

FAITHFUL TO THE WORD

Systematic Theology Series

SOTERIOLOGY

The Doctrine of Salvation

By Grace Alone, Through Faith Alone, In Christ Alone, To the Glory of God Alone

UNIT 12: CONCLUSION — THE GOLDEN CHAIN UNBROKEN

Salvation Planned, Accomplished, Applied, and Completed — To the Praise of His Glorious Grace

Lesson 35

From Eternity to Eternity

The Unbreakable Purpose of God

Foreknew → Predestined → Called → Justified → Glorified

Every Link Forged by God — Every Link Held by God — No Link Breakable

“For from Him and through Him and to Him are all things. To Him be the glory forever. Amen.”

Key Texts: Romans 8:28–39; 11:33–36; Ephesians 1:3–14; 2:1–10; Jude 24–25; Revelation 5:9–14; 7:9–12

*“For from Him and through Him and to Him are all things. To Him be the glory forever.
Amen.”*

Romans 11:36, NASB 1995

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Introduction

Thirty-four lessons. Thirty-four windows opened onto the inexhaustible riches of the doctrine of salvation, from the eternal election in the counsel of the Triune God before the foundation of the world, through the redemptive work of the incarnate Son at Calvary and the empty tomb, through the Spirit's sovereign application of the accomplished redemption in the regeneration, justification, adoption, and ongoing sanctification of the individual believer, through the perseverance and preservation of the saints, through the assurance and the dark night of the soul, through the glorification that awaits, the resurrection of the body, the new heavens and the new earth, and the face-to-face, permanent, all-things-new eternal state. The whole arc of the saving work, from its eternal origin to its eschatological destination, traced with the theological precision and the pastoral warmth that the scope of the subject demands.

Lesson 35 is the series' final lesson, and it is, by the nature of the subject, a lesson that does not introduce new doctrinal territory but revisits the whole of the territory already traversed, now from the elevated vantage point of the conclusion, and sees it whole. It is the lesson in which the golden chain of Romans 8:29–30, introduced in Lesson 27 as the ground of the perseverance of the saints, traced in Lesson 32 as the ground of the glorification's certainty, is revisited as the summary declaration of the entire soteriology series' theological content: foreknew, predestined, called, justified, glorified. Every link forged by God, every link held by God, and no link missing or breakable. The salvation that the series has traced from its eternal origins to its eschatological destination is the salvation that the golden chain declares in a single sentence, the most compressed and the most comprehensive statement of the divine saving purpose available in the entire canon.

The lesson will proceed through eight major sections, each of which revisits a dimension of the series' content from the doxological perspective of the conclusion: the golden chain revisited; the Trinitarian summary of the series; the five solas as the final word; the exclusion of boasting; the comfort for the anxious; the fuel for mission; the motivation for holiness; and the doxological climax. Throughout, the governing text is the one that stands at the end of Romans 11's meditation on the whole counsel of God, the verse that Paul writes as the only adequate response to the sweep of the divine wisdom and knowledge and judgment and ways that the entire soteriological argument of Romans 1–11 has been displaying: "For from Him and through Him and to Him are all things. To Him be the glory forever. Amen" (Romans 11:36, NASB 1995). This is the last word of soteriology. It is the last word of all theology.

I. The Golden Chain Revisited

From Eternity Past to Eternity Future, Unbroken

A. The Chain and Its Links

Romans 8:29–30 has served as the series’ architectural spine, the single most compressed and most theologically comprehensive passage that holds the entire *ordo salutis* together as the expression of a single, unbroken, divine saving purpose. “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 brethren; and these whom He predestined, He also called; and those whom He called, He also justified; and those whom He justified, He also glorified” (NASB 1995). The chain’s five links, foreknew, predestined, called, justified, glorified, are the five major movements of the divine saving purpose that the series has traced in its thirty-four lessons. Each link has its own lesson or unit; together they are the single, seamless, uninterrupted expression of the will of the God who determines to save and who, having determined, does not fail.

The foreknowing (Unit 1’s territory, grounding in the eternal election of the Father): the personal, intimate, covenant-knowing of the specific persons whom the Father has chosen in Christ before the foundation of the world, whose election is the uncaused expression of the divine sovereign love and the eternal foundation of the entire saving work that follows. The predestining (the same unit, the divine appointment): the specific, purposeful appointment to the specific destination, conformity to the image of the Son (Romans 8:29), that the whole of the saving work is aimed at producing. The calling (Unit 3’s regeneration and effectual calling): the Spirit’s sovereign, effective, life-giving summons through the gospel that produces the new birth and the faith through which the redemption’s benefits are received. The justifying (Unit 5): the legal declaration of the forensic righteousness by which the believing sinner receives the imputed righteousness of Christ and stands before the holy God in the verdict of the completed justification. The glorifying (Units 11–12): the final, eschatological, whole-person, permanent conformity to Christ’s image that the resurrection of the body, the beatific vision, and the new creation together express.

The chain’s theological force rests on two specific features that the series has consistently emphasized. First, its unbroken character: there is no link at which the divine purpose can be frustrated, no transition between links at which a person foreknown can fail to be predestined, called, justified, or glorified. The chain connects every foreknown person to every glorified person without loss between the first link and the last. Second, its divine agency at every link: every verb in the chain has God as its subject. God foreknew, predestined, called, justified, glorified. The human response, the genuine, responsible, Spirit-produced faith through which the calling is received and the justification is appropriated, is genuinely real; but it is the fruit of the divine work at each link rather than the independent contribution that completes the divine work’s partial achievement. The chain is golden not because it is decorative but because it is strong, as strong as the character of the God who forged it and who holds every link.

B. The Past Tense of Glorification and the Series’ Confidence

The specific, series-summarizing significance of the past-tense glorification in Romans 8:30 (“these He also glorified”) is the specific, eschatological confidence that it provides for the whole of the series’ content. Every lesson of this series has been the exposition of a work that the God who glorified has already accomplished from the divine perspective. The election was accomplished before the foundation of the world. The redemption was accomplished at the cross and the empty tomb. The regeneration is accomplished by the sovereign Spirit in the specific moment of the new birth. The justification is declared in the moment of faith. The adoption is established in the moment of regeneration. The sanctification is being progressively accomplished through the Spirit’s ongoing work. And the glorification, still future from the temporal perspective of the present-age believer, is, in the divine reckoning, already accomplished. The God who foreknew has already glorified. The chain is not in process of being completed; from the divine perspective, it is already complete. And the present-age believer who rests in this confidence rests not in the probability of a future outcome but in the certainty of the divine purpose that has already, in the past tense of God’s eternal knowledge, embraced the whole journey from its beginning to its end.

II. The Trinitarian Summary

The Father Planned, the Son Accomplished, the Spirit Applies

A. The Trinitarian Architecture of the Series

The soteriology series has been, at its deepest level, an account of the Trinitarian God’s saving work, the cooperative, distinctive, harmoniously-unified activity of the Father, the Son, and the Spirit in the single, comprehensive, eternal-to-eternal saving purpose that Romans 8:29–30 summarizes. Every element of the *ordo salutis* has its Trinitarian dimensions: the election is the Father’s sovereign appointment, grounded in the *pactum salutis* in which the Son undertook to accomplish the redemption and the Spirit undertook to apply it; the redemption is the Son’s incarnate, cruciform, resurrection-validated achievement; the regeneration and every subsequent work of the Spirit’s application are the Spirit’s sovereign, faithful, covenant-keeping ministry in the specific life of the specific believer. The Trinitarian architecture is not merely the theological backdrop of the saving work; it is its internal structure, the reason that every link in the golden chain holds, and the ultimate explanation of why the salvation that the series has traced is as secure as the eternal God Himself.

