

Blessedness of Predestination!

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Bible Text: Ephesians 1:3-7
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I want you to take your Bibles and stand. I want you to turn to the book of Ephesians 1 and we're going to read verses 3 down through verse 7. Ephesians 1, beginning at verse 3.

3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ: 4 According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love: 5 Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will, 6 To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved. 7 In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace; 8 Wherein he hath abounded toward us in all wisdom and prudence; 9 Having made known unto us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure which he hath purposed in himself:

Shall we pray?

Our Lord, tonight sanctify this endeavor as only thou art able. Give listening ears, attentive minds and open hearts and, Lord, do whatever work has to be done. Strengthen the believer as only thou art able, convict where conviction is needed, confirm where confirmation is needed, and above everything else, Lord, glorify thyself in all thou hast said and done. Forgive us where we have failed thee today. Draw us each one closer to thee and keep thy hand upon this endeavor and make it to grow and prosper as it stands as a lighthouse in the darkness round about us. O dear God, we ask you, make this weekend to be more than just a time of fellowship and a meeting but, Lord, do a work in the hearts of individuals as only thou canst do. We ask you, Lord Jesus, for thy sake and to thee will belong all the glory. We pray, Lord, in thy blessed name. Amen.

Thank you. You may be seated.

This is known as the Sovereign Grace Baptist Church and if it's an old fashioned Baptist church, I'll tell you right now, it doesn't wink, pass by, or dilute any of the great doctrines of the Bible. Now, one of the great doctrines of the Bible that we're going to look at

tonight and it's a doctrine that's hated because every time it's mentioned it seems to raise like a red flag before the individual and tonight for a few moments I want to talk to you on the blessedness of God's predestination. Now, you say, "Preacher, that sounds like a deep subject." It is but all of us who know the Lord Jesus Christ need to understand one thing: the doctrine of God's predestination is a most blessed doctrine. And when we find it gets a hold of us, I'll tell you right now, it strengthens us, matures us, and makes us a lot better believer, and I'll tell you something else, it gives us the greater desire for folks to be saved than every before.

Now, let's look at our study tonight. Our lesson will fall into these simple categories: first of all, we're going to look at the meaning of the term "predestination"; then secondly, we shall look at the majesty of predestination; and then, thirdly, we'll have a practical lesson. Now listen carefully as I give you some definitions. Here we find predestination means to deliberate beforehand with one's self how one shall act and in consequence of such deliberation, to constitute, foreordain and predetermine when, where, how and by whom anything shall be done and to what end it shall be done. Now, let's sum that all up: only God can predestinate and we need to understand that. And we find that what does God do? God acts because of a counsel that he deliberated beforehand how he's going to act and in consequence of his deliberation, what did he do? He constituted, foreordained and predetermined when, where and how and by whom anything shall be done and for what end it shall be done.

Now that sounds like a very deep subject but then let me give you an old fashioned Baptist confession of faith known as the London Confession of Faith in 1689 and this is what it says, "By the decree of God, for the manifestation of his glory, some men and angels are predestinated, or foreordained to eternal life through Jesus Christ, to the praise of his glorious grace; others being left to act in their sin to their just condemnation, to the praise of God's glorious justice." Now let that soak in. You and I are here on this earth for one reason: we're going to carry out God's purpose and God has a purpose for every one of us here at this hour. I believe he has a purpose for you to get saved if you're not saved. That's why you're here tonight. This is a Saturday night and we find very clearly most people don't like to have services on Saturday night but I'll tell you right now, the Lord God of heaven meets with us and that's all that counts. And we find, listen now, "By the decree of God, for the manifestation of his glory, some men and angels are predestinated, or foreordained to eternal life through Jesus Christ, to the praise of his glorious grace." Now that's all brought up in our text.

Look, if you will, at Ephesians 1 and look at verse 4 through 7, notice, "in love: Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will, To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved. In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace." If we were to take that apart, I'll tell you right now, we could be here all night and then on but let me give you another definition, if I may. Predestination means this: God has a plan which is broad enough to embrace the whole universe of things and minute enough to concern itself with the smallest details. Now let that soak in. And we find very clearly God has a plan broad enough to embrace

the whole universe of things and minute enough to concern itself with the smallest details. Not a hair of your head falls but God knows about it. Now that's a minute detail, isn't it? Then it goes on and it says here to concern itself with the smallest details and actualizing itself with the inevitable certainty in every event that comes to pass. Each event falls into its proper place without stress, occurs with his ordering, works out his purpose resulting in his glory and his praise. Now, what does that mean? It means that God knows what he's doing, with whom he's doing, and why he's doing it, and every event will fall in place without any stress or strain whatever. Now, that puts God absolutely on the throne and it puts man at God's footstool, but mankind today doesn't want to believe that. They want to put God at man's footstool and put man on the throne and it doesn't work that way.

