

PREDESTINATION, PART III

What is predestination?

- it is God who ultimately chooses us, not we who choose God

Acts 16:14

One who heard us was a woman named Lydia, from the city of Thyatira, a seller of purple goods, who was a worshiper of God. The Lord opened her heart to pay attention to what was said by Paul.

Romans 9:10-16

¹⁰ When Rebecca had conceived children by one man, our forefather Isaac, ¹¹ though they were not yet born and had done nothing either good or bad – in order that God's purpose of election might continue, not because of works but because of his call – ¹² she was told, “The older will serve the younger.” ¹³ As it is written, “Jacob I loved, but Esau I hated.” ¹⁴ What shall we say then? Is there injustice on God's part? By no means! ¹⁵ For he says to Moses, “I will have mercy on whom I have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I have compassion.” ¹⁶ So then it depends not on human will or exertion, but on God, who has mercy.

Objection: election is unfair!

- fair is that we all experience judgment and wrath
- God has an absolute right to extend costly mercy to some and not all

Objection: what about John 3:16?

- this is called the *Free Offer of the Gospel*
- with predestination, can God truly offer salvation to all?

John 3:16

For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.

Matthew 11:28

Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.

The difference between General Call and Effectual Call

1 Corinthians 1:22-24

²² For Jews demand signs and Greeks seek wisdom, ²³ but we preach Christ crucified, a stumbling block to Jews and folly to Gentiles, ²⁴ but to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God.

1 Thessalonians 1:4-5

⁴ For we know, brothers loved by God, that he has chosen you, ⁵ because our gospel came to you not only in word, but also in power and in the Holy Spirit and with full conviction.

Objection: what about faith?

- doesn't predestination take away the requirement of faith?

Ephesians 2:8-9

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

Objection: isn't predestination God randomly choosing who to save?

- like darts on a board, it's arbitrary who is saved and who is not
- but God predestines according to *his love*, not according to *our merit*
- otherwise, why are you a Christian and others are not?
- in the end, predestination humbles you to the dust and fills you with wonder and gratitude and praise

Objection: what about evangelism?

- if people are predestined, why should I evangelize? what incentive?

Romans 10:13-15

¹³ For “everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.” ¹⁴ But how are they to 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? ¹⁵ 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!”

Predestination III, Notes

What is predestination?

- our salvation ultimately depends on *God's choice* not *ours*
- God first chooses us, so that we can choose (believe in) him

Acts 16:14 – One who heard us was a woman named Lydia, from the city of Thyatira, a seller of purple goods, who was a worshiper of God. The Lord opened her heart to pay attention to what was said by Paul.

God acts *first* – he opens Lydia's heart

- because without God's Spirit intervening, we have hearts of stone – dead and unfeeling
- ultimately, it does not depend on us, but on the grace of God

Romans 9:10-16 – ¹⁰ When Rebecca had conceived children by one man, our forefather Isaac, ¹¹ though they were not yet born and had done nothing either good or bad – in order that God's purpose of election might continue, not because of works but because of his call – ¹² she was told, "The older will serve the younger." ¹³ As it is written, "Jacob I loved, but Esau I hated." ¹⁴ What shall we say then? Is there injustice on God's part? By no means! ¹⁵ For he says to Moses, "I will have mercy on whom I have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I have compassion." ¹⁶ So then it depends not on human will or exertion, but on God, who has mercy.

Notice the logic of Paul's argument

- before Jacob and Esau were born and before they had done anything, good or bad (in fact, Jacob is a weasel, a manipulative liar and schemer – in many ways, worse than Esau!)
- but salvation is NOT BY WORKS but by God's gracious calling
- God has the sovereign right to love Jacob by grace and hate Esau because of his wickedness

People's immediate reaction – that's unfair!

- Paul anticipates that response in v. 14 – is there injustice on God's part?
- absolutely not! – justice is not that God love both, but that God loves neither
- what is fair is that we all experience judgment and wrath

God has an *absolute right* to extend costly mercy to some and not all

- quoting Exodus 33:19, Paul writes in v. 15 – "I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy"

Illustration

- suppose you're moving – go on Craigslist and hire 5 guys | all day, moving furniture
- at end of day, you decide to only pay 2 of them
- is that unfair? absolutely! | because all 5 deserve their wages; all 5 worked hard
- by not paying 3 of the workers, you are denying them what is rightfully theirs

- suppose 5 guys break into your home and rob you by gunpoint
- caught by police | but decide mercy on 2 and drop charges, give jobs, turn life around
- other 3 say, "that's not fair!" | "if you save 2, obligated to save all of us – drop charges, give us jobs"
- you would say, "listen, I don't think you understand your situation"
- you all deserve imprisonment – all committed crime | I don't have an obligation to save any of you
- if I choose to have mercy on anyone, at great cost to me, it's entirely up to me

Which of these two illustrations matches our situation?

- are we the 5 Craigslist movers? or 5 criminals?

Objection: what about John 3:16?

John 3:16 – For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.

Argument – “whoever believes in him”

- salvation is possible for anyone | doesn't say, “that the elect who believes not perish”
- Doctrine of Predestination seems to deny that salvation is available to all

This is called *Free Offer of the Gospel*

- God freely offers salvation to all humanity | no one is excluded and no preconditions
- there's an openness and broadness to the gospel call – freely available to all

Matthew 11:28 – Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.