The Father planned our salvation in eternity past. The decrees of election and reprobation, the specific appointment of the specific persons to the salvation accomplished by the Son, the predestination to conformity with the image of the Son, the covenant of redemption, all of these are the Father’s sovereign, eternal, uncaused, grace-expressing decisions that constitute the eternal foundation on which the whole of the temporal saving work is built. Ephesians 1:3–14’s account of the spiritual blessings in Christ, chosen before the foundation of the world, predestined to adoption as sons, redeemed through the blood of Christ, sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise, is the New Testament’s most comprehensive single account of the Trinitarian architecture of the saving work, with the Father as the specific subject of the planning and appointing that the whole saving work expresses.

The Son accomplished our salvation in history. The incarnation, the active obedience (the entire life of perfect law-keeping that produced the righteousness available for imputation), the passive obedience (the specific, substitutionary, atoning death that bore the penalty that the law demanded), the resurrection (the specific, historically-verified, bodily triumph that vindicated the atoning work and established the risen Christ as the

firstfruits of the resurrection harvest), and the ascension and the session (the permanent enthronement of the risen, glorified humanity of the Son at the Father's right hand, from which the continuous intercession and the return are accomplished), these are the Son's specific, historical, fully-accomplished saving acts that provide the objective ground of every element of the *ordo salutis*' application. The salvation that the Spirit applies is the salvation that the Son accomplished; and the security of every element of the Spirit's application rests on the completeness and the sufficiency of what the Son has done.

The Spirit applies our salvation in our experience. Every lesson of the series' central units has been the account of the Spirit's specific, moment-by-moment, life-long, uninterrupted ministry in the specific life of the specific believer: the conviction and the new birth (regeneration), the production of the faith that receives the justification (effectual calling and justification), the establishment of the adopted relationship and the Abba cry (adoption), the progressive forming of the Christ-image (sanctification), the sustaining of the faith through every trial and the sealing for the day of redemption (preservation), the testifying with the spirit that she is a child of God (assurance), the groanings-too-deep-for-words intercession on behalf of the specific weakness (Romans 8:26–27), and the ultimate role in the resurrection of the body (Romans 8:11: "He who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will also give life to your mortal body through His Spirit who dwells in you"). The Spirit's work is the indispensable, never-failing, sovereign application of the Father's eternal plan and the Son's accomplished redemption to the specific person who is the object of both.

III. The Five Solas as the Final Word

The Reformation's Summary of What the Series Has Established

A. *Sola Gratia and Sola Fide*

The five solas of the Protestant Reformation are not external slogans imposed on the soteriology series' content; they are the precise, theologically-compressed expression of what the series has established across thirty-four lessons. *Sola Gratia*, grace alone, is the series' first and last word about the nature of the saving work: from the uncaused, sovereign, grace-expressing election in eternity past (which owes nothing to the foreseen faith or the anticipated merit of the elect) through the grace-sourced regeneration (which the spiritually dead sinner contributes nothing to) through the grace-grounded justification (which is the imputed righteousness of Another, received through faith rather than earned through works) through the grace-sustained sanctification (which is God who works in you both to will and to work) through the grace-guaranteed glorification (already accomplished in the divine purpose for every foreknown person), the salvation that the series has traced is grace from first to last. Grace alone. Not grace plus merit; not grace plus maintained cooperation; not grace plus sustained faithfulness; not grace that can be earned or supplemented or jeopardized by any creaturely contribution. Grace alone. *Soli Deo Gloria* is the necessary conclusion.

Sola Fide, faith alone, is the series' account of the alone instrument by which the accomplished, grace-provided salvation is received. Faith is not the ground of the justification (the ground is the imputed righteousness of Christ alone); faith is the alone instrument through which the ground is applied to the specific person. The *fiducia*, the personal trust, the first-person receiving of the specific Savior, is the hand that takes the gift, not the price that purchases it. The careful treatment of faith in its three elements (*notitia*, *assensus*, *fiducia*), the distinction

between the faith that justifies (the faith that is directed toward and resting on the person and work of Christ alone) and the works that demonstrate the genuine character of the justifying faith (Lesson 13's treatment of James 2), all of this has been the series' sustained account of what the alone instrument of justification is, what it is not, and why the distinction between faith as instrument and faith as ground is the critical precision that the entire justification doctrine depends on.

B. Solus Christus, Sola Scriptura, and Soli Deo Gloria

Solus Christus, Christ alone, is the series' account of the alone ground and source of the salvation that grace provides and faith receives. The entire Christology of the series, the incarnation that established the mediatorial humanity, the active obedience that produced the righteousness available for imputation, the passive obedience that bore the penalty that the law demanded, the resurrection that vindicated the atonement and guaranteed the resurrection of those who are in Christ, the continuous intercession at the Father's right hand that maintains the application of the completed work, has been the series' sustained account of why Christ alone is the ground and source. Not Christ as one contributor among several; not Christ whose work requires the supplement of the believer's own merit, cooperation, or maintained faithfulness; but Christ alone, whose completed work is the entire and sufficient ground of the entire and comprehensive salvation that grace provides and faith receives.

Sola Scriptura, Scripture alone, is the epistemological foundation that the series has stood on from the beginning. Every doctrine of the series has been grounded in the specific, exegetically-engaged, grammatically-historically-interpreted testimony of the inspired, inerrant, infallible Word of God, not the tradition alone, not the experience alone, not the reason alone, but the Scripture alone as the supreme, final, sufficient authority for all doctrine and life. The series has worked from the text: from Genesis 1–3's account of the creation's very goodness and the fall's corruption; through the legal and typological anticipations of the Mosaic covenant; through the Psalms' testimony to election and redemption; through the prophetic promises of the new covenant; through the Gospels' account of the incarnate Son's life, death, and resurrection; through Paul's systematic account of the *ordo salutis*; through the General Epistles' pastoral applications; and through Revelation's eschatological vision. The Scripture alone has been both the source of the series' content and the authority by which its conclusions may be tested.

Soli Deo Gloria, to God alone be the glory, is the series' final word, the doxological conclusion that the whole of the soteriological content demands. The election that owes nothing to human merit, the redemption that the Son alone accomplished without creaturely supplement, the regeneration that the Spirit alone produces in the spiritually dead, the justification that imputes Another's righteousness to the one who contributes nothing to its production, the adoption that makes children of those who were enemies, the sanctification that the Spirit accomplishes within the believer through the Spirit's own power, the preservation that is the Father's grip rather than the believer's grip, the glorification that the God who foreknew has already accomplished in the past tense of the divine purpose, none of this leaves any room for the creature's glory. The salvation that the series has traced is grace from first to last; and grace from first to last means glory to God alone from first to last.

IV. The Exclusion of Boasting

Where Then Is Boasting? It Is Excluded

A. Romans 3:27 and the Structural Impossibility of Human Pride

Romans 3:27's rhetorical question and its answer constitute one of the most theologically precise and the most practically important declarations in the entire Pauline corpus for the spiritual formation that the soteriology series is aimed at producing: "Where then is boasting? It is excluded. By what kind of law? Of works? No, but by a law of faith" (NASB 1995). The question is the direct challenge to the boasting that the human heart's instinctive orientation toward self-justification always produces: if the salvation is the product of the believer's own faith, faithfulness, and spiritual achievement, then the believer has something to boast about, something to compare favorably against the neighbor who failed to produce the same spiritual achievement, something to present to God as the meritorious contribution that explains why she was saved when others were not. But the salvation that the series has traced, grace alone, through faith alone, in Christ alone, leaves no ground for the boasting. It is excluded. Not merely discouraged; not merely inappropriate; excluded by the very structure of the salvation itself.

