

DOCTRINE OF FOREKNOWLEDGE, ELECTION, AND PREDESTINATION

July 14, 1987

I. Greek vocabulary.

A. Foreknowledge.

1. Verb προγίνωσκω, proginosko: occurs 5X and means to know beforehand (Act.26:5, Rom.8:29; 11:2; 1Pet.1:20, 2Pet.3:17).
2. Noun προγνώσις, prognosis: occurs 2X and means foreknowledge (Acts.2:23; 1Pet.1:2).

B. Election.

1. Verb ἐκλέγωμαι, eklegomai: occurs 21X and means to choose, elect; 6X it is used technically (Mt.13:20; 1Cor.1:27,28; Eph.1:4; Jam.2:5).
2. Adjective ἐκλεκτός, eklektos: occurs 22X and means chosen, elect, of which all references are technical (Mt.22:14; 24:22, 24, 31; Rom.8:33; 1Tim.5:21 [elect angels]; 1Pet.1:1; 2:4,6,9; 2Jn.1, 13; Rev.17:14, et al.).
3. Noun ἐκλογή, ekloge: occurs 7X and means election, choosing. All occurrences are technical (Acts.9:15, Rom.9:11; 11:5,7,28; 1Thess.1:4; 2Pet.1:10).

C. Predestination.

1. The verb προορίζω, proorizo: occurs 6X and means to decide beforehand or predestine (Acts.4:28; Rom.8:29,30; 1Cor.2:7; Eph.1:5,11).
2. The verb ὁρίζω, horizo: meaning to determine or designate; it is used in Acts.2:23 as a participial adjective with the noun "plan" ("*this one, delivered up by the predetermined plan and foreknowledge of God*").

II. Preliminary considerations.

A. Foreknowledge.

1. Foreknowledge is a function of the divine attribute of Omniscience whereby God anticipates in advance all things that will occur (Isa.46:10).
2. Foreknowledge as applied to God is static, in that God has always foreknown all things (God does not need to actively acquire information).
3. Foreknowledge is God's eternal foresight by which He anticipated all who would be positive and believe in Christ (Rom.8:29 "*For whom He foreknew, He also predestined*"; 11:2 "*God has not rejected His people [Israel] whom He foreknew*").
4. Foreknowledge makes nothing certain, but merely anticipates what is certain. In this regard, God knew from eternity past who would and who would not believe of their own volition at gospel hearing or calling.
5. Foreknowledge enables God to anticipate all things and initiate a perfect, foolproof plan for the objects of His foreknowledge, election and predestination.

B. Election.

1. Election is a function of the attribute of Sovereignty, and as such is an active function of God's essence.
2. Election is a choice God made in eternity past to save all those that He foreknew would believe (Eph.1:4 "*just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world*"; 1Pet.1:1,2 "*who are chosen according to the foreknowledge of God*").
3. Election is in accordance with the principle of grace and not works (Rom.9:11).
4. "Elect" is a title for believers (Mt.24:22,24,31; Lk.18:7; Rom.8:33; 16:13; Rev.17:14).
5. Jesus Christ, who was foreknown, is God's chosen or elect one (1Pet.1:20 "*For He was foreknown before the foundation of the world*"; cp. Acts.2:23; 1Pet.2:4,6; Mt.12:18 [verb, αἰρετίζω, airetizo is a hapax]).

C. Predestination.

1. Predestination, like election, is a function of Sovereignty (Eph.1:5 "He predestined us to adoption as sons through Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the kind intention of His will"; cp. vs.11).
2. Predestination, like election, is related to foreknowledge (Rom.8:29).
3. Predestination occurred in eternity past (1Cor.2:7 "*which [Bible Doctrine] God predestined before the ages to our glory [Ph3 for the Church]*")
4. Predestination is also related to the attribute of love (Eph.1:5 "*In love He predestined us*").
5. Predestination has as its goal to make every believer (i.e., those He foreknew) like God's Son (Rom.8:29 "*For whom He foreknew, He also predestined to become conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren*").
6. There are three steps related to time that are required to make the goal or decree of predestination a reality for each believer.
 - a. Calling, whereby each one God foreknew and chose is guaranteed a gospel hearing (Rom.8:30 "*and whom He predestined, these He also called*"; cp. 2Thess.2:14).
 - b. Justification is the imputation of God's righteousness to everyone who believes (Rom.8:30 "*and whom He called, these He also justified*"; cp. Gal.2:16).
 - c. Glorification occurs at the resurrection of the body, which completes the steps necessary to make us like Christ (Rom.8:30 "*and whom He justified, these He also glorified*").

