics was a subset of philology but has overshadowed it in modern times. J.R.R. Tolkien and Friedrich Nietzsche and Max Muller are representative humanities scholars/philologists—In biblical exegesis, John Gill and Matthew Poole rank as philologists—so, too, George Caird, George Kittredge and S.T. Coleridge and several dramatists. Some dictionaries have gone so far as to equate philology with classical scholarship.

Restraining grace (#3) kept him out of Asia Minor and directed him to evangelize Europe. And years prior, it kept him out of Judea, the region surrounding Jerusalem—where the initial opposition to his gospel was the strongest.

When God created man, out of the dust—he was, at first but an earthen framework of a man. After forming the man, **God breathed into his nostrils the breath of life and the man became a living soul.** (Spirit and body united.) “Now it strikes me,” preaches Spurgeon, “that in the early part of the history of the people whom God means to save, though they have not received into their hearts any spiritual life (**being dead in trespasses and sins**), not experienced any of the work of regeneration, yet their life before conversion is really a working of them in the clay.” (P 4) Likewise, there is a purpose in the singular gifts with which Saul was endowed—rhetorician/orator par excellence (despite his disclaimers, like the erudite (learned) Moses before him!) and a logician as well, able to reason profoundly and conclusively (rabbinically, and culturally!) He saw penetratingly, with clarity and distinction—able to expound the Scriptures (either as a revelation of God, or as prophetic (re the “messiah”) or as truth in such a way as to not be misunderstood. A teacher above all teachers—excepting his Master. None of the other apostles had his scholarly sharpness, or acumen, reach of mind, or intellectual mastery.

**While Paul was stating these things in his defense, Festus said in a loud voice, “Paul, you are out of your mind! Your great learning is driving you insane.”** Acts 26:24 New American Standard Bible  
Excellent school, again like Moses, and surpassing all others in Judaism, he also learned obedience in suffering (Preparatory Grace #4) —yes, he knew the canon, the entirety of it thoroughly. Had he remained a natural man, he might have attained the stature of a Coleridge among poets, or a Bacon, or Donne, or Locke, among geniuses, a Newton, Archimedes, Plato or Aristotle—yes; he mastered Greek philosophers as well. It is pretty astonishing that some accused him of not understanding his faith, or the law!

When we see one so adept, so skilled and adroit, well we might wonder what is God up to? What is God’s purpose in Saul’s life—from the outset? God knew that such a vessel, or instrument, was needed so as to convey to the world the hidden treasures of the glorious gospel of Jesus Christ. He needed a great man to convey these great things—Paul was that man. God has made such determinations before; what he entrusted to Isaiah what he didn’t give to Ezekiel . . . Nahum’s revelation wasn’t given to Amos!! “Each man is “after his own order,” and a man of this masterly order of mind, like the Apostle Paul, must have been created, it seems to me for no other end, than to be an appropriate means of revealing to us the fullness and the blessing of the gospel of peace.” (CHS) He was no stranger to Hebrew, or Aramaic, or Greek—or Latin.

This regarding the grace of a Tender Conscience (# 5) God tenderized his conscience towards those he formerly hated as well as his fellow Israelites. Here is a quote from a Quaker source:

One of the most precious things a man can possibly possess is a tender conscience. There are many hardening influences in the world. There are many forces at work that have a tendency to deaden and blunt the keen sensitiveness of the conscience, so that it is a great thing, indeed, to be favored to preserve its tenderness inviolate.

A tender conscience is governed by the revealed will of God, that will which is always "good," "acceptable" and "perfect," even though the doing of it may involve self-denial and taking up the daily cross. By a tender conscience, I do not mean a scrupulous or a morbid conscience. A scrupulous conscience is governed by its crotchets (*a perverse or unfounded belief or notion*), and a morbid (*an abnormal and unhealthy interest in disturbing and unpleasant subjects*) conscience by its fears, neither of these makes for a wholesome and happy life and a well balanced character.

What characterized "the Quaker of the olden time," as the poet Whittier has it, was just this one thing--he watched over his conscience, that it might be kept in the Holy tenderness, and thus be "void of offense towards God and men." It was the constant exercise of those worthy men and women into whose inheritance we have come by our outward profession of being "Friends" and by it "they obtained a good report."

"Herein do I exercise myself," said Paul. Such an exercise is no mere creaturely effort. It is a giving up to the pressure of the Divine Spirit upon us, the divine Love ever following us, brooding over us, compassing us in our path, besetting us before and behind, that we, welcoming it, even in its searchings, may be led by it, out of every evil thing in "the way everlasting." Now, how may one obtain this great blessing--a tender conscience? It will require "exercise." Said the apostle Paul: **"Herein do I exercise myself to have always a conscience void of offense toward God and men."** That is the keynote of a life in which peace may be known even in a hurricane of trouble, and wealth in direst poverty.

<http://www.qhpress.org/quakerpages/qwhp/tender.htm>

Paul, we read, engaged in a life-long struggle against the superstitious, Judaizing spirit. In order to oppose the law, he needed to first know it! He knew the **traditions of the father**, which would oppose the gospel, in order to deliver people out from under it! Add to that his spiritual struggles, mental and moral as well as scriptural controversies and debates. What he learned through living and experience transcended whatever he internalized from his schoolmasters and teachers. He held the indwelling grace of God above all this! Category #6, he had *dissatisfaction* with his bondage to the law, at first barely sensed, but later fully exposed.

And category #7, the grace of Appetite and Thirst, Adam and Eve were created hungering and thirsting, spiritually this led Paul to desire to know Christ above all else, and anything else: **Christ and Him crucified**. Paul was unchanged as to temperament, nature and force of character . . . just as earnest, fervent, dauntless and fearless . . . firm, bold and decisive. His personality remained, his character was transformed: as Adam arose from the ground to serve and worship God, just so Paul, purposed from the beginning for his unique role in human and sacred history was that man of the hour—he rose to the occasion through faithfulness to his heavenly call and could declare at the end of his life (2 Tim. 4:6-8):

**6 For I am already being poured out as a drink offering, and the time of my departure has come. 7 I have fought the good fight, I have finished the course, I have kept the faith; 8 in the future there is reserved for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day; and not only to me, but also to all who have loved His appearing.**

Preceding grace was engaged in fashioning, molding and preparing the man so that when the figurative “breath of the Spirit,” or “the truth of the gospel” was breathed into him(!), he was off and running to a satisfying life of fulfillment and spiritual accomplishment. Now you see 1. Formative Grace in Paul’s upbringing, training in business, advancement in scholarship. 2. Preventive Grace in Paul’s rescues and deliverances. 3. Restraining Grace when prohibited, or directed by the Holy Spirit. 4. Preparatory Grace in what Paul learned through life and suffering for the sake of Jesus’ name. 5. We see the Grace of Tender Conscience when Paul loves those he once hated—even his enemies. 6. The Grace of Dissatisfaction with the legalism and superstition of the day’s Judaism. And 7. The Grace of Appetite and Thirst in his pursuit of living waters. And all with the arc of predestined, called, justified and glorified. When God reassured Paul, **My grace is sufficient for thee**, we can take it to mean “all of my grace, all for thee.”

**Amen**