

# PREDESTINATION, PART I

## What is the Doctrine of Predestination?

### Westminster Confession of Faith (chapter 3, section 1)

*God from all eternity, did, by the most wise and holy counsel of His own will, freely, and unchangeably ordain whatsoever comes to pass.*

## It is a biblical teaching:

### Ephesians 1:3-5

<sup>3</sup> Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places, <sup>4</sup> even as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him. In love <sup>5</sup> he predestined us for adoption through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of his will.

### Exodus 33:19

<sup>19</sup> And the LORD said, “I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and will show mercy on whom I will show mercy.”

### Romans 9:20-23

<sup>20</sup> But who are you, O man, to answer back to God? Will what is molded say to its molder, “Why have you made me like this?” <sup>21</sup> Has the potter no right over the clay, to make out of the same lump one vessel for honored use and another for dishonorable use? <sup>22</sup> What if God, desiring to show his wrath and to make known his power, has endured with much patience vessels of wrath prepared for destruction, <sup>23</sup> in order to make known the riches of his glory for vessels of mercy, which he has prepared beforehand for glory.

### Acts 13:44-46, 48-49

<sup>44</sup> The next Sabbath almost the whole city gathered to hear the word of the Lord. <sup>45</sup> But when the Jews saw the crowds, they were filled with jealousy and began to contradict what was spoken by Paul, reviling him. <sup>46</sup> And Paul and Barnabas spoke out boldly. ... <sup>48</sup> And when the Gentiles heard this, they began rejoicing and glorifying the word of the Lord, and as many as were appointed to eternal life believed. <sup>49</sup> And the word of the Lord was spreading throughout the whole region.

## Objection: predestination means human beings are robots

- what about free will? are we like puppets and God holds strings?

## Answer: there are two kinds of human will

- *natural will* – ability to do what we want to do
- *moral will* – ability to do what is good and holy
- doc. of predestination does not violate our natural will

## But human beings are not free in their moral will

- *illustration*: choice between two plates: filet mignon and feces
- will is bound to nature – therefore we don’t have absolute freedom
- every human heart has been bewitched

## Doctrine of Total Depravity

### Romans 8:7

The sinful mind is hostile to God.

### Romans 3:10-12

As it is written: “None is righteous, no, not one; no one understands; no one seeks for God. All have turned aside; together they have become worthless; no one does good, not even one.”

### John 3:19

And this is the judgment: the light has come into the world, and people loved the darkness rather than the light because their deeds were evil.

## Therefore, our only hope is divine intervention

### Ezekiel 36:26

And I will give you a new heart, and a new spirit I will put within you. And I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh.

## Who does what in salvation?

- “I ultimately choose God – I do 1% but God does 99%”
- sounds humble, but if allow for 1%, then it’s not grace all the way

### Ephesians 2:8-9

<sup>8</sup> For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, <sup>9</sup> not a result of works, so that no one may boast.

## Predestination I, Notes

### Definition:

#### **Westminster Confession of Faith (chapter 3, section 1)**

*God from all eternity, did, by the most wise and holy counsel of His own will, freely, and unchangeably ordain whatsoever comes to pass.*

- “by counsel of his own will” – God, alone, from within himself, decides all things
- “from all eternity” – not a response to history as it unfolds, but decided beforehand
- “freely” – not constrained by what we do, but completely independently in himself
- “unchangeably” – this sovereign will is already written and does not change

### **Predestination is general doctrine | also called “God’s eternal decrees”**

- election and reprobation are subsidiary doctrines
- God chooses some to eternal salvation and some to eternal damnation
- this has nothing to do with our decision or response to our choice, but sovereignly within God himself

### **People really dislike this doctrine | full of controversy**

- I want demonstrate this is a thoroughly biblical doctrine
- but also, how *sweet* and *glorious* it is
- ultimately, about who does what in salvation
- when realize God is author of salvation, then all praise and glory goes to him!

### **It is a biblical teaching:**

#### **Ephesians 1:3-5**

<sup>3</sup> Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places, <sup>4</sup> even as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him. In love <sup>5</sup> he predestined us for adoption through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of his will.

#### **God chooses us**

- this is done “before the foundation of the world” – before we are born or do anything
- before creation, God already fore-ordained all things to come to pass
- v. 5 – he “predestined” us | pre-determined, pre-decided, pre-destined

#### **Exodus 33:19**

<sup>19</sup> And the LORD said, “I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and will show mercy on whom I will show mercy.”

### **God is totally sovereignly free to decide who to save and who not to save**

- it is first and foremost his choice, not ours

### **Romans 9:20-23**

<sup>20</sup> But who are you, O man, to answer back to God? Will what is molded say to its molder, “Why have you made me like this?” <sup>21</sup> Has the potter no right over the clay, to make out of the same lump one vessel for honored use and another for dishonorable use? <sup>22</sup> What if God, desiring to show his wrath and to make known his power, has endured with much patience vessels of wrath prepared for destruction, <sup>23</sup> in order to make known the riches of his glory for vessels of mercy, which he has prepared beforehand for glory.