Ephesians 2:8–9 provides the most explicit statement of the boasting's exclusion in the Pauline corpus: "For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that, not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; not as a result of works, so that no one may boast" (NASB 1995). The specific force of "so that no one may boast" is the declaration that the exclusion of boasting is not a pastoral concern about the spiritual health of the boasting community but the specific, divinely-intended consequence of the grace-alone character of the salvation: the salvation was designed to exclude boasting. God chose to save in a way that leaves no room for the creature's pride, by grace alone, through faith alone, in Christ alone, precisely so that the glory would be His alone, forever. The theology is doxological from the first premise: the election is uncaused by the elect's merit, so the elect cannot boast of having earned the election. The regeneration is the Spirit's sovereign work in the spiritually dead, so the regenerate cannot boast of having cooperated in their own new birth. The justification is the imputation of Another's righteousness, so the justified cannot boast of a righteousness that is their own achievement. The adoption is the Father's free, gracious welcome of those who were enemies, so the adopted cannot boast of a filial standing that they earned. Boasting is not merely discouraged; it is structurally impossible.

The positive side of the boasting's exclusion is the specific wonder, gratitude, and worship that its place. The person who has genuinely understood the grace-alone character of the salvation, who has received it not as the just reward of her own spiritual merit but as the undeserved, uncaused, grace-expressing gift of the sovereign God, is the person whose instinctive response to the salvation is not the pride of the one who has achieved what others failed to achieve but the wonder of the one who has received what nothing in her merited and everything in her needed. The wonder is the appropriate response to grace; the gratitude is the appropriate expression of the wonder; and the worship is the appropriate direction of both: to God alone, whose grace alone is the source of everything the salvation has provided from its eternal origins to its eschatological destination.

V. The Comfort for the Anxious

Your Salvation Is as Secure as God's Own Faithfulness

A. The Security That Follows from the Divine Agency

If the salvation that the series has traced is the salvation that God accomplishes from first to last, the election, the redemption, the regeneration, the justification, the adoption, the sanctification, the preservation, and the glorification, all accomplished by the Trinitarian God's sovereign, faithful, omnipotent activity, then the security of the salvation is as strong as the character of the God who accomplishes it. The anxious believer, the one who is troubled by the quality of her own sustained faithfulness, whose assurance fluctuates with the quality of her spiritual performance, and whose specific failures produce the specific fear that the salvation might be jeopardized, has mislocated the security. The security does not rest on the quality of the believer's faithfulness but on the faithfulness of the God who has committed Himself to completing what He began.

Philippians 1:6's declaration, "He who began a good work in you will perfect it until the day of Christ Jesus" (NASB 1995), is the series' most compressed single statement of the divine-agency-grounded security. The He who began is the God of the entire golden chain: the same God who foreknew, predestined, called, and justified is the God who is completing the work through the progressive sanctification and will perfect it at the day of Christ's glorification. The beginning and the completing have the same subject: the God whose purposes are as immutable as His character. The completion is not contingent on the quality of the ongoing performance of the work's recipient; it is the divinely-committed outcome of the divinely-initiated work. He who began will perfect. Not He who began will perfect if the recipient maintains a sufficient quality of cooperative response. He who began will perfect, full stop, no conditions, no qualifications, no escape clause. The anxious believer whose assurance fluctuates with the quality of the spiritual performance is the anxious believer who has not yet understood where the security actually rests.

The pastoral word for the anxious is the specific, Philippians-1:6-grounded re-location of the security: not in your ability to maintain the work but in the faithfulness of the God who began it. Not in the strength of your grip but in the strength of the Father's grip, which is greater than all (John 10:29). Not in the quality of your perseverance but in the divine preservation that produces and sustains the perseverance. Not in the thin assurance of the dark night of the soul but in the faithfulness of the God who remains faithful even when we are faithless, because He cannot deny Himself (2 Timothy 2:13). The security is as secure as God. And God does not fail.

VI. The Fuel for Mission

The Doctrines of Grace Produce Urgency, Not Complacency

A. How Sovereign Grace Fuels the Missionary Impulse

Among the most persistent objections to the doctrines of grace, and particularly to the doctrines of unconditional election and the sovereign work of the Spirit in regeneration, is the objection that these doctrines produce complacency in mission: if God has already chosen those who will be saved, why preach? Why pray? Why go? The objection misunderstands the relationship between the divine sovereignty in salvation and the human responsibility in mission. The sovereignty of God in salvation does not eliminate the means through which the divine purpose accomplishes its goals; it guarantees the effectiveness of those means when they are faithfully used in the service of the divine purpose.

Paul's own missionary career is the most compelling single counter-example to the complacency objection. The apostle who most fully developed the theology of unconditional election, sovereign grace, and the divine

preservation of the saints is the same apostle who traveled the Mediterranean world enduring shipwrecks, beatings, imprisonments, stonings, and constant danger to preach the gospel he had received. His missionary urgency was not despite his theology but because of it: the doctrines of grace provided Paul with the specific, mission-sustaining confidence that the gospel he was preaching would not return void, because the God who had appointed the ends had also appointed the means, and the preaching of the gospel was the specific, divinely-appointed means through which the specific, divinely-appointed people would come to the specific, divinely-appointed faith. Acts 18:9–10 provides the most direct expression of this relationship: “Do not be afraid any longer, but go on speaking and do not be silent; for I am with you, and no man will attack you in order to harm you, for I have many people in this city.” The God who has people, the God who has already, in the divine election, named the ones who are His, is the God whose sovereign purpose fuels the missionary’s courage rather than undermining it.

The soteriology series has been, at its application level, a series about the God who seeks and saves the lost through the specific, ordinary, Spirit-empowered means of the gospel proclamation, the pastoral care, the discipling community, and the visible embodiment of the new creation in the life of the congregation. The doctrine of election does not produce the missionary who says “I do not need to preach because God will save His elect without me”; it produces the missionary who says “I preach with confidence because God has a people to save, the gospel is the means He has appointed, and my faithfulness in proclaiming it is the specific, Spirit-empowered channel through which the sovereign electing purpose ordinarily accomplishes its goals.” The doctrines of grace are not the enemy of mission; they are its most durable theological foundation.

VII. The Motivation for Holiness

The Grace That Saves Is the Grace That Sanctifies

A. Romans 6:1–2 and the Impossibility of the Antinomian License

The soteriology series has consistently addressed the antinomian objection to the doctrines of grace: the fear that the grace-alone character of the salvation produces the license of those who reason that if grace abounds where sin increases (Romans 5:20), then sinning more will produce more grace and therefore the salvation’s security relieves the pressure to pursue holiness. Paul’s response in Romans 6:1–2 is not the qualification of the grace (“yes, grace alone, but...”) but the appeal to the new nature that the grace alone produces: “What shall we say then? Are we to continue in sin so that grace may increase? May it never be! How shall we who died to sin still live in it?” (NASB 1995). The “may it never be” (*mē genoito*, the strongest possible Greek negation) is not merely the expression of Paul’s pastoral distaste for the antinomian conclusion; it is the theological declaration of the impossibility of the antinomian life for the genuinely regenerate believer.

