



## WHY DO WE BELIEVE *THAT* ? Introduction to Reformed Theology

### Class 19 THE *ORDO SALUTIS*, PART 2

Education Year 2024-2025

Rev. Mark H. Vander Pol



1

## Review – The *Ordo Salutis*

- Review of Covenant of Redemption & Covenant of Grace
- The *ordo* is a logical order, not necessarily chronological. Accommodated to our finite understanding.
- It is Biblical and Confessional
- Foreknowledge & Election (not part of the *ordo* per se)



2

## Ordinarily

- When we think about the application of our salvation by the gracious work of the Triune God alone, we need to remember that God is God, and he can work in anyway that he wills.
- What we have in his Word are the promises of how he will *ordinarily* work in and through the Church of Christ.
- By having an *ordo* we are not “putting God in a box,” but being led by his Word and his promises.



## Scripture Passages - Calling

- **Romans 10:14-17**

How then will they call on him in whom they have not believed? And how are they to believe in him of whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without someone preaching? And how are they to preach unless they are sent? As it is written, “How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the good news!” But they have not all obeyed the gospel. For Isaiah says, “Lord, who has believed what he has heard from us?” So faith comes from hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ.

- **I Corinthians 1:9**

God is faithful, by whom you were called into the fellowship of his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

- **I Peter 5:10**

And after you have suffered a little while, the God of all grace, who has called you to his eternal glory in Christ, will himself restore, confirm, strengthen, and establish you.



## Scripture Passages - Regeneration

- **John 3:3**

Jesus answered him, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born again he cannot see the kingdom of God."

- **I Corinthians 12:3**

Therefore I want you to understand that no one speaking in the Spirit of God ever says "Jesus is accursed!" and no one can say "Jesus is Lord" except in the Holy Spirit.

- **I Peter 1:23**

...since you have been born again, not of perishable seed but of imperishable, through the living and abiding word of God...



## Calling & Regeneration

- Two sides of the same coins, but which side is up first? Is the order:
  1. Calling
  2. Regeneration
- Necessary to determine which call we are talking about:
  - External / General Call
  - Internal / Effectual Call
- If we are talking about the external / general call, then it is fairly understood that ordinarily it precedes regeneration. The unregenerate can hear the gospel.
  - The Word of the Gospel is preached indiscriminately – CD II.5.
- The bigger question comes with the internal/effectual call.
  - Does the Spirit open our ears first to hear the call, or does the effectual call come and then effectually opens ears / heart?



## Defining Terms

### • Calling

- "...is an act of the grace of God in Christ by which he calls men dead in sin and lost in Adam through the preaching of the gospel and the power of the Holy Spirit, to union with Christ and to the salvation obtained in him."
  - "[Called *from*] the state of sin and condemnation, darkness, the world..."
  - "[Called *to*] union with Christ, holiness, marvelous light, the kingdom of God..."<sup>1</sup>
- [It is the] voluntary favor of God whereby He so summons and draws to the communion of His grace and glory the elect from eternity—redeemed through Christ in time, by nature sinners, many simple and ignoble—by His supernatural and omnipotent power, through the external proclamation of the Word and the Holy Spirit. He creates anew and regenerates them, and at the same time gives them faith in Christ, and through it unites them to God. As a result of God calling in this way, they are infallibly led into and reach His communion by right.<sup>2</sup>

### • General / External Call

- The preached Word that goes out to all the world—to all people that hear it: both the elect and the reprobate.
- CD II.5; III/IV.8

1. Turretin, *Institutes*, 2.501.

2. Heidegger, *The Concise Marrow of Theology*, 145.



## Defining Terms

### • General / External Call

- [For the non-elect] they are called according to the righteousness and economy of God whereby *He tolerates them in the external communion of the elect*, convicts through the Word concerning His goodness and their malice, and it provides no excuse for parents. *These are not called immediately by God, who moves the heart, but mediately by men who strike the ears.* Their hearts are not penetrated and, having been called in such a way, they are not brought in but are abandoned in their misery. *Finally, they are called not on account of themselves but on account of the elect, in whose midst they dwell.* They do not prevail at discerning these human heralds. This itself is nevertheless not universal, because external calling through the Word has "proper times" (1 Tim 2:6) and measure of rule or "line" of mission (2 Cor 10:13, 15).<sup>1</sup>
- ... the presentation of the gospel to sinners in general by the preaching of the Word.<sup>2</sup>

