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Class: TH601 NA/NOS Systematic Theology II: Christ and the Church

QUESTIONS

1. Briefly explain the term theosis and provide two Scriptures used to support this term.
2. What is Origen's take on judgment?
3. Provide one argument against universalism.
4. Briefly describe the term exclusivism.
5. What is Bird's conclusion on the question, can you lose your salvation?

ANSWERS

1. Theosis, called "deification," identifies salvation as becoming like God and sharing in the divine nature. It does not mean we become divine by nature but participate in God's energy—for example, glory, love, virtue, and power. Two biblical texts used to support theosis are 2 Peter 1:4 and Romans 8:29.
2. Origen believes that judgment is about purification, not retribution. He believes all humans will be restored and recover their original unity with God.
3. One argument against universalism is that the Bible is clear on judgment and eternal separation. Jesus and the New Testament authors teach that there will be a final judgment, the outcome of which will be justification for some and condemnation for others.
4. Exclusivism indicates that salvation is found in no other name and in no other way than Jesus the Christ, and only a few will be saved. That salvation comes by faith, faith comes by hearing, and hearing comes by people being sent.
5. Bird's conclusion on the question, can you lose your salvation, is the reformed position that those elected to salvation will inevitably persevere in the end, though not necessarily without struggle. It is not that Scripture teaches "once saved, always saved," for the reality is more complex. More appropriately, perseverance is based on the covenantal promise. If we are regenerated and new creations, we will inevitably and assuredly be saved.

TERMS

Universalism: is the view that all human beings will be saved in the end.

Apokatastasis: a doctrine of Origen which designates the restoration of all things back to their original state.

Inclusivism: the view that the content of natural revelation, the universal work of the Holy Spirit, and the limited “light” given in other religions are a way of holding out that the unevangelized might be saved.

SUMMARY

In this section, Bird addresses eternal life, theosis, nearness and access, and the center of salvation. He also discusses the scope and security of salvation—who will be saved and how certain that salvation is. Finally, Bird provides various views on this topic, including his opinion and, most importantly, what the Bible says about it.