

Salvation—Predestination (5th)

(Today we continue studying the doctrine of predestination and its connection to salvation. In this lesson, we will consider predestination as associated with Acts 4:28 and I Corinthians 2:7.)

In previous podcasts concerning predestination and its relationship to salvation, we studied Romans 8:29-30 and Ephesians 1:5, 11. The other two passages that contain the Greek word προορίζω (proorizo) that is translated predestination in the verses we have studied are Acts 4:28 and I Corinthians 2:7. They are as follows: Acts 4:28, “For to do whatsoever thy hand and thy counsel determined before to be done.” I Corinthians 2:7, “But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, *even* the hidden *wisdom*, which God ordained before the world unto our glory.” Hopefully, by studying these two passages you will be blessed to have a fuller understanding and appreciation of the rich meaning of the Greek word that is translated as predestination. These verses as seen in their context further enlightens us to the fact that our salvation in all of its aspects is not something that God had to invent after man fell in the Garden of Eden, but that salvation originated in the Lord before creation. Furthermore, in that it originated in the mind and purpose of God, He did not determine who would be saved based on anything that man would or should or could do. Salvation, from beginning to the end and all things in between, is purely by the purpose and grace of God “given us in Christ Jesus before the world was,” II Timothy 1:9.

Now we will consider Acts 4:28, “For to do whatsoever thy hand and thy counsel determined before to be done.” This verse is part of a prayer offered to God by the congregation at Jerusalem after Peter and John were threatened and released from the Sanhedrin Council due to their healing the lame man at the Beautiful Gate and preached repentance to the people. Though the council “commanded them not to speak at all nor teach in the name of Jesus,” Peter and John replied that they were to obey God rather than man, Acts 4:18-20. Being assembled with “their own company” they “reported all that the chief priest and elders had said to them,” Acts 4:23. Unlike professing Christians today, the early Christians did not bow to the commands and threatenings of the rulers in their day. They continued to assemble together and glorified the God that “made heaven, and earth, and the sea, all that is in them” and recognized the prophetic words of the Holy Scriptures that foretold of the “kings of the earth” and the “rulers” conspiring against “the Lord, and against his Christ,” verse 26. They further spoke of how “Herod, and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles, and the people of Israel, were gathered together, For to do whatsoever” God’s “hand and counsel determined before to be done,” Acts 4:27-28. In other words, the wicked rulers and people were gathered together to fulfill the counsel and predestination of God because the Greek word προορίζω (proorizo) that is translated predestinate in the previous verses studied is the same word that is translated “determined before” in this verse. They recognized that when Christ was crucified by wicked men for the salvation of His people it was according to the predestination of God.

Predestination is a core factor in the salvation of God. As we have seen in previous podcasts, those that God loved in eternity and chosen in Christ and adopted to be in the family of God were predestinated to these things. They are the ones that are to be conformed into the image of Christ Jesus, justified, and eventually be glorified to live eternally with God. Though after creation they fell in Adam and were dead in trespasses and sins, the payment for their sins whereby they will be ultimately fully saved was equally included in the predestination of God. (The Lord willing we will study about the fall of man in future studies.) The early saints recognized this glorious truth and rejoiced in it in their prayer and praise to God because of being persecuted for the truth of the gospel.

Because “Herod, and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles, and the people of Israel, were gathered together, For to do whatsoever thy hand and thy counsel determined before to be done,” this did not excuse them anymore than it excused Pharaoh for his wicked acts. Yes, God raised up Pharaoh for the purpose to show His power and declare His name “throughout all the earth”; nevertheless, Pharaoh was guilty for his wicked deeds, Romans 9:17-24. Likewise, those who crucified our Lord are guilty for their sinful acts. Peter, and the other apostles, declared to the Jewish crowd on the Day of Pentecost, “Him being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain.” Acts 2:23. (While the word “determinate” is not the Greek word προορίζω as Acts 4:28, it is ὀρίζω, the root of predestination as pointed out in our first podcast on this subject.) Though what they did was by “the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God” they did it by their “wicked hands.” How do we reconcile this with, or in, our fallen minds? We can’t. Just as Romans 9 addresses those who would raise the question of why or how God finds fault with wicked men (like Pharaoh) that He raises up to do His (i.e., God’s) will so must we give the same inspired answer: “Nay but, O man, who art thou that repliest against God? Shall the thing formed say to him that formed *it*, Why hast thou made me thus?” Therefore, instead of trying to figure out the dividing line of the sovereignty of God and the responsibility of man in connection with predestination, let us follow the Christians in the first century by worshiping, honoring, praising, and glorifying our great God Who upholds “all things by the word of his power,” Hebrews 1:3. God did not predestinate and tell us of His predestination in the Scriptures for men to argue and debate over details that He did not tell us in the Scriptures. He did it for His honor and glory, and the reason and logic of sinful man is too low to comprehend the secret things of God. Let us simply give the glory and honor to the Lord for His predestination.

