

THEOLOGY PROPER (76)

4) I Pet.1:2 - In this text, it is specifically stated that election is according to or face-to-face with the foreknowledge of God. In other words, foreknowledge is continually a basis for His election. The clear emphasis of this passage is that this work of God is that which should cause us to bless Him and praise Him (I Pet.1:3). The idea here is not that He knew how we would turn out (all are unrighteous), but that He knew before it ever happened what He would do with us. God has chosen us and incorporated His sovereign, eternal plan in our sinful, finite lives and that should cause each of us to praise Him.

Foreknowledge, when properly understood, brings great glory to God for it testifies of the fact that God knows everything he is going to do long before He does it.

Term #3- Predestination.

The word literally means to predetermine or foreordain (Smith, p.382). **It carries with it the idea of both seeing and setting the boundaries.** When it is used theologically, it means God sets boundaries for everything. God predetermines what He will permit to happen. This is true for the angelic world, for the human world, for human history and even for individual salvation. Many passages clearly set forth this theme:

1) Acts 4:28 – Here is one of the most vivid pictures of predestination in all of the Bible. Peter and John had been testifying of Jesus Christ, specifically concerning His resurrection (4:2,13,19-20). When Peter and John were finally released, they reported all these things to the other believers (4:23) and when they did, notice carefully the theological admission of all the believers- "O Lord, it is thou who didst make the heaven and the earth and the sea and all that is in them." (4:24) In the same context, these faithful believers totally united in their theology, "with one accord" (4:24), to testify that it was God who predestined the crucifixion and murder of Jesus Christ. This group even names groups and individuals who were specifically involved in carrying out the predetermined plan of God (4:27-28).

From a human perspective, the facts surrounding the death of Jesus Christ are inhumane. Christ is the "holy servant" who lived perfectly. He never sinned and therefore He does not merit the death penalty, which is God's penalty for sin (Gen.2:17; Rom.6:23). This innocent Jesus is hauled into court, given several hearings and sentenced to die the worst death possible, the death on a cross. This is undoubtedly the most diabolical misuse of justice in all of history and yet we read: "to do whatever Thy hand and Thy purpose predestined to occur." (4:28)

God predestined and predetermined this whole episode, including the participants. He predetermined and foreordained and set the boundaries for this entire scenario. This reality did not cause the early believers to question God, it caused them to praise God and to ask God for the boldness to proclaim these kinds of realities (4:24,29,31). There was no crime more godless or ruthless than the murder of Jesus Christ- yet it was predestined by God.

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2) Rom.8:29-30 - Here it is specifically stated that God has set the individual boundaries in salvation and the individual growth boundaries after salvation.

When it comes to the subject of predestination as it relates to salvation, there are two general theological divisions:

- 1) Election- God elects some to salvation. He does choose some to be saved.
- 2) Retribution- god does not elect some to salvation. He does not choose some to be saved.

Dr. Chafer writes: "Election and retribution are counterparts of each other. There can be no election of some that does not imply the rejection of others." "Since divine predestination is taught in the Bible without diminution, it is to be received and believed. Rationalistic attempts to modify this revelation, as might be expected, have resulted in greater complications." (Vol.1, p.244)

We must **always** keep in mind, when studying any Biblical issue, the authority for what we think and believe is the written word of God- God's written revelation. If the Bible teaches election and retribution, it is to be believed, even if it isn't fully understood. There are many passages that indicate retribution is a Biblical doctrine.

1) Rev.13:8 - It is very evident that names of individuals not written in the book of life have not been there "from the foundation of the world." The irony of this context is that it is nearing the end of the program of God, which means these are some of the last people on earth and their names have not been in the book of life throughout all of human history, in dramatic contrast to the unbeliever, it is recorded, concerning the believer, that God chose us "before the foundation of the world." (Eph.1:4) If one is honest with the Bible, one must admit both election and retribution are true, eternal doctrines.

2) Rom.9:22 - This text is very specific to say that God has included el group of unbelievers in His sovereign plan and has some "prepared for destruction," Two reasons why He does not save everyone is to demonstrate His wrath and His power, Solomon said exactly the same thing in a slightly different way (i.e. Prov.16:4).

3) Jude 3-4 - God has "marked-out" certain ungodly people for His condemnation. Certainly a key to determining who is "marked-out" for condemnation is one's concept of the grace of God.

4) I Pet.2:8 - As hard as it may be for us to grasp, God has "appointed" some to stumble at the grace message of Jesus Christ. Some have been given a Divine sentence of rejecting Christ and disobedience to God's word. Dr. Chafer writes: "God does for one class what He does not do for the other, but both aggregations pass before His mind and become objects of His determination. Exceedingly painful expressions are used in the Scriptures to describe the divine decision regarding the nonelect." (Vol.1, p.247)