We were coming down and we were listening to the radio and this one man, he made some statements about election and everything like that and it sounded pretty good but then this is what he said, he said, "Now, what you've got to do," he said, "You've got to allow the Lord God of heaven to save you." Well, beloved, nothing could be further from the truth. If we would allow God to do anything, that would put us on the throne and God at our footstool and it's the other way around. We are accepted. We don't even accept Christ. Christ accepts us. Now, I'm going to prove that to you again. Look at Ephesians 1, if you will, and look at what it says, "in love: Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will, To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved." If you're saved here tonight, there was a time in your life that you wanted God to accept you and you didn't know if he would or not, but to your amazement after you sought the Lord, and I'll tell you right now, you sought him because of the working of God in your heart and we find you became willing in the day of God's power, and I'll tell you what happened, you begged the Lord to have mercy on you and you know he didn't have to and when he did, I'll tell you this, you can never get over it. You didn't accept Christ, Christ accepted you and salvation is not so much the sinner accepting Christ as it is Christ accepting the sinner. And you can go from Genesis to Revelation and you'll find out that every individual that came to the Lord Jesus Christ stood before him to be accepted or rejected by Christ. It's never been the other way around, but our evangelism today has completely turned this thing around and it's wrong.

Now, this is the blessedness of the doctrine of predestination and this is the definition of it and I want you to understand it. Listen carefully: every event falls into its proper place without stress, occurs with his ordering, and works out his purpose, resulting in his glory and his praise. "Now, what are you talking about? That may work out if we have a war with Iraq." You see, God knows what he's doing and don't ever get away from that, and when people come along and say, "Oh, what's going to happen to me?" You just stop and tell them, "Wait a minute, God's on the throne. We know what's going to happen." And as I've said before in these days of stress and strain, we as believers ought to be the most optimistic people on the face of the earth. Why? I know where I'm going and I know who's going to take me there and I know very clearly that whatever befalls my life, I'll tell you right now, it's all done by the ordering of God and it will occur without stress or strain on the part of God and you and I have to learn how to be obedient unto the Lord

God of heaven and so many times we get into trouble because of the fact that we don't listen to the Lord God of heaven and we don't follow his teaching.

"Now, why in the world do you tell us these things?" Alright, God has a plan which is broad enough to embrace the whole universe of things and is minute enough to concern itself with the smallest details. Alright now, we find very clearly these events that take place, what do they do? They occur with his ordering; they work out his purpose resulting in his glory and his praise. And a classic example in the Old Testament is the life story of Joseph. Joseph was 17 years old when he was sold into slavery. His brothers hated him. His father loved him. He had been taught and trained by his father and probably by his mother but we find very clearly he was brought into Egypt in chains at the age of 17 years of age. He didn't see any of his family for years. In the meantime, what happened? Well, you know what happened. He was put in prison and then Potiphar bought him and we find Potiphar was blessed because of Joseph's sake; and we see what happened, Potiphar's wife tried to get Joseph to shack up with her and he wouldn't do it so she concocted a lie about him and Joseph was put in prison. All done by God's plan. All done according to God's purpose. And while he was there, what happened? You know, if you know anything about Joseph: the baker and the butler had offended Pharaoh, their king; he put them in the same prison where Joseph was. Both of them had a dream. Each one, we find, dreamed that something would happen to them in three days. Well, Joseph interpreted the dream. He told the butler, he said, "In three days," and it took place on Pharaoh's birthday, he said, "You're going to be restored to your position and you're going to bring the cup again before Pharaoh." He told the baker, he said, "In three days you're going to hang," and that's exactly what happened. And two years later God did this: he made Pharaoh to have a dream. None of the magicians or anybody like that of Egypt could interpret that dream and when the butler heard about it, alright, he brought about and he said, "I know of a man, a Hebrew," and what happened? You know the rest of the story. Alright, all of that was done according to God's purpose and God's plan.