1. Heidegger, *Concise*, 145-146 (emphasis added).

2. Vos, *Reformed Dogmatics*, 4.38.



## Defining Terms

### • Effectual / Internal Call

- HC 21, “[True faith is]... a wholehearted trust which the Holy Spirit works in me by the gospel...”
- HC 65, “[True faith comes from] the Holy Spirit works it in our hearts by the preaching of the holy gospel...”
- WCF – Article X
- WLC – Questions 67-68



## Defining Terms

### • Effectual / Internal Call

- The call of God that regenerates.
- Some theologians prefer to combine this internal / effectual call with regeneration as they are intimately connected.

...many older theologians treat regeneration under “calling.” They speak of a twofold calling: an external calling (*vocatio externa*) that occurs through the preaching of the Word, and an internal or effectual calling (*vocatio interna, vocatio efficax*) that occurs through the operation of the Holy Spirit in the heart. These terms are not chosen arbitrarily. They occupy a rather large place in scriptural usage, and since theological terminology ought to keep as closely as possible to God's Word, we may not push them aside. However, the question arises whether in Scripture “calling” is in fact understood as the same thing that we have come to know as regeneration. The answer to this must be twofold: yes, concerning the essence of the thing; *no*, concerning the viewpoint from which the same thing is considered.

...what drove this [connection] was the conviction that the working of God's grace may not be detached from the Word of God.<sup>1</sup>

1. Vos, *Reformed Dogmatics*, 4.34.



## Defining Terms

### • Effectual / Internal Call

- Vos: the term “call” has lost some of its specific meaning because it has “become the general name for regeneration.”<sup>1</sup>
- Heidegger: the call of God that gives faith.
  - Calling is being brought to God and His communion. Furthermore, there can be no communion with God except in Christ, nor can one be in Christ unless he seizes Christ by faith. Therefore, calling is the giving of faith--namely, through which the one who is called responds to the one who calls.<sup>2</sup>

1. Vos, *Reformed Dogmatics*, 4.38.  
2. Heidegger, *Concise*, 148.



## Defining Terms

### • Regeneration

- CD III/IV. 10-14
- Hoeksema, quote on p. 642.
  - In the chapter on “Ecclesiology”
- Some theologians speak about God preparing people for regeneration because of the circumstances of their life drawing them to Himself.

1. Vos, *Reformed Dogmatics*, 4.29.  
2. Berkhof, *Manual*, 236.



## Defining Terms

### • Regeneration

- Regeneration is an immediate re-creation of the sinful nature by God the Holy Spirit and an implanting into the body of Christ.<sup>1</sup>
- Calvin employed [regeneration] in a very comprehensive sense, to denote the whole process of man's renewal, including even conversion and sanctification. In our confessional standards it serves to designate the be-ginning of man's renewal in the new birth plus con-version. At the present time it is used in a far more restricted sense, to denote the divine act by which the sinner is endowed with new spiritual life, and by which the principle of that new life is first called into action. Sometimes it is employed in an even more limited sense, as a designation of the implanting of the new life in the soul, apart from the first manifestations of this life. In this sense of the word regeneration may be defined as that act of God by which the principle of the new life is im-planted in man, and the governing disposition of the soul is made holy.<sup>2</sup>

1. Vos, *Reformed Dogmatics*, 4.29.  
2. Berkhof, *Manual*, 236.



## Order of Calling and Regeneration

- Vos, quotes on page 39-40.
- Hoeksema, quote on page 460.
- Heidegger, "The first effect of calling is regeneration."<sup>1</sup>

1. Cited in Heppe, *Reformed Dogmatics*, 518.



## Contrary Positions re: Calling & Regeneration

- Arminians – the need for prevenient grace to respond to the call of God
  - Talked about in our class on Election
- Rome and Eastern Orthodoxy – See Horton quote, p. 562-563.
- Lutherans – See Horton quote, p. 562-563.
  - The call of God is always effectual, God's *grace* is always communicated and received. Fallen humans will always reject that Word and grace. When we are converted it is because of the divine grace working through the Word monergistically.