The specific ground of the impossibility is the new nature that the grace alone produces in the regeneration: the genuinely regenerate believer has died to sin (v. 2) in the sense that the sin’s fundamental orientation and the sin’s ultimate hold on the nature have been broken by the Spirit’s regenerating work. The new creature of 2 Corinthians 5:17, old things passed away, new things have come, is not the old creature with new religious behavior layered on top; it is the fundamentally, ontologically, Spirit-transformed person whose new nature is genuinely oriented toward God rather than away from Him, and whose continuing in sin in the antinomian sense

is the contradiction of the new nature rather than its expression. The grace that saves produces the nature that sanctifies; and the nature that sanctifies is genuinely opposed to the sin that the antinomian would excuse as covered by grace. The grace does not merely forgive the sin; it changes the sinner into the person whose deepest desire is the holiness that the forgiveness has freed her to pursue.

The practical implication for the soteriology series' conclusion is the specific, grace-motivated, gratitude-expressing, Spirit-empowered character of the holiness that the series has been tracing in its sanctification units. The holiness is not the performance-anxiety-driven, merit-seeking, assurance-by-achievement posture of the person who pursues holiness to earn or maintain the salvation; it is the gratitude-expressing, already-justified, Spirit-following, new-nature-expressing pursuit of holiness of the person who knows that the grace alone has already secured what the holiness is now freely, joyfully, and without the moralistic anxiety expressing in the daily life of the adopted child. The grace that saves is the grace that sanctifies; and the sanctification is the grace's fruit, not its precondition.

VIII. The Doxological Climax

For from Him and through Him and to Him Are All Things

A. Romans 11:33–36 and the Series' Final Word

Romans 11:33–36 is the doxological climax not only of this lesson but of the entire soteriology series, the doxological response that the whole of the soteriological argument of Romans 1–11 demands and that no lesser expression than the one Paul provides could adequately supply. “Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments and unfathomable His ways! For who has known the mind of the Lord, or who became His counselor? Or who has first given to Him that it might be paid back to Him again? For from Him and through Him and to Him are all things. To Him be the glory forever. Amen” (NASB 1995). The doxology arrives at the end of the argument not as a rhetorical flourish but as the only intellectually honest, theologically adequate, and spiritually appropriate response to the content of the argument it concludes.

The three rhetorical questions of verses 34–35 trace the theological ground of the doxology. “Who has known the mind of the Lord?”: the divine wisdom that the entire saving purpose expresses is not the product of creaturely counsel; it is the inexhaustible, unsearchable, unfathomable wisdom of the God whose judgments are above the creature's capacity to audit and whose ways are above the creature's capacity to trace. The series has been the exposition of what the divine wisdom has been pleased to reveal about the saving purpose; but every lesson has been the reminder that the revealed depth is only the edge of the unfathomable whole. “Who became His counselor?”: the God who designed the entire saving purpose needed no advisory committee, no creaturely input, no consultative process. The sovereign, uncaused, grace-alone character of the salvation is the expression of the divine wisdom's unilateral purpose, proceeding from God alone without the creaturely supplement that the boasting would require. “Who has first given to Him that it might be paid back?”: the salvation is entirely unearned, unpurchased, and undeserved from the creaturely side. There is no debt on God's side; there is no merit on the creature's side. Grace alone, from first to last.

Verse 36's declaration, “For from Him and through Him and to Him are all things”, is the most compressed and the most comprehensive expression of the Trinitarian, grace-alone, God-alone theology of the entire saving

purpose available in the entire canon. From Him: the source and origin of all that exists, including the saving work from its eternal origins, is the God alone whose creative and electing purpose initiated everything that is. Through Him: the means and the agency of all that exists and all that is accomplished, including the specific, historical, Christ-accomplished, Spirit-applied saving work, is the God alone whose power and wisdom sustain and accomplish everything that His purpose has initiated. To Him: the destination and the goal of all that exists and all that is accomplished, including the eschatological glorification and the eternal state's face-to-face worship, is the God alone whose glory is the ultimate end that the entire creation, redemption, and new creation are aimed at expressing. From Him, through Him, to Him, source, agency, and destination all belong to the same God, and the glory belongs to Him alone, forever.

B. Ephesians 1:3–14 and the Doxological Architecture of the Series

Ephesians 1:3–14 provides the final doxological frame for the series: the single, long Greek sentence, the longest in the New Testament, in which Paul moves from the benediction (“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ”, v. 3) through the entire account of the spiritual blessings, chosen before the foundation of the world (v. 4), predestined to adoption (v. 5), redeemed through His blood (v. 7), sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise (v. 13), given as a pledge of the inheritance (v. 14), and closes not with a further declaration but with the doxological purpose that the whole account has been aimed at expressing: “to the praise of His glory” (vv. 6, 12, 14, the three-fold refrain that marks each section of the saving work's Trinitarian movement).

The three-fold “to the praise of His glory” is the doxological spine of Ephesians 1's entire account of the spiritual blessings: the Father's work of election and predestination is “to the praise of the glory of His grace” (v. 6); the Son's work of redemption and forgiveness is “to the praise of His glory” (v. 12); and the Spirit's work of sealing and pledging the inheritance is “to the praise of His glory” (v. 14). The entire Trinitarian saving work, planned by the Father, accomplished by the Son, applied by the Spirit, is aimed at a single, unified, eschatologically-final destination: the praise of the divine glory. This is what the soteriology series has been from beginning to end. Not the aggrandizement of the creature's spiritual achievement, not the celebration of the believer's cooperation with grace, not the vindication of the human free will's capacity to receive the salvation that grace provides, but the praise of the glory of the God who alone planned, accomplished, and applies the salvation that the series has traced from its eternal origins to its eschatological destination.

Revelation 5:9–14 and 7:9–12 provide the final eschatological vision of the series' doxological destination: the redeemed from every tribe and tongue and people and nation, ten thousand times ten thousand of them, standing before the Lamb who was slain and the One who sits on the throne, singing the new song of the redemption's praise: “Worthy are You... for You were slain, and purchased for God with Your blood men from every tribe and tongue and people and nation” (5:9, NASB 1995). This is the destination of the entire saving work that the series has traced. The redeemed community, gathered from the ends of the earth and every generation of the church's history, standing in the glorified embodiment of the resurrection bodies that 1 Corinthians 15 describes, in the new creation that Revelation 21–22 envisions, in the face-to-face, name-on-forehead, tear-wiped, curse-gone, all-things-new presence of the God who foreknew and predestined and called and justified and glorified, singing the worthy-is-the-Lamb that is the only adequate response to the grace alone by which the salvation was accomplished from first to last.

From eternity to eternity. The chain is golden. Every link forged by God. Every link held by God. No link breakable. And the God who forged the first link, the eternal, sovereign, uncaused, grace-expressing foreknowing, is the God who will hold the last link, the eschatological, permanent, face-to-face, tear-wiping, all-things-new glorification, and whose faithfulness between the first link and the last is as certain as His character, as reliable as His promises, and as permanent as the Lamb's blood through which every link was sealed. The doxological climax is not the end of something; it is the beginning of everything: the eternal, unending, inexhaustible praise of the God from whom and through whom and to whom are all things, to Him be the glory forever.

Amen.

“Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments and unfathomable His ways!... For from Him and through Him and to Him are all things. To Him be the glory forever. Amen.”

