

PREDESTINATION

I. Biblical references

A. Direct references -

1. Greek word *proorizo*.
 - a. *pro* = before, prior, previous
 - b. *horizo* = to limit, fix a boundary; from *horas* = boundary.
Get English word "horizon"
2. Usages in New Testament
 - Acts 4:28 - "whatever Thy hand and purpose predestined to occur"
 - Rom. 8:29 - "He predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son"
 - Rom. 8:30 - "whom He predestined, He also called..."
 - I Cor. 2:7 - "a mystery, the hidden wisdom, which God predestined before the ages"
 - Eph. 1:5 - "He predestined us to adoption as sons through Jesus Christ"
 - Eph. 1:11 - "having been predestined according to His purpose"

B. Related words

1. Foreknowledge - Gk. *proginosko*
Acts 2:23; Rom. 8:29; Rom. 11:2; I Pet. 1:2,20
2. Election, Choosing - Gk. *eklegomai, eklektos*
Lk. 23:35; Eph. 1:4; Col. 3:12; I Pet. 1:2; 2:4,6,9; Rev. 17:14
3. Calling - Gk. *kaleo*
Rom. 8:28,30; I Cor. 1:9; Gal. 1:6; Eph. 4:1; II Thess. 2:14
4. Appointment, Placement - Gk. *tithemi*
I Thess. 5:9; Heb. 1:2; I Pet. 2:8
5. Will of God - Gk. *thelema*
Gal. 1:4; Eph. 1:5,9,11
6. Counsel of God - Gk. *boule*
Acts 2:23; 4:28; Eph. 1:11
7. Purpose of God - Gk. *prothesis*
Rom. 8:28; Eph. 1:11; 3:11
8. Administration of God - Gk. *oikonomia*
Eph. 1:10; 3:2; Col. 1:25
9. Reign of God - Gk. *basileuo, basileia*
Mk. 1:15; I Cor. 6:9,10; Rev. 19:6

II. Perspective of relationship between God and man

- A. God is absolute, supreme, Almighty, omnipotent, sovereign.
- B. Man is a choosing creature, responsible for his choices.
- C. How can God act without impinging on man's choices?
- D. How can man choose without impinging on God's action?

III. Historical survey of theological understanding of "predestination"

- A. Early church fathers (Justin Martyr, Tertullian, Clement of Alex., Origen) emphasized man's freedom of choice alongside of God's determinative activity.
- B. Pelagius (360-420) over-emphasized human potential and ability
- C. Augustine (354-430) reacted against Pelagianism with strong doctrine of predestination, election and efficient grace.

- D. Councils of Arles (473) and Orange (529) tried to find balance again.
- E. Aquinas (1225-1274) emphasized God's determinations again.
- F. Duns Scotus (1265-1308) re-emphasized will of man.
- G. Reformers, Luther and Calvin (16th cent.), developed more systematic emphasis on divine predetermination
- H. Arminius (1560-1609) rejected strict Calvinistic presentation.
- I. Karl Barth (20th cent.) sought balance by emphasizing Christocentric understanding of election and predestination.

IV. Attempting to find balance between theological extremes.

God's determinations

Man's response, responsibility

Determinism, fatalism

Humanism

God determines all things

Man's choices determine all

Irrelevancy of man's choices

Irrelevancy of God

Man is automaton, puppet

God is myth or figure-head

Augustinianism, Calvinism

Pelagianism, Arminianism

passivism

performance, "works"

Christocentric predestination

The Pre-horizon of God is Jesus Christ (II Cor. 2:7; Col. 2:2)

The Chosen One of God is Jesus Christ, and all "in Him" (Lk. 23:35)

The Calling of God is unto fellowship with Jesus Christ (I Cor. 1:9)

The Appointment of God is Jesus Christ (Heb. 1:2)

The Will of God is Jesus Christ (Eph. 1:9)

The Counsel of God pertains to Jesus Christ (Eph. 1:11)

The Purpose of God is in Jesus Christ (Eph. 3:11)

The Administration of God is Jesus Christ (Eph. 1:10)

The Reign of God is by the Lord, Jesus Christ (Mk. 1:15; Col. 1:13)

God has determined to restore all men who will receive Jesus Christ by faith unto functional humanity, and by their continued receptivity to the ontological dynamic of the life of the risen Lord Jesus, express the glory of God.

V. Conclusions

- A. Biblical predestination is not a strict, mechanical or logical determinism that fails to take into account human freedom of choice and responsibility.
- B. Our finite human thinking must keep a balance and tension between divine determination and human responsibility.
- C. H.A. Ironside - "Nowhere are we told in Scripture that God predestinated one man to be saved and another to be lost...God has predestinated you to be fully conformed to the image of His Son."
- D. Ray C. Stedman - "It (predestination) simply tells us that God has selected beforehand the goal toward which He is going to move everyone who believes in Christ. That goal is conformity to the character of Christ."