

Doctrine of Election and Reprobation

1. The historical reason for Christ being born in Bethlehem of Judea was because of a royal decree.
 - *Luke 2:1 And it came to pass in those days, that there went out a decree from Caesar Augustus, that all the world should be taxed. 2 (And this taxing was first made when Cyrenius was governor of Syria.) 3 And all went to be taxed, every one into his own city. 4 And Joseph also went up from Galilee, out of the city of Nazareth, into Judaea, unto the city of David, which is called Bethlehem; (because he was of the house and lineage of David :)*

2. The divine reason for these same events is the divine decree of God, because God is sovereign. His sovereignty has to do with His government over all that He makes.
 - *Psalms 97:1 The Lord reigneth; let the earth rejoice; let the multitude of isles be glad thereof.*
 - *Psalms 146:10 The Lord shall reign for ever, even thy God, O Zion, unto all generations. Praise ye the Lord.*

3. Long before Augustus issued his tax decree, God had foreordained where Christ would be born, and that He would be born of a virgin.
 - *Micah 5:2 But thou, Bethlehem Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall he come forth unto me that is to be ruler in Israel; whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting.*
 - *Isaiah 7:14 Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign; Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel.*

4. When God decrees something, it must come to pass, for all of His works are known to Him.
 - *Acts 15:18 Known unto God are all his works from the beginning of the world.*

5. The most controversial decree of God has to do with His decree of election, rooted in the Doctrine of Predestination.

6. The word predestination, is understandable. We know that a destination refers to a goal which is hoped to be arrived at safely.

7. Sometimes we speak of our destiny. Pagans think of destiny in terms of fate. Christians think of destiny in terms of a Divine design.

8. Destiny has to do with the ultimate point to which we are headed, which has been decreed by Almighty God. The prefix “pre”, means beforehand, or in advance of.

9. To increase understanding of the word predestination, an appeal can be made to Noah Webster's 1828 Dictionary. Predestination is, "The act of decreeing or foreordaining events; the decree of God by which he hath, from eternity, unchangeably appointed or determined whatever comes to pass. It is used particularly in theology to denote the preordination of men to everlasting happiness or misery."
10. In simple terms, God, from all eternity, decreed a destiny for a predetermined people.
- *Ephesians 1:3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ: 4 According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love: 5 Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will, 6 To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved.*
11. When Paul introduces the doctrine of election, and predestination in this passage, three times, he speaks of a blessing, or a blessedness.
12. The doctrines of grace are not to be viewed dimly, or in a negative manner. This is not a curse in theology.
13. Predestination and election are designed to glorify God, and be a source of comfort and blessing to those who are the heirs of salvation.
14. When the doctrine of predestination is ripped from its place of blessedness, then turmoil and conflict will ensue.
15. John Calvin believed that the doctrine of predestination is one of the teachings of Scripture that must be treated with great care and humility, because it can be misunderstood. When misunderstood, the great doctrine will cast a shadow upon the love, mercy, and grace of God.
16. To be a Christian, and to be Biblical, every believer must have some knowledge of the doctrine of predestination, because the Scriptures teach it.
- *Acts 4:28 For to do whatsoever thy hand and thy counsel determined before to be done.*
 - *Romans 8:29-30 For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren. 30 Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified.*
 - *1 Corinthians 2:7 But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom, which God ordained before the world unto our glory:*
 - *Ephesians 1:5 Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will,*

- *Ephesians 1:11 In whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will:*

17. Historically, two main views have emerged among believers regarding predestination.

- There is the view that God has foreknowledge. God knew who would choose Him, and those are the ones He predestined to salvation.
- There is the view that God sovereignly, of His own free will, predestined certain people to be saved. His choice is not based upon looking into the future to see who would choose Him, for then God would cease to be omniscient. God would be coming into knowledge. He would be learning something He did not know. He would no longer be the Alpha and Omega, knowing the beginning and the end.

18. In either case, the point is established that predestination is found in the Bible. It is a doctrine that the honest and faithful Christian must accept.

19. The foremost objection to the doctrine of predestination comes in the form of a question. “If predestination is true, then how can there be free will?”

20. To begin with, free will is the ability to make choices according to one’s desires.

21. There are two views that have emerged concerning free will.

- There is the Compatible View. This position says that a person is only as free as his nature permits him to be free. Sin prevents a person from freely choosing God because of a Fallen nature that has placed the Moral Ability of the soul in darkness. A person is free to sin, but not free to choose God or please him in the flesh.

1 Corinthians 2:14 But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.

Romans 3:10 As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one: 11 There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God. 12 They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one.

Romans 6:14 For sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the law, but under grace. 15 What then? shall we sin, because we are not under the law, but under grace? God forbid. 16 Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness? 17 But God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you. 18 Being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness.

19 I speak after the manner of men because of the infirmity of your flesh: for as ye have yielded your members servants to uncleanness and to iniquity unto iniquity; even so now yield your members servants to righteousness unto holiness. 20 For when ye were the servants of sin, ye were free from righteousness.