Now, everything that happens to you, you'd better understand it, is according to God's purpose and God's plan and don't ever get away from that. Now, why do I tell you this? This is the blessedness of predestination. I wonder what it is that the Lord saw fit in his economy and everything like that to have us meet here tonight and discuss this blessed subject? And I hope that you'll get a blessing of it as I've given you right now the meaning of the term but there's another aspect of it. We find the experiences of Joseph were wrought out to the glory of God. Alright, take the Apostle Paul. Paul hated the truth, didn't he? He stood there and said amen when they stoned Stephen to death; he held their clothes. And on his road to Damascus, what was he doing? He was hailing men and women and putting them in prison and putting some of them to death and saying, "Yes, I want these people to die," and what happened? God stopped him in his tracks. He arrested him. Suddenly absolutely, positively and indelibly the Apostle Paul was arrested by God, put down in the dust in ashes of repentance. He was arraigned before God as a guilty sinner because the Lord said, "Saul, you find it hard to kick against the pricks." In other words, "Why are you against me?" That's what he was asking Paul and Paul couldn't answer and then he cried out and he said, "Lord, what do you want me to do?" He told him to go down in the house and for three days and three nights the Apostle Paul,

he what? He didn't eat. He didn't sleep. I'll dare tell you this, he no doubt walked the floor but he was praying and talking to the Lord and you'll find his testimony in the third chapter of the book of Philippians and what took place when he was under conviction in that way.

And what did God do? He turned to Ananias and he said, "You go down and talk to Saul," and Ananias said, "Wait a minute!" He said, "Wait a minute, we've heard of him and how much he's done," and the Lord said, "He's a chosen vessel of mine," and he said, "Behold he prayeth." I like that. Do you pray? Do you pray very often? Do you enjoy praying or do you just utter some words and then you go on? I'll tell you right now, you'd better learn how to pray. If you know the Lord God of heaven, it's a joy to pray and I'll tell you this, I pray for this church practically every day the week and I pray for you and especially some of you that I know that are not saved at this hour and I don't want you to die and go to hell. I want you to be saved and it's according to God's economy and God's plan that you're here tonight and it's according to God's plan as you're listening to what you're listening to at this present hour.

Well now, let's look for a moment or two at the majesty of predestination. Most people don't understand. They are afraid of it, but you and I don't have to be afraid of it because this is the majesty of predestination. 1. It puts man at the footstool of God, it puts God on the throne. Keep that in mind. Either God's on the throne or man is on the throne. Man today wants to be on the throne. He's nothing but a devil clad in human flesh. He's no different than the devil until the Lord God of heaven reaches down and saves him. But we find in the doctrine of predestination it puts God on the throne and man at his footstool and what does it do? It exalts the sovereignty of God.

Now, let me show you that. Take your Bibles now, keep your finger in Ephesians 1 and turn back to the book of Daniel. Daniel 4 for just a moment or two and we find in the book of Daniel, we find here a classic example and a classic definition of the sovereignty of God. In Daniel 4, and we find again, Nebuchadnezzar had been made crazy for seven years. His hair was like feathers and we find his nails were like claws and he ate grass and for seven years he was out in the fields, but I'll tell you this, he never lost his throne. Alright, now look at verse 34, "And at the end of the days I Nebuchadnezzar lifted up mine eyes unto heaven, and mine understanding returned unto me, and I blessed the most High, and I praised and honoured him that liveth for ever, whose dominion is an everlasting dominion, and his kingdom is from generation to generation: And all the inhabitants of the earth are reputed as nothing: and he doeth according to his will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth: and none can stay his hand, or say unto him, What doest thou?" Now, beloved, there's the sovereignty of God. He does as he pleases, when he pleases, how he pleases, and with whom he pleases, and nobody can tell him what to do. And yet how many times you have preachers tell you this, "Well, the Lord Jesus Christ did all he could do for you and you wouldn't let him save you and when you get to hell he's going to point his finger at you and say I tried to save you and you wouldn't let me." That's not the God of the Bible and if any of you believe in that kind of a God, you're believing in an idol because that's not the God of the Bible. We find the Lord God of heaven is on the throne. He does according to his will in the army of

heaven and among the inhabitants of the earth and none can stay his hand or say unto him, "What doest thou?"