Let us briefly consider our last passage: I Corinthians 2:7, “But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, *even* the hidden *wisdom*, which God ordained before the world unto our glory.” The Greek word of προορίζω (proorizo) is “ordained” in this verse. The context of this verse and the subject matter is the gospel. (Time does not allow for a thorough study of the gospel. We may consider this in future studies, but we are trying to limit this to predestination and its relation to salvation. I will say that I believe the gospel was commission to the only ecclesiastical authority, the ἐκκλησία ekklēsia of God—the congregation of God which is the house of God.)

From this verse, in connection with many others, we see that the gospel is included in the predestination of God. Like the love of God for His sheep, the calling of God, the justification of God, the glorification of God, and redemption by the crucifixion of Christ, the gospel of the salvation of God was equally included in the predestination of God. Revelation 14:6 alludes to it as “the everlasting gospel.” No. The gospel is not some afterthought that God added after the crucifixion of Christ. In fact, no part of the salvation of God is disconnected from the overall purpose and counsel of God. The whole of salvation from the beginning to the end and all things in between is of God. God did not love His people before the foundation of the world, predestinate their calling, justification, and glorification, and then leave them on their own while they live out their lives in this world. A loving and caring natural father brings children into the world and does his best to provide food, clothing, and shelter for them. Likewise, our Heaven Father Who, is greater and more loving and caring than a natural father, provides for His children while they, too, live their lives in this sinful world. In the wisdom and mystery of God, Who works all things together for good for His children (Romans 8:28), He sees to it that His children know, love, and follow their God and Father and that they enjoy their Savior. Allow me to give a small sample passages to exhibit this glorious truth. First, the words of Jesus as given in John 6:37, 44-45: “All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out. ... No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him:

and I will raise him up at the last day. It is written in the prophets, And they shall be all taught of God. Every man therefore that hath heard, and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto me.” Next, John 10:3, 5, 14-15: “... the sheep hear his voice: and he calleth his own sheep by name, and leadeth them out ... And a stranger will they not follow, but will flee from him: for they know not the voice of strangers. ... I am the good shepherd, and know my *sheep*, and am known of mine. As the Father knoweth me, even so know I the Father: and I lay down my life for the sheep.” Notice from these verses that the sheep of God know the voice of the Shepherd because He calls each one by name; they follow the Shepherd and not another (stranger); the Shepherd knows the sheep (Yes, even by name.) and the sheep equally knows the Shepherd. Just as the Shepherd knows the Father, so likewise does the sheep know the Shepherd. Time fails me to multiply such verses. However, allow me to impose on your time with one more. “Therefore I endure all things for the elect’s sakes, that they may also obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory,” II Timothy 2:10. Just as the apostle Paul was willing to “endure all things” to preach the gospel to the elect, so likewise should every gospel minister (as well as any knowledgeable Christian) seek to give the gospel to any and all who will listen.

There are many mysteries of predestination that God was pleased to hide from us, but we have seen that it is a glorious truth regarding the salvation of the believer from beginning to the end. Though there are many mysteries and questions that we are unable to know, answer, or understand, I close with a quote from *The Works of Robert Trill*, Volume II, p. 32. It is as follows: “It was a good saying, I think, of the blessed martyr Mr. Bradford, ‘No man should go to the university of predestination, till he be well trained up in the grammar-school of faith and repentance.’”

For time sake and because our study would take us beyond the doctrine of salvation, we will not consider the root word of προορίζω (proorizo) which is ὁρίζω (horizo). A list of those passages was given in our first lesson on predestination.

Our time is up for today. Farewell.