Romans 11:33, 36, NASB 1995

Theological Terms and Definitions

The Five Solas	The five theological affirmations that crystallized the Protestant Reformation's recovery of the biblical gospel: Sola Scriptura (Scripture alone as the supreme authority for all doctrine and life), Sola Gratia (salvation by grace alone from first to last, without any creaturely merit), Sola Fide (faith alone as the alone instrument of justification, not faith plus works), Solus Christus (Christ alone as the ground and source of salvation, whose completed work is the entire and sufficient basis of the sinner's right standing before God), and Soli Deo Gloria (to God alone be the glory, the necessary doxological conclusion of the grace-alone character of the salvation). The five solas together constitute the theological summary of the entire ordo salutis: grace alone planned, accomplished, and applies the salvation; faith alone receives it; Christ alone grounds it; Scripture alone reveals it; and God alone deserves the glory for it.
Sola Gratia	Latin: "grace alone", the affirmation that salvation is by grace alone from first to last, without any creaturely contribution that could form the ground of a claim on the divine favor. The uncaused election (God does not choose the elect because of their foreseen faith or merit), the monergistic regeneration (the Spirit alone produces the new birth in the spiritually dead sinner who contributes nothing), the forensic justification (the imputed righteousness of Another, not the believer's own achieved righteousness), the Spirit-empowered sanctification (God who works in you both to will and to work), and the divinely-guaranteed glorification (the past-tense certainty of Romans 8:30's divine reckoning) are all expressions of the grace alone that is the first and last word about the nature of the saving work. Sola gratia implies Soli Deo Gloria: grace alone means glory to God alone.
Sola Fide	Latin: "faith alone", the affirmation that faith is the alone instrument by which the grace-provided salvation is received, specifically in the context of justification: the sinner is justified by faith alone, not by faith plus works. The alone instrument receives the imputed righteousness of Christ (the ground of justification) without supplementing it with any creaturely merit. The Reformation's formula was iustificatio sola fide sed non per fidem solam: justification is by faith alone, but not by faith that is alone (i.e., genuine justifying faith is never solitary but is always accompanied by the Spirit-produced works that demonstrate its genuine character). The distinction preserves both the alone-instrument character of the justifying faith (the ground is Christ's righteousness alone) and the genuine fruitfulness of the justified life (the fruit demonstrates the root without constituting the root's character or earning its standing).
Solus Christus	Latin: "Christ alone", the affirmation that Christ alone is the ground and source of the salvation that grace provides and faith receives. His incarnation, active obedience (the whole life of perfect law-keeping that produced the righteousness available for imputation), passive obedience (the substitutionary, propitiatory, expiatory death that satisfied the divine justice and bore the penalty of the elect's sin), resurrection (the vindication of the atoning work and the guarantee of the resurrection of those in Christ), ascension and session (the permanent enthronement at the Father's right hand from which the continuous intercession is accomplished), and return (the eschatological appearance that will consummate the salvation and inaugurate the eternal state), all of these are the alone-Christ's completed and continuing work that is the entire and sufficient ground of every element of the ordo salutis.
The Boasting Excluded	Paul's declaration in Romans 3:27 ("Where then is boasting? It is excluded") and its Ephesians 2:8–9 complement ("not as a result of works, so that no one may boast") that the grace-alone, faith-alone, Christ-alone character of the salvation structurally excludes the boasting that a merit-based salvation would enable. Boasting is not merely discouraged as pastorally unhealthy; it is excluded by the very structure of the salvation itself, the election owes nothing to the elect's merit, the regeneration contributes nothing from the spiritually dead sinner, the justification imputes Another's righteousness, the adoption welcomes enemies who deserve

	condemnation. Nothing in the grace-alone salvation provides the boasting with a legitimate purchase. The appropriate response to the grace-alone salvation is not pride in the spiritual achievement but wonder at the divine grace, wonder that yields gratitude, and gratitude that yields worship: to God alone be the glory, forever.
He Began Will Perfect	The specific, Philippians 1:6 expression of the divine-agency-grounded security of the believing soul: “He who began a good work in you will perfect it until the day of Christ Jesus.” The same God who foreknew, predestined, called, justified, and (in the divine past-tense reckoning of Romans 8:30) has already glorified is the God who will perfect the work until the day of Christ. The completion is not contingent on the quality of the ongoing performance of the work’s recipient; it is the divinely-committed outcome of the divinely-initiated work. The pastoral application: the anxious believer whose assurance fluctuates with the quality of the spiritual performance has mislocated the security; the security rests not on the believer’s ability to maintain the work but on the faithfulness of the God who began it and who does not abandon the works He initiates.
The Doctrines of Grace	The five doctrines of Calvinistic or Reformed soteriology summarized in the acronym TULIP, articulated at the Synod of Dort (1618–1619) in response to the Arminian Remonstrance: Total Depravity (the unregenerate person is unable to respond to the gospel or seek God apart from the Spirit’s prior work), Unconditional Election (God’s electing choice is not conditioned on foreseen faith or merit), Limited Atonement (Christ’s atoning work was specifically and effectively accomplished for the elect), Irresistible Grace (the Spirit’s regenerating and effectual calling produces the new birth in those God has chosen, not contingent on the cooperation of the fallen will), and Perseverance of the Saints (those whom God has genuinely regenerated will persevere in faith and holiness to the end, kept by the divine preservation). The doctrines together form the theological architecture of the Soteriology series’ treatment of the ordo salutis, from election through glorification.
Soli Deo Gloria	Latin: “to God alone be the glory”, the doxological summary of the entire soteriology series and the final word of all Christian theology. The Reformation slogan captures the necessary, comprehensive, grace-alone-demanding implication of every doctrine of salvation rightly understood: when the salvation is grace alone from first to last, the glory belongs to God alone from first to last. Not God and the cooperating believer; not God and the church’s sacramental mediation; not God and the believer’s sustained faithfulness, but God alone, whose grace alone planned in eternity past, whose Son alone accomplished in history, whose Spirit alone applies in the believer’s experience, and whose Triune faithfulness alone will consummate in the age to come. Every lesson of the soteriology series has closed with this declaration because every lesson has been the account of what God alone has done. From Him and through Him and to Him are all things. To Him be the glory forever. Amen.
Pactum Salutis	Latin: “covenant of redemption”, the eternal, intra-Trinitarian covenant in which the Father appointed the elect to salvation, the Son undertook to accomplish the redemption through His incarnation, obedience, and atonement, and the Spirit undertook to apply the redemption through regeneration and the ongoing sanctifying, preserving, and assuring ministry. The pactum salutis is the eternal, Trinitarian foundation of the entire ordo salutis: every temporal expression of the saving work, the regeneration in time, the justification in time, the glorification at the end of time, is the temporal unfolding of the eternal covenant whose parties are the Triune God and whose execution is as certain as the faithfulness of the God who made it. From Him and through Him and to Him.

Practical Application

A. For the Mind: What Must We Believe?

We must believe the five solas as the theological summary of the series' content: grace alone, faith alone, Christ alone, Scripture alone, to God alone be the glory. Not as slogans to be recited but as the specific, theologically-precise, living-truth commitments that shape the daily understanding of the salvation, the daily approach to God in prayer and worship, the daily motivation for holiness and service, and the daily communication of the gospel to those who do not yet know the Savior. The five solas are not the Reformation's private property or the Reformed tradition's tribal distinctives; they are the biblical gospel's own structure, recovered from the accretions of medieval theology and expressed in the theological precision that the sixteenth century's Spirit-empowered reformation of the church produced.