Now, here's where the majesty of predestination, it puts God on the throne and men at his footstool, it exalts 1. the sovereignty of God. Are you listening? God knows who you are, what you are, and whether or not you're ever going to get saved or if you ever have been, and God has made you to be exactly the kind of an individual you are at this hour. He knows. He determined the color of your eyes. He determined the height of your stature. He has determined also who you are going to marry, if you ever do, and I'll tell you right now, these events that take place, I'm going to tell you this, God knows all about it, and I'll tell you this, he does according to his will in the army of heaven and among the inhabitants of the earth. The God that I know and whose I am, I'll tell you right now, is a sovereign God and I bow at his footstool and praise him for his sovereignty.

But then we find also, listen now, don't lose me. People have taken the predestination of God and they have gone to seed with it. While the majesty of predestination puts God on the throne and man at his footstool, it exhausts the sovereignty of God but then it also places a responsibility upon the individual. Now, let that soak in. If you die and go to hell, it's your fault. If you get saved or have been, it's God's fault. Can you hear me? If you're six years old here today, you're old enough to be saved. If you're 60, you should have been saved a long time ago. You have a responsibility to do what? To repent before God and to sue for mercy on the basis that Christ died for sinners and you're the sinner, and a responsibility is placed upon you. I'll tell you this, God tells man very clearly he is to repent and believe in the Lord Jesus Christ.

Now, he's given a twofold commandment concerning that so take your Bibles now and turn to Acts 17 and look with me at verses 30 and 31 and here is the first command that God has given to all mankind and all mankind is responsible to obey this command. In Acts 17:30 we read, "And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men every where to repent." Now, that command is a military term. Let it soak in. When you get into the military, I'll tell you one of the first things they teach you how to do and that is this: you'll say, "Yes, sir" or "No, sir." And you'll learn three things in the military: it'll be, "Yes, sir, no sir, or no excuse, sir." And people today need to learn that because our problem with our generation today and with our society today is this: there is no character for one thing, and there's no responsibility. And yet mankind is responsible. You're responsible for what you do. If you go out and lie and cheat and everything like that in school and you fail, that's your fault. Don't blame the teacher. That's your fault. You have a responsibility and the responsibility that God has placed upon every human being on the face of this earth is 1. to repent. Repent of who we are, of what we are, and the judgment we are under because mankind today is under the judgment of God if he doesn't know the Lord Jesus Christ. You're not going to be condemned, you already are and we find very clearly your reprieve will end according to God's will. And you know, the same thing is true with regard to our life as a believer.

There was a lady in our church and she was in our church a number of years ago. I think her name was Joan, I don't know if that's right or not but my wife can correct me

afterward. But anyway, she got sick and we went over to her house one time and, I'll tell you, she was a very poor housekeeper. But she got sick and she moved and lived in a rest home and one day she was on the telephone and she professed to know the Lord and as far as I know she probably did. I can't argue with her on that. I didn't know her heart. But she told this person she was on the phone and she said, "I've got to go," she said, "They're coming after me." She hung up the phone and immediately had a heart attack and went out into eternity and the people that were talking to her on the phone they said, "She said, 'They're coming after me.'" She said, "I wonder who's coming after her?" Well, we know who was coming after, if she was saved, the angels came after her, didn't they? But it came according to the plan of God.

You see, God has a plan for your life and the command of God to every individual is, 1. repent. That's the first command. Now, turn to the second one. 1 John 3 and look with me, if you will, at verse 23 and we find this is the second command that God has given to every individual and it is the responsibility of man to fulfill this endeavor. In 1 John 3:23, we read, "And this is his commandment, That we should believe on the name of his Son Jesus Christ, and love one another, as he gave us commandment." Alright, there it is. Here is the command of God incumbent upon every individual. It's the responsibility of man to repent, to repent of their sin, and to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and then as we become believers, our responsibility is to love one another. Not this sentimental hogwash that's going on, genuine love and love suffereth long and is kind and we find very clearly love doesn't brag on itself, but love endures because, I'll tell you right now, it endures all things and it always comes on top.

Now, why in the world do I tell you this? Because we find very clearly this is part of the majesty of God's predestination. It places a responsibility on mankind and that is mankind is to repent and believe in the Lord Jesus Christ. Then it does something else. When we get saved we find out to our amazement that God predestinated our salvation. You say now, "Preacher, wait a minute." No, go back, if you will, to Acts 13 and look at what it says in Acts 13 and here again is the majesty of God's predestination. Look at it, if you will, Acts 13 and we find beginning at verse 46, "Then Paul and Barnabas waxed bold, and said, It was necessary that the word of God should first have been spoken to you: but seeing ye put it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles. For so hath the Lord commanded us, saying, I have set thee to be a light of the Gentiles, that thou shouldest be for salvation unto the ends of the earth. And when the Gentiles heard this, they were glad, and glorified the word of the Lord: and as many as were ordained," or predestinated, "to eternal life believed."