## “Free Offer of the Gospel”

### • CD II.5 – The Mandate to Proclaim the Gospel to All

Moreover, it is the promise of the gospel that whoever believes in Christ crucified shall not perish but have eternal life. This promise, together with the command to repent and believe, ought to be announced and declared without differentiation or discrimination to all nations and people, to whom God in his good pleasure sends the gospel.

### • CD III/IV.8 – The Serious Call of the Gospel

Nevertheless, all who are called through the gospel are called seriously. For seriously and most genuinely God makes known in his Word what is pleasing to him: that those who are called should come to him. Seriously he also promises rest for their souls and eternal life to all who come to him and believe.



## How to Defend Doctrine

- **Properly Understand your Opponent:** An adherent of the doctrine you are opposing must be able to agree with your summary of their belief.
- Beware of “**Slippery Slope Arguments**”: Just because you think a belief will lead to another errant belief doesn’t mean that it will.<sup>1</sup>
  - Person A → “You believe X and I think that will lead to an errant belief in Y, therefore X is wrong.”
  - Person B → “I do believe in X, but I don’t believe in Y.”
- Don’t attack a **Strawman**: The position you are attacking must be real, not an imagined “worse-case” scenario, in other words, “you can’t misrepresent an opponent’s position or argument, usually for the purpose of making it easier to attack.”<sup>2</sup>

1. The actual fallacy is called the “Domino Fallacy”: This fallacy consists of “assuming, without appropriate evidence, that a particular action or event is just one, usually the first, in a series of steps that will lead inevitable to some specific, usually undesirable, consequence” (Damer, *Attacking Faulty Reasoning*, 158).

2. Ibid., 179.



## Protestant Reformed Objections

- Herman Hoeksema, pp. 470-472
  - Seems to be concerned about the more Lutheran understanding that the call of God (only one kind) is a communication of God’s grace to all who hear.
  - I agree with most of what he says on this subject!
  - His concern with the “well-meant offer” is in connection with the thinking that calling is a “step on the way of salvation... the acceptance of which depends on the free will of man.” He is not talking about the “preaching of the gospel as it is proclaimed to men.”<sup>1</sup>
- Cammenga & Hanko,
  - pp. 53-54
  - pp. 90-92
  - pp. 115-116
- Homer Hoeksema, p. 354

1. Hoeksema, *Reformed Dogmatics*, 471.



## Crux of the Issue?

- Language: only using “calling” in the “effectual calling” sense?
  - Semantic differences? Similar to “grace” re: common grace?
- Strawman arguments – Telling everybody “God loves you...”
  - Cammenga & Hanko, p. 90.
  - All Confessional Reformed agree that is not a proper way to say it. That is not what we mean by the “free offer of the gospel.”

1. Hoeksema, *Reformed Dogmatics*, 471.



19

## Interpreting Scripture Passages

- It is imperative that we remember that God’s Word is his accommodation to us. He doesn’t always reveal his entire decretive will (what he has perfectly decreed), but his preceptive will (what he commands) or what he chooses to reveal.
  - Deut 29:29
  - Turretin, p.
  - There will be instances where God speaks in a manner that seems like he changes his mind (i.e. Gen 6:6; Ex 32:14; I Sam 2:25, etc.).

- Hoeksema, p. 76

When in the Scriptures we read that God repents,<sup>1</sup> or when He speaks a word which at a later moment is changed into the very opposite, as in the case of Hezekiah's sickness, or of Jonah's commission concerning the destruction of Nineveh, these instances may never be explained as presupposing a change in God. Rather must we remember that the eternal and immutable God reveals Himself in time, and that what is thus revealed to us in a succession of moments is eternally and un-changeably in the mind of God.<sup>1</sup>

1. Hoeksema, *Reformed Dogmatics*, 76.



20

## Scripture Passages

- Deuteronomy 5:28-29,

“And the LORD heard your words, when you spoke to me. And the LORD said to me, ‘I have heard the words of this people, which they have spoken to you. They are right in all that they have spoken. Oh that they had such a heart as this always, to fear me and to keep all my commandments, that it might go well with them and with their descendants forever!’”