#### **God is the potter; we are the clay**

- some God makes for “honorable use” (salvation); others for “dishonorable use” (damnation)
- two kinds of vessels – for mercy and for wrath
- v. 23 – God “prepared beforehand for his glory”

### **Acts 13:44-46, 48-49**

<sup>44</sup> The next Sabbath almost the whole city gathered to hear the word of the Lord. <sup>45</sup> But when the Jews saw the crowds, they were filled with jealousy and began to contradict what was spoken by Paul, reviling him. <sup>46</sup> And Paul and Barnabas spoke out boldly. ... <sup>48</sup> And when the Gentiles heard this, they began rejoicing and glorifying the word of the Lord, and as many as were appointed to eternal life believed. <sup>49</sup> And the word of the Lord was spreading throughout the whole region.

#### **Notice a huge crowd gathers to listen to the gospel preaching**

- some responded with bitterness and anger; some responded with faith and repentance
- why? because “as many as were appointed to eternal life believed”
- it is a matter of appointment – God decides beforehand who will believe and who will not

#### **Objection: predestination means human beings are robots**

- what about free will? are we like puppets and God holds strings?
- is God forcing our hand | “ah, I don’t want to do that, but I’m predestined!”

#### **Answer: there are two kinds of human will**

- *natural will* – ability to do what we want to do
  - we have freedom to do whatsoever we desire
  - God does not violate our freedom | we are not constrained or coerced against our will
- *moral will* – ability to do what is good and holy
  - but we do not have the freedom to do what is right and good
  - Eph. 2:1 – “we are dead in our sins”
  - metaphor of being “dead” – absolute inability, absolute incapability
  - John 8:34 – “you are slaves to sin”
  - thus, we are NOT FREE, but slaves to our sinful nature and desires

**Illustration: imagine two plates**

- filet mignon steak, baked potato, grilled vegetables
- pile of steaming feces and vomit

**Would you ever choose the plate full of poop? Never!**

- if someone asks you about it, you would say, “I can’t!”

**Let’s get a little philosophical here**

- what do you mean, “I can’t”?
- do you mean you can’t physical do it? no, you have natural ability
- you mean, “I really, really don’t want to. I’m repulsed by it!” you lack the desire
- you lack the affectional ability to eat it

**Is that a lack of free will?**

- no, it’s a lack of desire, lack of heart affection for poop

**In other words, your will is always bound to your nature**

- no one has absolute freedom
- you don’t have the freedom to love poop or eat foul things

**So do we have free will?**

- depends on what you mean
- we’re free to do whatever we want
- but we’re not free to do what is right

**Bible – every human heart has been bewitched**

- so that what is good and beautiful looks like feces
- and what is foul and disgusting looks attractive

**Sin has cast a spell over our hearts**

- fellowship with God looks like feces
- sin and rebellion look like filet mignon

**This is doctrine of total depravity**

- doesn’t mean we’re as depraved and wicked as can be
- every aspect of human nature is fallen and corrupted
- so even our will and our minds are darkened

**Romans 8:7**

The sinful mind is hostile to God.

**Romans 3:10-12**

As it is written: “None is righteous, no, not one; no one understands; no one seeks for God. All have turned aside; together they have become worthless; no one does good, not even one.”

**John 3:19**

And this is the judgment: the light has come into the world, and people loved the darkness rather than the light because their deeds were evil.

### **Therefore, our only hope is divine intervention**

- if our minds are darkened, if our heart is cold, if we are dead in our sins
- then salvation depends on the initiative of God
- God must make the first move – that’s Calvinism
- we cannot make the first move

#### **Ezekiel 36:26**

And I will give you a new heart, and a new spirit I will put within you.  
And I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh.

### **God has to do radical heart surgery on us**

- divine initiative to remove our cold, dead hearts
- to give us eyes to see and ears to hear the good news

### **Issue of Calvinism is ultimately: *who does what in salvation?***

- “I ultimately choose God – but my faith is just a tiny contribution”
- “I do **1%** but God does **99%**” | God takes 99 steps towards me, I must take 1 step towards him
- sounds humble, but if allow for 1%, then it’s not grace all the way
- whatever small portion you played, that’s to your credit, that’s your contribution

#### **Ephesians 2:8-9**

<sup>8</sup> For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God,  
<sup>9</sup> not a result of works, so that no one may boast.

### **Gift is not earned | not your own doing**

- there is nothing in salvation we can say is ours
- there is no works on our part | no room for boasting
- that’s what “grace” means