Now, people have twisted this around. They have said this, "Alright, when you believe, then you're predestinated." No, sir, you've been predestinated before you believed. Those that were ordained to eternal life believed. Are you a believer here tonight? You were ordained to eternal life by God back yonder in eternity. You didn't know that until the reality dawned upon your heart when you got converted and you probably still didn't know it until later on because this truth is very seldom preached in our pulpits of this present hour, but this is part of the majesty of God's predestination. We've been ordained to eternal life and that's how come we do believe.

Now, as I've said before and I'll say it again: I was in World War II and I saw a lot of patriotism in World War II that I don't see in this country right now. I don't see it at all and I get kind of disgusted with these people because of the fact comparing in 1941 and comparing 9/11 we find very clearly, alright, listen, when Japan attacked the United States, the whole country rose up in arms and said let's take them down. These terrorists have attacked the United States of America. Today there were thousands of these ignoramuses, and I call them that, out there protesting against the war. Well, I'm going to tell you right now, if Saddam Hussein hasn't been put down or isn't put down and if Iran and Syria hasn't been taken care of, listen, this whole world is going to see a third world war that will make the others look like a Sunday school picnic. Now, you may not agree with me, that's your privilege, but I'm going to tell you right now, all of this is part of God's plan. God knows exactly what's going to happen. God knows exactly whether our president will send the troops in or not. I don't know it. You don't know it. And our president is doing this, he's doing everything he can to do the right thing and I'll tell you right now, these Ishmaelites and that's what this guy is and I'm going to tell you something, there are only two times in human history when the woman was in charge. You say, "What are you talking about?" The first one was in the garden of Eden. Adam listened to that woman and she was in charge and what happened? The whole human race plunged into depravity. There was another time and that other time was what? Abraham and Sarah. Sarah said to Abraham, "Here, take my maid and you go in unto her, my maid Hagar, you go in unto her," and we find he did so and it produced an Ishmaelite and I'll tell you right now, we've got a billion Ishmaelites on this world today and I'll tell you this, like the description of Ishmael as found in the book of Genesis, it's true of them today where it says, "He shall be a wild man and every man's hand shall be against him." And that's happening today before our very eyes.

And yet God's on the throne. Aren't you glad? He's on the throne. Oh, I know I'm an Orthodox conservative so they would say they probably don't like it when I said what I did about these things going on. I had a lady in my church resign from my church, incidentally. I had a lady in my church and she wrote me a long letter and she said this about President Bill Clinton, she said, "He was the greatest president that ever lived," and she said also point blank, "The time will tell." She said, "It doesn't make any difference what an individual does on the outside as long as they fulfill their job." I said, "Boy, did the devil get you brainwashed." Boy, she and her husband quit coming to church. They go somewhere else and I'll tell you this and I wrote her back and I told her, I said, "God put President Bill Clinton to be a moral as well as a spiritual leader of the United States of America," and I said, "he's done everything else wrong. He has no morality whatever." And I say that and I live in the state of Arkansas and I'll tell you right now, he could run for governor in Arkansas tomorrow and he could get in because the people are still that silly and they don't see him for what he really is. And this week, he made the statement and you and I had better understand it, Bill Clinton wants the United States to be a third rate power. He made this statement, he said, "The United States needs to get ready to understand and when it's no longer the number one power on the block," he said, "we've got to get along with the others." In other words, he doesn't want the United States to be a number one power and we look back and during his administration what did he do? He

cut the military to the bone just like Jimmy Carter did. And yet, are you listening? God knows all about it. He's still on the throne. Aren't you glad he is? He's still protecting the United States of America, isn't he?