- God, through Moses gave them his Law / Commands (granted it is not the Gospel), but the Lord “laments” that the people will not fear the Lord.
- Josh 24:19, “But Joshua said to the people, ‘You are not able to serve the LORD, for he is a holy God. He is a jealous God; he will not forgive your transgressions or your sins.’”
- Was God not earnest or well meaning in these words to his people?
- Not covered by Hoeksema nor Cammenga & Hanko



21

## Scripture Passages

- Ezekiel 18:19-32

v. 23, “Have I any pleasure in the death of the wicked, declares the Lord GOD, and not rather that he should turn from his way and live?”

v. 30-32, “Therefore I will judge you, O house of Israel, every one according to his ways, declares the Lord GOD. Repent and turn from all your transgressions, lest iniquity be your ruin. Cast away from you all the transgressions that you have committed, and make yourselves a new heart and a new spirit! Why will you die, O house of Israel? For I have no pleasure in the death of anyone, declares the Lord GOD; so turn, and live.”

- Context of God discussing that the soul of the one who sins shall die.
- Not covered by Hoeksema; Cammenga & Hanko only vv. 25-30 in that God is not the author of sin.



22

## Scripture Passages

- Ezekiel 33:11

“Say to them, As I live, declares the Lord GOD, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his way and live; turn back, turn back from your evil ways, for why will you die, O house of Israel?”

- Context of Ezekiel being the watchman of Israel.
- Not covered by Hoeksema or Cammenga & Hanko



23

## Scripture Passages

- Matthew 19:21-22,

“Jesus said to him, ‘If you would be perfect, go, sell what you possess and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow me.’ When the young man heard this he went away sorrowful, for he had great possessions.”

- Context of the Rich Young Ruler
- Was Jesus’ call to “follow him” serious / well meaning or was Jesus lying to him?
- Not covered by Hoeksema nor Cammenga & Hanko



24

## Scripture Passages

- Matthew 22:14,  
“For many are called, but few are chosen.”
  - Context of the Parable of the Wedding Feast.
    - What was the king doing in the beginning of the parable except seriously and well-meaning calling guests to his banquet? They heard the truth, but rejected it.
  - Herman Hoeksema cites this passage stating:
    - “This is also true with respect to the proclamation of the gospel, or the external calling through the Word. This calling also is in a certain sense general, although it does not reach all men, but only those to whom God in His good pleasure sends the gospel. *Yet, although this is true, the fact remains that many are called, but few are chosen. Also the calling through the gospel does not come only to the elect, but also to the reprobate according to the good pleasure of God.* And also this calling has significance, not only for the elect, but also for the reprobate.”<sup>1</sup>
  - Cammenga and Hanko do not address this passage on the “calling” part, only the “chosen” part.

1. Hoeksema, *Reformed Dogmatics*, 470 (emphasis added).



## Scripture Passages

- Matthew 23:37,  
“O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the city that kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to it! How often would I have gathered your children together as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, and you were not willing!”
  - Context of Jesus lamenting over Jerusalem after pronouncing woes upon the Scribes and Pharisees.
  - Cammenga & Hanko use this as a proof text for irresistible grace, but they don't wrestle with the fact that Jesus is lamenting that the city rejected the Word of God.



## Scripture Passages

- Acts 17:30, “The times of ignorance God overlooked, but now he commands all people everywhere to repent...”
  - Context of Paul on Mars Hill
  - Neither Hoeksema nor Cammenga & Hanko cite this passage.



27

## Scripture Passages

- Romans 10:16-18, 21,
 

“But they have not all obeyed the gospel. For Isaiah says, ‘Lord, who has believed what he has heard from us?’ So faith comes from hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ. But I ask, have they [the Jews] not heard? Indeed they have, for ‘Their voice has gone out to all the earth, and their words to the ends of the world.’ ... But of Israel he says, ‘All day long I have held out my hands to a disobedient and contrary people.’”

  - Was God lying or not being truthful when he “held out his hands” all day long?
  - Not cited by Hoeksema or Cammenga & Hanko



28