- There is the Libertarian View. This position says that an unsaved person is still able to freely choose God, in spite of his sinful nature.

John 3:16 For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.

John 3:36 He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him.

- 22.** Because He is God, the Lord cannot not know all things, including the free will choice of every person. What God knows does not violate free choice.

A parent might put a bowl of chocolate ice cream, and a bowl of dirt and rocks in front of their child, and know exactly which one the child will choose to eat. But prior knowledge does not violate their child's free will.

In reality, God knows that the choice of every unsaved person will be to not seek Him.

- *Romans 3:11 There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God.*

The free will of the unsaved man leaves him in bondage to sin, and it condemns him to hell. Only in matchless grace can a soul be delivered from his free, but wrongful, self-destructive choices. Salvation is of the Lord, and not of man's unregenerated free will.

- *John 1:13 Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.*

- 23.** Returning to Paul's letter to the church of Ephesus, the apostle speaks about predestination in terms of election..

- *Ephesians 1:3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ: 4 According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love:*

- 24.** Predestination and election are not synonyms. They do not mean the same thing, though they are closely related.

- 25.** Predestination has to do with God's decree concerning anything He has decreed will come to pass. What God decrees is predetermined, or it will not happen.

26. A specific type of predestination is election, which has to do with God choosing certain people to be saved, in Christ, and to be adopted into the family of God.

27. From all eternity, God has a plan of salvation, which, from all eternity, He has chosen people, He has elected people to be adopted into His family.

28. Election is unto salvation.

- The gospel is unto salvation. *Romans 1:16 For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek.*
- Confession is made unto salvation. *Romans 10:10 For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.*
- Wisdom is given unto salvation. *2 Timothy 3:15 And that from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus.*
- Christ will come the second time unto salvation. *Hebrews 9:28 So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation.*
- Faith in Christ is unto salvation. *1 Peter 1:5 Who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.*
- Election in Christ is unto salvation. *1 Thessalonians 5:9 For God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ,*

29. Two more important questions arise in regard to election.

- Is there an opposite side to election, namely, reprobation? If God has, from all eternity, chosen some unto salvation, does that not mean God has chosen to damn all others? Is there a double predestination?
- What is the basis, or ground, on which makes His choice of the elect? Is election based on God's foreknowledge of whom will accept Christ as Saviour? Is election based on God's sovereign choice that He will have mercy on whom He will have mercy?

30. The most popular view of predestination is the Prescience View. The term is composed of two words. There is the prefix, pre, to go before, and there is the word, science, or knowledge. The term speaks of God's foreknowledge of what people will do, or not do.

31. The idea of Prescience is that God will choose to salvation those He knows will choose Him with their own free will.

32. The Prescience View of Predestination is a denial of Scripture, which teaches the opposite.

- *1 John 4:19 We love him, because he first loved us.*

33. The ground of predestination is said to be the good pleasure of God's own will.

- *Ephesians 1:5 Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will. 6 To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved.*

34. This does not mean that God is arbitrary. It does mean God is sovereign. God is not capricious. He knows what He is doing for His good pleasure.

35. Whatever choice God makes is based upon His own internal righteousness, and His own internal goodness. God does not know how to make a bad choice, or a wrong choice.

36. Paul praises God for His plan of salvation which is based on the good pleasure of His will, and for His glory.

37. What Paul taught in Ephesians, he developed in his epistle to the Romans.

- *Romans 9:10 And not only this; but when Rebecca also had conceived by one, even by our father Isaac; 11 (For the children being not yet born, neither having done any good or evil, that the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works, but of him that calleth;) 12 It was said unto her, The elder shall serve the younger. 13 As it is written, Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated.*

38. Before Jacob is born, God gave to Him benevolent love.

39. Is God unrighteous? No.

- *Romans 9:14 What shall we say then? Is there unrighteousness with God? God forbid.*

40. No one who conceives of predestination as being part of the goodness of God raises such a terrible question against God. God is not unrighteous to be sovereign.

- *Romans 9:15 For he saith to Moses, I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion.*

41. Concerning the doctrine of reprobation consider this truth. Injustice is evil, mercy is not. When God is merciful, He is not unjust.

42. When God demands justice for sin, He is not unjust for punishing depraved individuals who are in rebellion against Him.

43. God is not obligated to show mercy to the unrighteous, but in not showing mercy He is still holy, just, and good.

44. Esau received justice. Jacob received mercy. Nobody received injustice.

45. God never punishes innocent people. God does show mercy to people who are not innocent. He is under no obligation to redeem any. It is on the basis of His amazing grace that He redeems some.

46. Paul comes to a conclusion.

- *Romans 9:18 Therefore hath he mercy on whom he will have mercy, and whom he will he hardeneth.*

47. Nothing could be more clear. The grounds of our salvation is not based on our running, our choosing, or our being willing. It is based on the sovereign grace of Almighty God.