Now, why in the world do I tell you this? Because we find that the majesty of predestination does this and we find that it places a responsibility on mankind but then it does something else. The majesty of predestination does what? It encourages the believer in all phases of our life. If you're a believer here tonight and only you and God know, if you're trying to live for the Lord, it's not easy. It's not easy. People don't care to have you talk to them about the things of Christ. You can knock on the doors from now until doomsday, as it were, and when I was up there in Arkansas, my first couple of years there, we knocked on practically every door in that area, invited people to church, asked them point blank one or two questions, not a solitary individual ever darkened the door of the church. People don't want to hear and yet it's our responsibility to do what? To try to contact them with the truth of the Gospel as we have the opportunity. And like I told some folks some time ago, I said, "This is what you need to do as believers: you need to get up in the morning and you need to ask the Lord to do this, 'Lord, send somebody across my pathway today that I can witness to about Christ.'" And then wait for it to happen and it will come when you least expect it.

We stopped the other night when we saw the Lawrences. We spent the night there in a motel and the man at the desk was very helpful and very kind, and when we came in from our meeting I had my red Bible and he looked at it and he said, "That's an awful good book you've got there." I said, I told him, "I sure do. I preach." He said, "That's an awful good book you have there." I said, "Boy, don't you think I don't know it." And I said, "Are you familiar with it?" He said, "Oh, yes." So then I asked him, I said, "Are you a Christian?" He said, "Yes, I am." I said, "On what basis? What's the basis of your salvation?" He came right back and he said, "My faith in the Lord Jesus Christ." That's a pretty good answer, isn't it? Then he told me, he said, he asked me, "Are you a preacher?" I said, "Yeah." And he said, "What kind?" I said, "I'm a Baptist preacher." Well, he said, "I go to the Baptist Church," and he said, "I've got to give a devotional on Sunday night." He said, "Would you let me share it with you?" So he handed me the printed page and the printed papers that he had and I read it. It was on the 13th chapter of the book of Matthew. Before I got through I told him this, I said, "You get the prophetic parables of Matthew 13 by A. W. Pink and you've got the best there is." Well, he had never heard of A. W. Pink. Now, I can tell you people that because you've heard of that. Your pastor knows what he's talking about and he has recommended good books to you. Now, why do I tell you this? Because of the fact that what do we find? In the majesty of predestination there is what? It encourages the believer. You and I need encouragement in these areas.

Take your Bibles now and turn to Isaiah 43 and look with me, if you will, at verses 1 through 3. Now, this applies to us as believers and how it ought to encourage our hearts because I know very clearly there is stress and strain and some people are probably wondering if their job is going to hold out or if they're going to get laid off or what. We were in a church the other night and several folks had gotten laid off. Alright, the

economy is not the best that it ought to be. We understand that. It's the craziest thing. We're in war but at the same time we're in an economic recession. It has never happened like that before in this country but it proves one thing: God is still on the throne. And he says this to us as believers in Isaiah 43, look again, "But now thus saith the LORD that created thee, O Jacob, and he that formed thee, O Israel." You and I were Jacobs at one time and when we got saved we are Israel. Now, if you don't understand that, well, you chew on that and you'll find it to be so in the book of Galatians.

But now notice, "Fear not: for I have redeemed thee, I have called thee by thy name; thou art mine. When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee: when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned; neither shall the flame kindle upon thee. For I am the LORD thy God, the Holy One of Israel, thy Saviour: I gave Egypt for thy ransom, Ethiopia and Seba for thee. Since thou wast precious in my sight, thou hast been honourable, and I have loved thee: therefore will I give men for thee, and people for thy life. Fear not: for I am with thee: I will bring thy seed from the east, and gather thee from the west." Now, what in the world do you have here? Alright, we find very clearly here is the encouragement to the believer in all phases of life. "What are you talking about?" Alright, you may pass through some deep waters. I don't know what's going to happen to you next week. You don't either. You may pass through some deep waters but I'm going to tell you right now if you know the Lord God of heaven, you'll know that he is with you and they cannot overflow you. When you pass through the fire, it could be the fire of temptation and everything like that, I'll tell you right now, the flames shall not hurt you, the Lord God of heaven says and I'll tell you how come: because God is a God of predestination. You see, the majesty of predestination does this, it encourages the believers in all phases of life.

