

Predestination, Election and Foreknowledge

Notes by David Green

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Predestination; the destiny before determined by God for the Church as a whole, each member of the Church, making up the Body of Christ. The Church described as the Body of Christ, Ephesians 1:23 *which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all*. Colossians 1:24 Who now rejoice in my sufferings for you, and fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ in my flesh for *his body's sake, which is the church*,

It is of the utmost importance in reading the Word of God to note who the Writer is addressing. The Epistles of Paul, among others, were written to the saints in various places. Confirmation of the gracious work of God is revealed to us by the Holy Spirit and in us, and for the benefit and blessing of the saints. The Word is preached to bring others into the blessings which the saints enjoy and all who believe and those who will yet believe were known to our Omniscient God before the foundation of the world. All these, known to God before the foundation of the world, are the Church, the Body of Christ, and in the letter to the Corinthians Paul tells of espousing a chaste virgin, the Church at Corinth, to Christ and John in the Revelation tells us of the Marriage of the Bride to the Lamb;

The Church, in this context, all those who have a saving faith in the Lord Jesus Christ; made up of all who have believed in the Lord Jesus Christ, all who are believing and all who will yet believe in the Saving work of the Lord Jesus Christ for salvation, sanctification and eternal security, by-products' inseparably accompanying salvation.

Note the word predestination is a noun; this is of prime importance for it then nominates a single body as having the end determined. The Chosen refers specifically to the Church; chosen in Christ before the foundation of the world. The work of salvation was complete before the foundation of the world, the full number of saints was known to God before the foundation of the world. The body is made of many parts and all have a specific function in the body; when each member of the body is working properly then a healthy life is enjoyed. So it is in the Church when each member of the body is fulfilling the right function, exercising the gift/s given by the Holy Spirit at the time of conversion. God has before determined the size of the Church, the function of the Body, the destiny of the whole and though each individual can enjoy specific blessings the end result is the glory of God.

We are members of a 'local church' no one of us can claim to be the Church; so it is with each local gathering of the saints; the local church is part of the whole and only the Designer and Builder of the Church knows all the parts and the different functions of the parts; He sets the parts in the place suited to them and for the purpose of having the building fitly framed together. Ephesians 2:21 in whom all the building fitly framed together grows unto a holy temple in the Lord.

Predestination is a word applying to the Church, the Body, made up of a variety of members with a wide range of abilities, some spiritual and some adapted to spiritual ends.

Ephesians 1:5. Having predestinated **us** unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will,

Ephesians 1:11. In whom also **we** have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will:

Romans 8:29. For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren.

Romans 8:30. Moreover whom he did predestinate, **them** he also called: and whom he called, **them** he also justified: and whom he justified, **them** he also glorified.

The work God has done in saving us; the whole body of believers, from the penalty of sin was completed before the foundation of the world. It was not a work done for the individuals comprising the Church; they do all enjoy wonderful benefits; it was a completed work the Father did for His Son before ever there was a world. Acts 15:18 **Known unto God are all his works from the beginning of the world.**

The Lamb was slain before the foundation of the world Revelation 13:8, the kingdom prepared from the foundation of the world, Matthew 25:34. The Christ was foreordained before the foundation of the world, 1Peter 1:20. The book of life has been complete from the foundation of the world, this all emphasises the Church is a completed work; completed in Christ before the foundation of the world.

God is not choosing some to be damned because they will not believe; each individual makes the choice privately.

God has chosen to form a Body, a Church, a Bride, for his Son; from the verses that talk of predestination we note, all who have believed, all who do believe and all who will yet believe in the saving work of the Lord Jesus Christ are the members that make up the Body, the Church, the Bride of Christ.

The Will of God is declared in the Word of God and there are more than 20 verses using this phrase, **the will of God**, in the New Testament. One is in reference to King David, one the word of the Lord Jesus relating to those who do the will of His Father, one in relation to the Holy Spirit, and the rest are to do with the saints, Christian attitudes and activities.

