Quick Reference Guide:
Key Terms about Salvation

Election

God's choice of certain individuals to salvation before the foundation of the world. The Reformed position on election is that it is *unconditional*; that is, God selected specific persons based solely on His divine will and good pleasure, not upon any foreseen faith, repentance, or merit in the elect. The Arminian position is that God's election is *conditional*; that is, God selected specific persons based upon foreseeing that they would respond in belief and repentance to the gospel message. Key Scriptures include Eph. 1:4; 2 Thess. 2:13; 1 Peter 1:1-2, 2:9.

Predestination / Foreordination

The work of God in determining beforehand the full and final salvation of the elect. While election refers to God's choice of *people*, predestination refers to the *promises* God has made to these people – to conform them to the image of His Son (Rom. 8:29), to adopt them as sons (Eph. 1:5), and to give them an inheritance (Eph. 1:11). In a broader sense, those of the Reformed tradition would say that God has predestined, or foreordained, every event throughout eternity; this does not, however, make God the Author of evil.

Foreknowledge

God's knowledge, from eternity past, of all future events, and especially of people whom He elected to salvation. Scripture indicates that God's foreknowledge of believers was more than an advanced awareness of their faith in Christ; it also involved His knowing and loving them personally. Believers are elect according to – or in harmony with – the foreknowledge of God the Father (1 Peter 1:1-2). In addition, those whom God foreknew, He predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son (Rom. 8:29).

Grace

God's favor toward mankind in providing salvation. This favor is unmerited on the sinner's part. In classic Greek, grace was something one bestowed only on a friend. But the New Testament use of grace turns the entire concept on its head. God loved us and sent His Son to pay our sin debt while we were still sinners (Rom. 5:8), enemies of God (Rom. 5:10), and excluded from the life of God (Eph. 4:18; Col. 1:21). The New Testament teaches that we are saved by God's grace, apart from any human merit or effort (Acts 15:11; Rom. 3:24, 11:6, Eph. 2:5, 8; 2 Tim. 1:9; Titus 3:7). Calvinists distinguish between *general (common) grace* and *irresistible (efficacious) grace*. Common grace is extended to all people and has no saving purpose, while irresistible grace is granted only to the elect, supplying them with faith, which they inevitably exercise by trusting in Christ for salvation. Arminians prefer to see grace as *prevenient*, meaning God supplies it to all people with the purpose of wooing them to faith in Christ. This grace may be received or rejected; it is not irresistible.

Calling

An inner urge or strong impulse God places in the heart of people, drawing them to salvation or to service. Regarding salvation, Calvinists distinguish between a *general outward call*, which is given to all who hear the gospel, and a *special inward call* to the elect that inevitably brings them to salvation. Arminians say the Spirit calls inwardly all those who are called outwardly by the gospel invitation. The Spirit does all that He can to bring every sinner to salvation. But inasmuch as man is free, he can successfully resist the Spirit's call. Regarding service, God's calls all believers to some manner of Christian service and endows them with spiritual gifts (1 Cor. 12:7). In addition, He calls some believers to special service – like Old Testament prophets and New Testament apostles – including those set apart in their mothers' wombs (Jer. 1:5; Gal. 1:15-16). Other key passages include Matt. 10:1, Mark 6:7, and Luke 6:13 (the apostles); Acts 13:2 (Paul and Barnabus); and Rom. 1:6-7, 8:28-30, Gal. 1:6, 1 Thess. 2:12, and 2 Tim. 1:9 (believers).

Regeneration

The work of the Holy Spirit imparting spiritual life to those who are "dead in trespasses and sins" (Eph. 2:1). It denotes the change in heart spoken of elsewhere in Scripture as passing from death to life (1 John 3:14); becoming a new creation in Christ (2 Cor. 5:17); being born again or born from above (John 3:3); and being made alive with the Messiah (Eph. 2:5). Scripture affirms the necessity of regeneration (John 3:3; Rom. 8:9). In Matt. 19:28, Jesus uses the term to refer to the future Messianic age, when the fallen creation is restored and "all things (are put) in subjection under his feet" (1 Cor. 15:27 NASB; see also Acts 3:21; Rom. 8:18-23; Rev. 21:1). In regard to salvation, those who hold to a Reformed view argue that regeneration *precedes* faith and repentance; in fact, faith and repentance are given irresistibly by God to the elect. Arminians counter that faith and repentance are man's contribution to salvation and *result* in regeneration.

Justification

God's gracious and full acquittal of believers' sins, accomplished through Christ's substitionary and satisfactory death at Calvary. Justification is a legal transaction that takes place in heaven. Like a judge declaring a defendant "not guilty," God the Father declares believing sinners innocent and in right standing before Him because His Son has paid their sin debt in full. Justification frees believers from the penalty of sin – everlasting separation from God – and places them in a position of peace and favor with God. Key passages on justification include Acts 13:39; Rom. 3-5; Gal. 2:16, 3:11.

Sanctification

The work of God in setting apart believers for Himself. There are two facets of sanctification: *positional*, in which believers are sealed by the Spirit, baptized by the Spirit and placed into the Body of Christ, and set apart forever as children of God; and *practical*, in which believers over time are conformed to the image of Christ. Positional sanctification occurs at the same time as justification, while practical sanctification is a life-long process requiring obedience and faithfulness. Key passages include John 17:14-21; Rom. 6:1-14, 15:16; 1 Cor. 6:9-11.

Adoption

God's placement of believers into His family. The Greek word *huiothesia* "signifies the place and condition of a son given to one to whom it does not naturally belong" (*Vine's Expository Diction of New Testament Words*). Adoption speaks of the special relationship believers have with God – that of "sonship" but distinct from Jesus, who is the uncreated, unique Son of God and therefore does not need to be adopted. Adoption was God's plan from ages past (Eph. 1:5) Through Christ's finished work at Calvary, the Father buys His elect out of the slave market of sin and brings them into His family with full rights and privileges, and as co-heirs with Jesus (Rom. 8:17). The Holy Spirit is given to believers as a permanent witness to their adoption and as a down payment on their future resurrection and glorification (Rom. 8:15, 23). In the Roman world, adoption meant three things: 1) the adopted persons lost all rights in their old family and gained all the rights of adult children in their new family; 2) they became heirs of their new father's estate; and 3) their old life was completely erased so that the adoption was irrevocable. In a similar way, believers are removed from under the authority of Satan and given a new Father. Their sins are forgiven, their slate is wiped clean, and they have a fresh start, a new Father and a sure inheritance in heaven.

Glorification

The full conformity of believers to the likeness of Jesus Christ (Rom. 8:29). Glorification will occur when Christ raises believers from the dead and gives them immortal, perfected bodies similar to the body Christ had when He rose from the dead (1 Cor. 15:50-55; 1 Thess. 4:13-17). These "glorified" bodies will be fit for everlasting worship and service unto God. Glorification is the complete removal of the effects of the Fall. It is the restoration of sinless perfection in God's redeemed people – not that we become gods, but that we see Jesus as He is and are like Him. This is His ultimate goal for all who receive Him by faith. Additional passages include 2 Thess. 2:13-14; Heb. 9:27-28; Rev. 21:1-22:5).

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