Then we find the fourth thing about it is this: it guarantees the results of our labor. Now, I've been in the ministry 50 years, how many folks got saved under my ministry I have no idea. I don't worry about it. I'm on the radio, 12 different radio stations. The message goes out every week and I don't know how many are listening to it but I do know this, that there are folks there listening. I never hear from them and I know right now there at one time there were 14 folks in this particular Baptist Church in Little Rock, they were part of the choir and I'll tell you right now, every Sunday morning they'd listen to me on the radio but I never heard a word from any one of them. I came in contact with a man in Eulie, Florida some years ago. He used to hear me over WHAS Louisville. That was way back there when he and his wife were in Louisville and they were going through some hard times and I came on the radio on Sunday night and he said more than once, he said, "Oh, how you have blessed us." Well, I didn't bless him, God did. God saw fit to use me and then he wondered because we went off the radio station. He often wondered what happened and God in his sovereignty and in his predestination and according to his will, the first year we went down to Eulie, Florida we sat right in front of those people. They were in the pew behind us and when we were called to stand up and tell who we were, I made this statement, "I'm Peter Nortier from Little Rock, Arkansas," and that man began to cry and shout. He said, "I never dreamed it. I never dreamed it." He said, "I often wondered what happened to you," he said, "now here you are in person." Alright, how come? God planned it all, you see?

You see, here's the majesty of predestination. "What are you talking about?" Well, it guarantees the results. Have you won any to the Lord? I said, "I don't know if I won any." That's not my responsibility. God knows. When I stand before the Lord at the judgment seat of Christ I'll know and I only want to hear one thing, "Well done, thou good and a faithful servant." That's all I want to hear. And if some of the soldiers saved under my ministry are there, I'll praise the Lord for it. And I don't know how many I have reached but it guarantees, it guarantees our results for our labor and that's why, what does it do? It encourages us. Don't quit. Believer, don't quit. Keep witnessing. Keep praying. Keep studying the word of God. Keep going on with the Lord. Well why? You and I are predestinated unto eternal life by the Lord God of heaven and I'll tell you right now, this encourages us because he guarantees the results of our labor, and what a wonderful thing it is when God reaches down and allows us to share these things.

But then one more thing, we find also what does it do? It incites patience and faith within the believer. Now, you say, "Preacher, what are you talking about?" Turn to 1 Thessalonians 1 and look with me at verses 9 and 10 and we find the word of God brings this out for our learning. In 1 Thessalonians 1:9-10, we find the word of God says these things for our learning. Look at it. We find, notice, "For they themselves shew of us what manner of entering in we had unto you, and how ye turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God; And to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead, even Jesus, which delivered us from the wrath to come." Alright, what does the majesty of predestination do? It incites patience and faith within the believers. "What are you talking about?" I'm waiting for the coming of the Lord, aren't you? I'm learning to wait with patience. I wish the Lord would come tonight. There isn't anything in this world I can't leave behind. I want to be with him. But I know this, he said he's going to come. He's going to come at his time and not my time.

So what do we do? We have the patience of hope and we labor and we wait for his Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, to deliver us from the wrath to come and, beloved, that deliverance just may take place this year. Are you ready? I hope and pray that you are. If you don't know the Lord, you're not ready. But those of us that are ready, we have the guarantee of the results of our labor, it incites patience and faith within us and then I'll tell you something else, it gives hope and substance to our faith, doesn't it? People say, "Do you mean to tell me you believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, a man that died 2,000 years ago and he paid for your sin?" I say, "I sure do." Well, he said, "How can you be so stupid?" I said, "How can you be so stupid not to believe him?" They look at me kind of funny and they say, "What do you mean?" I said, "He died. He was buried. He rose again. He's in heaven now. He's going to come after us." "Oh, you don't expect me to believe that fairytale." That's not a fairytale. It's a living reality and as a living reality in the heart of every true believer, it has been put there by God if we're genuinely converted.

And what does it do? We find very clearly, I'll tell you right now, this is what it does: it incites patience and faith within the believer, it guarantees the results of our labor, and then it gives hope and substance to our faith. Like I said before, I'm 79 years old. People look at me and say, "Well, you don't look like you're that old." Well, how is a 79-year-old

man supposed to look? If you can tell me, I'll try to fill the bill. "Well, you don't act like it." I said, "How are they supposed to act? Let me know so I can find out what it is." Nobody can tell me. Alright, why do I tell you these things? We find very clearly but is it true? It gives hope and substance to our faith. You see, the faith that we have is not the faith of man, it's the faith that God has put within us and we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works.

Then we find also, last of all, God's glory is the ultimate end of his predestination. Go back to our text in this closing moment, in Ephesians 1. Look again if you will, the book of Ephesians 1 and we find, beginning in verse 9, "Having made known unto us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure which he hath purposed in himself that in the dispensation of the fullness of times