

**I. INTRO: [Theology]: God's essence, His names, His attributes, His persons, and now His works.**

**A. We distinguish between God's works in eternity and His works in time**

1. God's works in time are creation, providence and salvation
2. God's works in eternity are His counsel and decrees
3. God's decree is His eternal purpose or good pleasure for all things, which determines everything which happens in history. History is the unfolding of God's eternal decree

**B. God's counsel has various attributes (see Q&A5)**

1. We saw too that God's counsel includes sin
2. But God is not the author of sin – He does not approve of, delight in or actually perform sin; His creatures do willingly and therefore they are guilty and accountable to Him for so doing.

**II. PREDESTINATION**

**A. Pred. is the eternal decree of God determining the eternal destiny (heaven/hell) of rational creatures (men/angels)**

**1. Some definitions: Predestination is one decree with two aspects – election and reprobation**

- a. To predestinate means to determine or appoint beforehand (Rom 8:29-30; Eph. 1:5, 11).
- b. To elect means to choose out for oneself (II Tim. 2:10; Eph. 1:4).
- c. To reprobate means to reject or to appoint to destruction (I Pet. 2:8; Rom. 9:22).

**2. Predestination is a decision made by God about the eternal destiny of men and angels**

- a. Pred. is not simply a choice of God that all those who believe in Jesus Christ (whoever they might be) will go to heaven, and all those who die in unbelief (whoever they might be) will go to hell; but it is a choice that certain individuals will go to heaven or hell acc. to God's appointment.
- b. But, pred. also includes the means to the end. God elects some to be saved in the way of hearing and believing the gospel and in the way of persevering in holiness to the end (Eph. 1:4); and He reprobates others to be damned in the way of their sin, unbelief and final impenitence.
- c. Here was John Wesley's caricature: "*The elect shall be saved, do what they will; the reprobate will be damned, do what they can.*" What is your answer to that charge?

**3. Predestination is a decision made by God about the salvation of individuals**

- a. *Some are happy to believe that God chooses nations*, but they deny that God chooses individuals. But, a nation is made up of individuals. If God rejected the Edomites, the Philistines in the OT, He necessarily also rejected individuals within those nations. Within Israel, the chosen nation, there were elect and reprobate people. Rom. 9:6.
- b. Some are happy to believe that God chooses people to service or to some earthly privileges, but not to salvation. But the Bible teaches election to salvation, Acts 13:48. II Thess. 2:13.

**4. Predestination is eternal, unchangeable, sovereign and unconditional**

- a. Romans 9:10-13 and Ephesians 1:3-6 teach this. The answer of some is that God chose us *in Christ*, which means that He chose us *after* we made a choice for Christ, or that He chose us in Christ by *foreseeing* that we would choose Christ. But Eph. 1 speaks of *before the foundation of the world*.
- b. We attribute freewill, absolute free choice to God. God was perfectly free to choose to save some, save none or save all. No one influenced His choice. He was sovereign, acting like the King.
- c. This is difficult for us to understand because we do not really have free choice. Every choice we make is based on something in the things we choose, some quality in them. Every choice we make is conditional.
- d. But God's choice of the elect is unconditional as is His rejection of the reprobate. *It happened before the children had done any good or evil*. It was not based on anything in the elect or reprobate or even on anything potentially in the elect or reprobate (foreseen faith or unbelief).

**B. Election and reprobation determine everything**

**1. Election/reprobation determine the end and the means**

- a. The reprobate perish forever in hell, not because God reprobated them, rejected them from salvation before they were born, but because of their sins. No man perishes in hell unjustly; he perishes because he sinned, and he sinned because he wanted to, and therefore God is just in punishing him.

- b. God chooses the elect to salvation. Therefore in time God sends Christ to die for His elect; He causes the elect to hear and to believe the Gospel; He gives them His HS and He causes them to persevere in holiness to the end (Rom. 8:29-30).
- c. God rejects the reprobate from salvation. Therefore in time God does not send Christ to die for the reprobate; He either does not cause the reprobate to hear the Gospel or He hardens them under it; He does not give the reprobate the HS, they never do anything good and they perish in their sins.
- d. Do not imagine that the reprobate want salvation; that they want to repent and believe; that they come to Jesus Christ and He turns them away. Not so! Read John 6:37, 10:26.

## **2. Election/reprobation have their source in the love or hatred of God**

- a. God loves the elect, and therefore He chooses them in Christ graciously. No one deserves to be elected. Christ is first in the decree of God: He chooses Christ and the elect in Him. He chooses the elect as the body and bride of Christ, not as a hodgepodge of individuals. Therefore, election is not a cold, abstract dogma, but a warm, comforting truth.
- b. God hates the reprobate and therefore He rejects them from salvation; He never desires their salvation and He never is gracious to them. His attitude to them in time and eternity is wrath (Rom. 9:22).
- c. Election comes from the love of God, the foreknowledge of God. Foreknowledge does not mean that God foresees what we do, but He foreknows *us* as His people. Rom. 8:29; Amos 3:2; Matt. 7:23
- d. Election is humbling. Therefore to say that Calvinists are proud members of an elitist club is slander, and a proud, arrogant Calvinist is an abomination. I Cor. 4:7.
- e. Election is unto holiness. Election is the fountain of salvation and God's ultimate purpose in electing us is that we be holy (Eph. 1:4) and that we be conformed to the image of Christ (Rom. 8:29).

## **C. Objections to Predestination**

### **1. "Predestination is not fair!"**

- a. Romans 9:14, "What shall we say then? Is there unrighteousness with God? God forbid!"
- b. God can no more be unrighteous, than He can be without wisdom. God is the standard of righteousness.
- c. God saves some undeserving sinners, and punishes others who deserve punishment. What is unjust?

### **2. "Predestination makes God a cruel monster and men mere robots or puppets!"**

- a. Romans 9:20, "Who art thou that repliest against God ...?"
- b. God is not a cruel monster, but a just judge and sovereign king, who can do with His creatures as He pleases. He is the potter and we are clay pots.
- c. Besides, man is a rational, moral creature, accountable to God, who willingly rebels against God.

### **3. "Predestination makes God a respecter of persons, because He chooses His favorites!"**

- a. For God to be a respecter of persons He would make choices and treat men acc to some quality it them, such as their wealth, physical beauty, etc. A judge who favors the rich and neglects the poor is such.
- b. But God's choice is unconditional. Therefore, He cannot be a respecter of persons (I Cor. 26-29).

### **4. "Predestination makes missions and evangelism unnecessary!"**

- a. God determines the salvation of the elect through the means of preaching of the Gospel. The elect are not saved without it.
- b. We preach not because we think God will save all men, or desires to save all men, but because God commands us to preach and this is the means of saving the elect. II Thess. 2:13

### **5. "Predestination makes prayer unnecessary!"**

- a. God has already chosen whom He will save, so why pray for the salvation of anyone.
- b. The answer is the same: God uses our prayers in order to save His people.
- c. The objection can be turned back: If God is already doing everything He can to save all men, then why pray; God cannot violate man's freewill, we are told. What shall we pray, "Please, knock harder!"

### **6. "Predestination makes holy living unnecessary!"**

- a. If a man knows that he is unconditionally elected, will he not lead a wicked life?
- b. The answer is that God saves His people to make them holy. Good works are the fruit – but never the cause – of election. Eph. 1:4, 2:10.