We must believe the golden chain's unbreakable character as the specific, daily, living-truth ground of the peace that the whole of the series has been establishing. Not the theoretical assent to the doctrine of the perseverance of the saints as a systematic theology proposition, but the daily, personally-received, specifically-applied confidence: I am foreknown, predestined, called, justified, and, in the divine reckoning of the God who cannot lie and who does not fail, already glorified. The chain holds. Every link. And the God who holds every link is the God whose faithfulness is as certain as His character, as permanent as His eternal purpose, and as personally directed at me as the uncaused, grace-expressing foreknowing that began the chain before the foundation of the world.

We must believe that the grace-alone character of the salvation leaves no room for the boasting and provides no ground for the complacency, but instead produces the specific wonder, gratitude, worship, missionary urgency, and holiness-motivation that the grace-alone saving work is designed to produce in those who have genuinely received it. The grace that saves is the grace that sanctifies; the grace that secures is the grace that motivates; and the grace that will glorify is the grace that already, in the present age, produces the groaning-and-hoping, suffering-and-serving, sanctification-pursuing, mission-engaging, doxologically-oriented life of the person who knows she is the undeserving recipient of the most magnificent gift that has ever been given: the grace of God in Christ Jesus our Lord, from eternity to eternity.

B. For the Heart: What Must We Feel and Desire?

Desire the specific, Romans-11:33-quality wonder at the depth of the riches of the wisdom and knowledge of God, the wonder that is the only intellectually honest and spiritually appropriate response to the sweep of the divine saving purpose that the series has been tracing. Not the comfortable familiarity with the theological categories, not the professional competence of the theological student who has mastered the vocabulary, not the intellectual achievement of the one who has organized the doctrines into a coherent system, but the genuine, open-mouthed, bowing-of-the-knee, "Oh, the depth!" wonder of the one who has glimpsed, through the glass darkly of the present-age theological study, the inexhaustible, unfathomable, unsearchable riches of the God whose wisdom designed the entire saving work and whose glory is the destination toward which the whole of it is moving. The doctrines of grace, rightly received, produce not the theological pride of the one who has mastered a system but the theological wonder of the one who has been mastered by the God the system is about.

Desire the specific, doxological posture that the five solas together produce: the posture of the one who is standing in the final assembly of the redeemed, Revelation 7:9–12's great multitude that no one could count, from

every nation and tribe and people and tongue, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, and who is singing the specific, grace-alone-demanded, glory-to-God-alone worship that the salvation from eternity to eternity requires. Not the worship that mingles the creature's pride with the Creator's praise. Not the worship that reserves some of the glory for the human faithfulness that somehow supplemented the grace. But the specific, whole-hearted, grace-alone-grounded, Lamb-who-was-slain-praising worship of the one who knows that everything she possesses, the salvation, the righteousness, the adoption, the sanctification, the hope, the glorification, the eternal life, was given, not earned; received, not achieved; graciously provided by the God who alone deserves the glory for it, forever.

Desire for the congregation you serve the specific, series-completing, doxologically-calibrated spiritual formation that the whole of the soteriology series has been aimed at producing: not merely better theological knowledge (though that is part of it), not merely clearer soteriological understanding (though that is essential), but the specific, grace-humbled, Christ-exalting, Spirit-dependent, Father-glorifying, mission-fueled, holiness-pursuing, eschatologically-hoping life of the person who has received the grace of God in Christ Jesus and who responds to it with the only response that the grace-alone character of the salvation makes appropriate: wonder, gratitude, worship, obedience, and the specific, lifelong, grace-empowered, doxologically-directed pursuit of the knowledge of the God from whom and through whom and to whom are all things.

C. For the Hands: What Must We Do?

- Read Romans 8:28–39 as the series' single most comprehensive summary passage, the passage that holds together the promise (all things work together for good), the golden chain (foreknew, predestined, called, justified, glorified), the closed court of the divine justification (who will bring a charge? God justifies; who will condemn? Christ intercedes), and the comprehensive inseparability from the love of God (neither death nor life nor angels nor principalities nor things present nor things to come nor any created thing). For each of the passage's major movements: how does it specifically address the theological content of one or more of the series' thirty-four lessons? And how does the passage's close, "neither... nor any other created thing, will be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord", constitute the specific, personally-addressed, finally-inseparable declaration of the grace-alone salvation's security as the series' own concluding word?
- Read Ephesians 1:3–14 slowly, attending to the three-fold "to the praise of His glory" that divides the passage into its Trinitarian movements (the Father's election and predestination, vv. 3–6; the Son's redemption and forgiveness, vv. 7–12; the Spirit's sealing and pledging of the inheritance, vv. 13–14). For each movement: name the specific lessons of the series that have treated the doctrine described in that movement. And then receive the three-fold "to the praise of His glory" as the specific, doxological purpose-statement of the entire saving work: the Father's planning, the Son's accomplishing, and the Spirit's applying are all aimed at the single, unified, eschatologically-final destination of the praise of the divine glory. Ask: has the series produced this praise in you? And what specific dimension of the series' content has most directly and most powerfully moved you from the theological understanding of the salvation to the doxological response that is the understanding's appropriate fruit?
- Read Revelation 5:1–14 as the eschatological vision of the series' doxological destination: the throne room of heaven, the sealed scroll and the Lion-Lamb who alone is worthy to open it, the new song of the redemption's praise ("Worthy are You... for You were slain, and purchased for God with Your blood men from every tribe and tongue and people and nation", v. 9, NASB 1995), and the ten-thousand-times-ten-thousand angels and the whole creation joining the song ("Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive

power and riches and wisdom and might and honor and glory and blessing”, v. 12, NASB 1995). Ask: in what sense is this eschatological vision of the heaven-and-earth chorus of the Lamb’s praise the specific, doxological destination of every lesson in the series? And how does the vision of the universal, every-tongue-and-tribe, every-angel-and-creature chorus of the Lamb’s worship provide the specific, eschatological, doxological horizon within which the present-age Christian life, with all its groaning, sanctification, suffering, mission, and hope, is to be understood and lived?

- For this final study group session, each participant is invited to name the single most important doctrinal insight from the series’ thirty-four lessons that has most directly transformed their understanding of the gospel, their experience of the Christian life, or their relationship with God. What did you understand, believe, feel, or do differently before the series that you now understand, believe, feel, or do differently after it? What specific lesson, what specific text, what specific theological insight has been the series’ most personally transformative gift? Share it with the group, not as a theological achievement to be proud of but as the specific, grace-given, Spirit-produced gift that it is, offered back to the God from whom it came and to the community whose shared study has been the context in which it was received. This is the series’ final application: the grace-alone salvation does not merely produce theological knowledge; it produces the specific, communal, doxologically-directed wonder of the people who know they have been saved by the grace of God alone and who are being formed, by the same grace, into the community of those who will sing the new song forever.
- Close the series, and this study guide, with the full reading of Romans 11:33–36 as the doxological declaration of the completed series. Read it slowly, with the full weight of thirty-five lessons of content behind it: “Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments and unfathomable His ways! For who has known the mind of the Lord, or who became His counselor? Or who has first given to Him that it might be paid back to Him again? For from Him and through Him and to Him are all things. To Him be the glory forever. Amen.” The Amen is not merely an ending; it is a declaration: so be it, so it is, so it shall be forever. The salvation that this series has traced is real. The grace that produced it is free. The Christ who accomplished it is risen. The Spirit who applies it is faithful. The Father who planned it will complete it. And the glory belongs to the Triune God alone, from eternity to eternity, forever and ever. Soli Deo Gloria.