There is a difference between *General Call* and *Effectual Call*

- general call is made to all people – through preaching of gospel
- effectual call accompanies the general call – God gives us ears to hear and eyes to see
- without the effectual call (regeneration), the general call falls on deaf ears – sounds like foolishness

1 Corinthians 1:22-24 – ²² For Jews demand signs and Greeks seek wisdom, ²³ but we preach Christ crucified, a stumbling block to Jews and folly to Gentiles, ²⁴ but to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God.

Notice the gospel sounds ridiculous to unregenerate hearts

- but to those who are “called” by God – who receive the effectual call of the Spirit
- they see the beauty and truth of Christ – the power and wisdom of God in a crucified Messiah

1 Thessalonians 1:4-5

⁴ For we know, brothers loved by God, that he has chosen you, ⁵ because our gospel came to you not only in word, but also in power and in the Holy Spirit and with full conviction.

We know God has chosen the Thessalonian believers

- because the gospel preaching came not just in words (general call)
- but in power and in the Holy Spirit and with conviction of heart (effectual call)

Therefore, Doctrine of Predestination does not violate the Free Offer of Gospel

Then why does God even make a general call?

- it seems like *a tease* | doesn't seem like a genuine offer of salvation – I know you can't accept

Answer – goes back to talked about in Lesson 1

- difference between natural will and moral will
- we all possess the natural will to respond positively to the gospel but we lack the moral will

Therefore, God asks of us to do what is good and right

- for example, God commands us to avoid deceit, murder and adultery
- but because of our fallen nature, that is impossible for us – our sinful nature
- but does that mean it is wrong for God to ask of us holiness? | **no! – we are still obligated!**
- God doesn't say, "oh well, it's impossible, so I'm not going to ask"
- the asking is the articulation of what is good and right

Objection: what about faith?

- doesn't predestination take away the requirement of faith?
- this is misconception that predestination means we don't have to respond in faith
- predestination doesn't mean we don't do anything – it means, everything we do comes out of God's grace

Common understanding of faith

- God takes 99 steps towards us and we take 1 step towards God (faith)

Ephesians 2:8-9

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

Faith is not our one meritorious work

- faith itself is a gift from God!
- faith comes out of a heart of flesh that God implants in us
- so that no one may boast!

Objection: isn't predestination God *randomly choosing* who to save?

- like darts on a board, it's arbitrary who is saved and who is not

What's the reason God chooses some and not others?

- there has to be a reason, so it must be in response to God seeing into the future my faith
- answer: it has nothing to do with your merits or God seeing that we would believe
- *God loves us because God loves us – he just loves us*

This is the love we need

- there is nothing more secure, more assuring than this kind of love

Illustration

- if your spouse asks, "why of all people, do you love me?" | what's right answer?
- do you say – "I love you because you're prettiest, smartest, richest"? – we hate that answer!

Why is that kind of love unsettling?

- because that kind of love can be lost
- you can lose your beauty, wealth | then, find someone better

So what's the right answer?

- *I love you because I love you* | I love you simply because I do
- true unconditional love has its own rational

If you say – the *ultimate reason* why I’m saved is because *I believe*, not because God choose me

Here’s the problem with that

- *question: why are you a Christian and others not?*
- answer: I believed and I accepted Christ as my savior
- *question: yes, but why did you believe and others did not?*
- answer: I realized my sins and confessed them
- *question: yes, but why you and not others?*
- answer: I humbled myself

Do you see where this is going?

- if you say your choice is ultimate and not God’s
- then what you’re saying – there was *something in you* that set you apart
- you were more spiritually open / you were more humble / you were more thoughtful
- means tiniest bit better than those who didn’t believe

But predestination says it has *nothing to do with you*

- nothing to do with fact you were more open or more thoughtful
- in fact, you were just as blind and dumb as next person
- only because God choose you – without condition, by sheer grace, completely undeserved
- if you understand – completely humble you to dust

Objection: what about evangelism?

- if people are predestined, why should I evangelize? what’s *my incentive?*

First | Illustration

- what if Christina, “can you help me cook tonight?”
- Christina’s a far better cook, so she does most of cooking
- “I’m really tired tonight, would you cook dinner?”
- “I’ve laid out all ingredients, instructions” | “and if you mess up, don’t worry, I’ll do it”

“Hmmm, whether I do it or not, dinner will get done” | “now I have no incentive”

- Christina: “you’re right, whether you do it or not, I’ll cook dinner”
- “but that’s not only reason you should help me”
- “you should help me because you love me, because you want to please me”

We do missions and evangelism – not only because we want people to be saved

- but also as an expression of worship to God and to obey him

Second | Predestination does not eliminate *means*

- “if I’m predestined to pass test, I don’t have to study” | no, you pass test by studying
- God will save his sheep, whom predestined, through evangelism

Romans 10:13-15

¹³ For “everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.” ¹⁴ But how are they to 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? ¹⁵ 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!”

Third | Predestination doesn’t take away incentive, it gives us *hope*

- when you talk with someone who seems like they will never believe the gospel – don’t give up hope!
- God can change even hardest hearts | because God promises to save, we work with diligence!