III. The relationship between foreknowledge, election and predestination:

- A. All three are eternity past functions of divine essence.
- B. Foreknowledge arises from Omniscience, while election and predestination are related to Sovereignty.
- C. Foreknowledge logically preceded election and predestination, as the natural reading of Rom.8:29,30 suggests (we recognize that since God is eternal, these functions always were before or with Him, but his plan is explained to us in sequential terms to communicate to us; see also 1Pet.1:1,2).
- D. Election is God choosing those He foreknew to salvation, which means God must see to it they hear the saving message in time (Rom.9:11).
- E. Election in no way interferes with or prevents the individual's free choice regarding salvation in time (1Pet.1:2 "*that you may obey Jesus Christ*"; cp. Rom.1:5).
- F. Calling always follows election, but calling does not lead to salvation if the one called is not positive (Mt.22:14 "*For many are called [includes all who hear the gospel, including many unbelievers], but few [as compared to the great majority of negative types] are chosen*").
- G. Election is based on foreknowledge (1Pet.1:1,2), while predestination is based on Sovereignty (Eph.1:5). In, Rom.8:29 Paul goes from foreknowledge to predestination without mentioning election.

IV. Election and predestination:

- A. Election is simply God picking or selecting those He foreknew to His plan.
- B. Predestination is the formulation of a plan that incorporates all things necessary to make His choice reality.
- C. Predestination's ultimate goal is to make us like His Son (Rom.8:29; Eph.1:5).
- D. Predestination is also concerned with the logistics necessary for the elect to have opportunity in the Angelic Conflict to be saved and to go as far as their volition will take them according to their appointed niche in Ph2.
- E. Even the sufferings that God permits to come our way were predetermined (Rom.8:28; cp. Acts.4:28).
- F. God predestined our particular dispensation (1Cor.2:7; Eph.3:8-11).

V. Some applications arising from this study.

- A. No one whom God foreknew to be positive will He fail to call, and no one whom He calls that is

positive will fail to believe (people are not going to hell who would have believed).

- B. God's plan for your life is perfect and preceded your personal history.
- C. God has the moral right to create people knowing they will not believe and end up in the Lake of Fire (Rom.9:19-21).
- D. God further has the freedom to use those who are negative as He sees fit to further His plan and glorify Himself, as the Pharaoh of the Exodus illustrates (Rom.9:17,18).
- E. God is under no obligation to give negative volition a hearing, thus many die never having heard the gospel.
- F. Election and calling do not depend on works or one's social station (Rom.9:11; Jam.2:5; 1Cor.1:26-29).

VI. Some of the problems associated with the false teaching known as Calvinism.

- A. Ignores or changes the obvious meaning of the term foreknowledge (the term does not mean or imply foreordination).
- B. Says we do not know why God chose some over others for salvation, when the answer is given in 1Pet.1:1,2.
- C. Says that those who are called cannot resist the Holy Spirit, but see Acts.7:51 (cp. Acts.18:5,6; 19:9; Lk.10:16; Jn.12:48; 1Pet.2:4,7).
- D. They contend that all who are called by God's sovereignty cannot resist the call, but see Mt.22:14 (the parable clearly teaches the call to salvation and participation in the plan of God, Ph3).
- E. Ignores verses that say it is God's desire that all be saved, like 1Tim.2:3,4 (cp. Ezek.18:23,32; 1Tim.4:10; Ti.2:11; 2Pet.3:9).

VII. Summary.

- A. Foreknowledge anticipates what each person whom God creates will be in terms of positive or negative volition (Jer.1:5; Ps.139:16).
- B. Election, a function of sovereignty, is the selection by God of those He knew would be positive in eternity past (illustrated by Jacob and Esau; Rom.9:10-13).
- C. Election is based on foreknowledge.
- D. Predestination reflects God's provision for the believer in time and eternity, based on His foreknowledge.

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