Key Texts: *Romans 8:28–39; 11:33–36; Ephesians 1:3–14; 2:8–10; Jude 24–25; Revelation 5:9–14; 7:9–12; Philippians 1:6; Romans 3:27; 6:1–2; Acts 18:9–10*

Study and Discussion Questions

Opening Question

- This is the final lesson of the soteriology series. Before engaging the lesson's content, look back at the whole of the series and identify the single lesson, the single doctrine, or the single text that has been most personally significant for your own theological formation and Christian life across all thirty-five lessons. What did you understand differently before the series that you understand differently now? And what specific pastoral, devotional, or doxological consequence has the most significant insight produced in your life?

Observation Questions (What Do the Texts Say?)

- Read Romans 8:28–39. In verse 28, what are the two qualifications on the “all things work together for good” promise? In verses 29–30, trace the golden chain and note the tense of each verb, why does the past tense of glorified create the specific, chain-completing confidence the passage aims at? In verses 31–34, what are the four rhetorical challenges and their specific answers? In verses 35–36, what specific forms of present-age suffering does Paul enumerate, and what does the Psalm 44:22 citation establish about their relationship to the Christian life (are they hypothetical or actual)? In verses 37–39, what is the comprehensive catalogue of potential separating forces, and what is the specific, personally-located declaration with which the passage closes (“in Christ Jesus our Lord”)? And how does the passage’s close, the love that cannot separate located in the specific person of Christ Jesus our Lord, provide the Christological and relational anchor of the grace-alone salvation’s security?
- Read Ephesians 1:3–14. Identify the three movements of the Trinitarian saving work and the doxological purpose-statement that closes each: (1) the Father’s work (chosen before the foundation of the world... predestined to adoption... to the praise of the glory of His grace, v. 6); (2) the Son’s work (redeemed through His blood... forgiveness of trespasses... to the praise of His glory, vv. 7–12); (3) the Spirit’s work (sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise... the pledge of our inheritance... to the praise of His glory, vv. 13–14). For each movement: what specific element(s) of the *ordo salutis* does the movement describe? And how does the three-fold “to the praise of His glory” establish the doxological purpose of the Trinitarian saving work as the answer to the series’ question: to what end has God done all of this?
- Read Romans 11:33–36 as the doxological conclusion to Paul’s argument in Romans 1–11. In verse 33, what three attributes of the divine nature does Paul name in his exclamation (“riches... wisdom... knowledge”), and what two words does he use to describe the divine judgments and ways (“unsearchable... unfathomable”)? In verses 34–35, what three rhetorical questions does Paul ask, each of which challenges a different form of the creaturely claim on the divine (the claim of wisdom, the claim of counsel, the claim of merit)? In verse 36, what is the triple attribution of the divine prerogative (“From Him... through Him... to Him”)? And how does the Amen that closes the verse function as more than a liturgical ending, what specific theological affirmation does the Amen make?
- Read Revelation 5:1–14 and 7:9–12. In 5:1–5, who is the only One found worthy to open the scroll, and by what dual title is He identified (“the Lion that is from the tribe of Judah... a Lamb standing, as if slain”, vv. 5–6)? In 5:9–10, what is the content of the new song the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders sing, particularly what is the ground of the Lamb’s worthiness (“for You were slain, and purchased... with Your blood...”)? In 5:11–12, what is the scope of the chorus and the content of the praise? In 7:9, who are

the great multitude, and from what backgrounds do they come? In 7:10, what is the specific declaration of the multitude's worship ("Salvation to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb"), and how does this declaration summarize the entire soteriology series' theological content?

- Read Romans 3:21–31 and Ephesians 2:1–10. In Romans 3:21–26, what is the specific content of the righteousness of God revealed in the gospel (apart from the Law... righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all those who believe... the redemption which is in Christ Jesus... as a propitiation through faith...)? In verse 27, what is Paul's immediate application ("Where then is boasting? It is excluded"), and what is the theological ground of the exclusion ("by what kind of law? Of works? No, but by a law of faith")? In Ephesians 2:1–5, what is the condition of the unregenerate ("dead in trespasses and sins... children of wrath"), and what is the divine initiative that addressed it ("But God, being rich in mercy... made us alive together with Christ")? In verses 8–9, what is the precise statement of the grace-alone, faith-alone character of the salvation, and what is the specific reason Paul gives for the works' exclusion ("so that no one may boast")?

Interpretation Questions (What Does It Mean?)

- The lesson presents the golden chain of Romans 8:29–30 as the series' architectural spine. Evaluate the adequacy of this claim as a summary of the entire *ordo salutis*. Does the five-link chain (foreknew, predestined, called, justified, glorified) adequately capture the full scope of the saving work, or does it omit significant elements, sanctification, adoption, perseverance, the resurrection of the body, that the series has treated as major units? How would you account for the omitted elements within the chain's structure? Are they implied in the existing links (sanctification is the process of the glorification's progressive approach; adoption is the relational expression of the justified standing), or do they represent aspects of the saving work that require the chain's expansion?
- The lesson presents the doctrines of grace as the fuel for mission rather than the ground for complacency, arguing that the sovereignty of God in salvation does not eliminate the means but guarantees their effectiveness. Evaluate the theological adequacy of this argument. Does the divine sovereignty in election and regeneration genuinely motivate the missionary's confidence (God has a people to save, and the preaching is the means), or does it create the logical possibility of the complacency objection (if God will save His elect, why preach)? And how does Acts 18:9–10 ("I have many people in this city" as the ground of the missionary's courage) model the specific, sovereignty-fueled, urgency-producing missionary posture that the doctrines of grace ought to produce?
- The lesson presents the exclusion of boasting as the structural consequence of the grace-alone character of the salvation: the salvation was designed to exclude boasting and to produce wonder, gratitude, and worship in its place. Evaluate the psychological adequacy of this account. Does the grace-alone theology genuinely produce the wonder and gratitude it claims, or does it risk producing the spiritual pride of those who boast that they are among the elect while others are not? How does the Calvinist tradition's consistent emphasis on the uncaused character of the election, the election owes nothing to the elect's merit, guard against the spiritual pride of the doctrine of election? And what specific spiritual disciplines or communal practices most effectively sustain the wonder and gratitude that the grace-alone theology is designed to produce?
- The lesson presents the three Reformation solas of grace, faith, and Christ as the specific summary of the series' content. Evaluate the relationship between the three: does the affirmation of each require and entail the others? If salvation is by grace alone, does that necessarily imply that the instrument is faith alone

(rather than faith plus works)? And if the instrument is faith alone, does that necessarily imply that the ground is Christ alone (rather than Christ plus the believer's own righteousness)? And how does the fourth sola, Sola Scriptura, function as the epistemological foundation that makes the first three knowable, and how does the fifth sola, Soli Deo Gloria, function as the doxological conclusion that the first four demand?

- Romans 11:36's "For from Him and through Him and to Him are all things" is the lesson's final text and the series' final word. Evaluate the adequacy of this verse as the theological summary of the entire soteriology series. How does the "from Him" address the Sola Gratia (the grace-alone source of the saving work), the "through Him" address the Solus Christus and the Spirit's applying ministry (the Christ-alone accomplishment and the Spirit-alone application of the saving work), and the "to Him" address the Soli Deo Gloria (the God-alone destination of the entire saving work's doxological purpose)? And how does the "all things" of the verse, not merely the saving work but the entire creation, history, and eschatological new creation, establish the soteriology series' content within the broadest possible theological horizon: the God who is the source, agency, and destination of all things?

Application Questions (What Does It Demand of Us?)

- The lesson closes with the invitation to identify the single most personally transformative insight from the series' thirty-five lessons. Having answered this question in the opening question, now address its application: what specific, concrete, observable change in your life, in your preaching, your pastoral care, your prayer, your approach to God, your motivation for holiness, your engagement in mission, your response to suffering, your eschatological hope, has been or should be produced by the most significant doctrinal insight? The test of theological formation is not the quality of the theological knowledge but the quality of the life the knowledge produces. What specific life-change does the series' most significant insight demand, and how will you pursue it?
- The series has consistently identified the five solas as both the Reformation's theological heritage and the biblical gospel's own structure. Evaluate your congregation's actual, operative theology of the gospel: not the theology they would articulate if asked to state the five solas, but the theology that shapes how they actually understand their standing before God, their motivation for holiness, their response to failure, and their approach to the grace they have received. Which of the five solas is most fully operative in the congregation's spiritual life, and which is most in need of deeper formation? And what specific preaching, teaching, or pastoral engagement would most effectively deepen the sola that is most urgently needed?
- The lesson argues that the doctrines of grace produce urgency for mission rather than complacency. Evaluate your congregation's actual missionary engagement in the light of the theology that should be fueling it. Is the missionary urgency of the congregation commensurate with the doctrinal conviction that God has a people to save, the gospel is the means He has appointed, and the preaching and the witnessing and the going are the Spirit-empowered channels through which the sovereign electing purpose ordinarily accomplishes its goals? And what specific, concrete, congregation-shaping decision would most directly express the missionary urgency that the doctrines of grace, rightly understood, should produce?
- This is the final lesson of the soteriology series, and it closes with the doxological climax of Romans 11:36: "For from Him and through Him and to Him are all things. To Him be the glory forever. Amen." As the series concludes, what will you do differently, in your study, your preaching, your pastoral care, your prayer, your worship, your mission, to ensure that the theological formation the series has aimed at producing continues to develop in you and in your congregation beyond the series itself? What specific ongoing engagement with the doctrines of grace, in the pulpit, in the study group, in the personal devotional life, will you commit

to as the expression of the conviction that the grace-alone salvation, rightly understood, demands the lifelong, grace-empowered, doxologically-directed pursuit of the knowledge of the God from whom and through whom and to whom are all things? To Him be the glory. Forever. Amen.

Prayer Focus

Open this final lesson's prayer time by reading Romans 8:28–39 in its entirety, slowly, as the single most comprehensive pastoral summary of the entire soteriology series. Let the golden chain of verses 29–30 be received as the specific, personally-addressed, already-accomplished-in-the-divine-purpose declaration of the saving work's security: foreknown, predestined, called, justified, glorified. And then let the rhetorical challenges of verses 31–39 be received as the specific, personally-directed, one-by-one answers to every specific form of the anxiety that the present-age Christian life produces: Who is against you? God is for you. Who will bring a charge? God justifies. Who condemns? Christ intercedes. Who will separate you? No one, nothing, neither death nor life nor anything created. The love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord is the specifically-located, personally-addressed, grace-alone-secured, inseparable love that is the final word of the golden chain's unbreakable security.

Pray the Trinitarian summary over the congregation as the specific, grace-grounded, doxologically-directed intercession that the series' theological content has been aimed at making possible: "Father, who chose this congregation in Christ before the foundation of the world, keep them in Your name, perfect the work You began in each of them until the day of Christ Jesus, and bring every foreknown person in their sphere to the glorification that You have already accomplished in the past tense of Your eternal purpose. Son, who accomplished the redemption through Your blood and who always lives to make intercession for them, maintain the application of Your completed work to each specific person in this congregation, sustain their faith through the specific trials that Your intercession anticipates, and let them know that neither the accusations of the enemy nor the failures of their own conscience can stand against the closed court of the God who justifies and the Christ who intercedes. Spirit, who sealed each one for the day of redemption and who testifies with their spirits that they are children of God, deepen the assurance, sustain the sanctification, intercede with groanings too deep for words for the specific weaknesses of each specific person, and bring every sealed person safely to the day of the inheritance's full receipt."

Pray Romans 11:33–36 as the corporate, doxological declaration of the series' theological journey's conclusion: "Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments and unfathomable His ways! For who has known the mind of the Lord, or who became His counselor? Or who has first given to Him that it might be paid back to Him again? For from Him and through Him and to Him are all things. To Him be the glory forever. Amen." Let the "Oh, the depth!" be the genuine, open-mouthed, grace-humbled wonder of the one who has spent thirty-five lessons at the edge of the unfathomable riches and has been overwhelmed not by the mastery of what has been learned but by the inexhaustibility of what remains to be learned about the God who is the source, agency, and destination of all things. The study of soteriology does not produce the theologian who has finished with the subject; it produces the worshipper who has barely begun.

Pray for the congregation's ongoing formation in the doctrines of grace, for the specific, Spirit-empowered, Scripture-grounded, wonder-producing, holiness-motivating, mission-fueling, comfort-providing, eschatologically-calibrated, doxologically-directed formation that the whole of the soteriology series has been aimed at producing. Ask the Spirit to take the seeds that the series has planted and produce in each person the specific, lasting, life-transforming fruit that the grace-alone theology should produce: the wonder that displaces pride; the gratitude that displaces anxiety; the worship that displaces self-centeredness; the holiness that displaces the antinomian complacency; the missionary urgency that displaces the inward-turned insularity; and

the eschatological hope that displaces the present-age sufferings' claim to be the final word. Ask for the congregation to be, year by year, becoming the community that most closely resembles the great multitude of Revelation 7:9–12: the community from every tongue and tribe and nation, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, crying out with a loud voice, "Salvation to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb."

Close the series with Jude 24–25, the benediction that has served as the series' doxological anchor across the perseverance and preservation units and that now serves as the final, unifying, forward-looking, grace-alone-expressing declaration of the entire series' content: "Now to Him who is able to keep you from stumbling, and to make you stand in the presence of His glory blameless with great joy, to the only God our Savior, through Jesus Christ our Lord, be glory, majesty, dominion and authority, before all time and now and forever. Amen." The able-to-keep is the grace-alone preservation. The blameless standing in the divine glory is the grace-alone glorification. The great joy is the grace-alone fruit of the whole saving work received as the gift it always was. And the glory and the majesty and the dominion and the authority, before all time and now and forever, belong to the only God our Savior through Jesus Christ our Lord, to whom the entire soteriology series, from the eternal election to the eternal state, has been pointing, and to whom the entire redeemed creation will sing the new song of the Lamb's worthiness forever and ever. Soli Deo Gloria. To God alone be the glory. Amen.

*"For from Him and through Him and to Him are all things. To Him be the glory forever.
Amen."*

Romans 11:36, NASB 1995

Key Texts: Romans 8:28–39; 11:33–36; Ephesians 1:3–14; 2:8–10; Jude 24–25; Revelation 5:9–14; 7:9–12; Philippians 1:6; Romans 3:27; 6:1–2

THE SOTERIOLOGY SERIES: COMPLETE

35 Lessons

12 Units

From Eternal Election to Eternal Glory

The Golden Chain

Foreknew → Predestined → Called → Justified → Glorified

The Five Solas

Sola Scriptura • Sola Gratia • Sola Fide • Solus Christus • Soli Deo Gloria

The Final Word

*"For from Him and through Him and to Him are all things.
To Him be the glory forever. Amen."*

Romans 11:36

Soli Deo Gloria

To God Alone Be the Glory

FAITHFUL TO THE WORD

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