2Peter 3:9 **The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.** We can see from this the plan of the Lord God is that all men everywhere should be saved. That all do not come to repentance is evident but can not be blamed on God who in His love and grace sent His Son to be a sacrifice for all; making it possible for all to be saved. God has given to all a freewill making each person responsible for the destiny they choose. It may be a wilful choice or a choice made by doing nothing. The law of God is not the reason an unrepentant sinner will end up in hell, not adhering to His Law, breaking the Law is what calls forth the judgement of God. Sin when it is finished brings forth death and after death the judgement and following judgement the sentence and the execution of the sentence – for the unsaved eternal damnation. The will of God for man is salvation and eternal blessing, man choosing not to believe God or failing to respond to God or neglecting the opportunities put before him, chooses his own destiny. God's will for man is blessing, man choosing to go his own way is choosing banishment from the presence of the Lord for eternity.

Election

Election or choice; this word when applied to the saints is not a doing word as we are often led to believe. The Elect is directly related to the saints, not as individuals but to the Church as a whole; **elect** according to the foreknowledge of God. The Elect is the body of believers.

In both the Old and New Testaments the words translated, 'elect' 'election' 'choose' 'chosen' mean simply a choice has been made. The criteria for the choice are not always stated but when it is we must accept it as written. When the word is used in relation to man it is easy to determine the right understanding.

With a nation in view the Israelites' were chosen by God to be His people on earth and as the nation from which the Redeemer should come forth. They were not chosen as individuals to make up the nation, each one was born into the nation. They were not chosen for their size or prowess, their status or abilities; **God chose them because He chose them.** Deuteronomy 4:37. **And because He loved thy fathers, therefore He chose their seed after them, and brought thee, Israel, out in His sight with His mighty power out of Egypt;** Deuteronomy 7:7. **The LORD did not set His love upon you, nor choose you, because ye were more in number than any people; for ye were the fewest of all people:** The choice God made was related to His own power and wisdom. There were no people for Him to choose as a nation when the Lamb was slain, Revelation 13:8--**Lamb slain from the foundation of the world.** He called out Abraham and made of him a mighty nation; not mighty in size or prowess but mighty as the Lord was with the nation. The nation of Israel still has a unique name among the nations of the world, through the years they have been attacked by many mightier nations; all of those are now insignificant or nonexistent.

The Apostle Paul writes as one who was a devout Jew, one who was converted, led out of the religion of the Jews by the Lord, so as he writes to the churches the Word is fresh and is applied to the saints of all the generations following his conversion. The Apostle Peter says of Paul that he wrote things hard to understand though never denying the truths Paul expounded.

The 'elect' according to the foreknowledge of God are all who are reckoned as 'in Christ', all who are in the Church. Clearly God knew them all and in due time called each one by His grace. God knew each person before they were formed; before there was a couple to start the human race and the scriptures teach us He in due time saved all and will save all who will be needed to make up the Body of Christ, the Church. They will each be saved from the wrath to come by believing the Lord Jesus Christ bore the penalty for their sins.

Because God knows the choice I will make does not mean that He predetermined that choice for me, He has given to man a free will, God is not the author of confusion. **Choose you this day who you will serve; believe on the Lord Jesus Christ; follow after righteousness** and many more passages of the Word of God clearly put the responsibility on the individual. *The members of the Church are not chosen to be saved, being*

saved they are in the Church, are numbered with the Chosen, the Elect of God. Each believer is known to God and God also knows where that 'living stone' (1Peter 2:5) will best fit in the Building called the Church

God has not built the Church on the whim of man nor is He building the Church according to the dictates of any denomination. The Church is entirely a work of grace, it is a building not framed with hands; God is building the Church for His Son. The Church is being built of those who believe God and do as He commands; **believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and you will be saved**, you will be part of the building not framed with hands, which is not of man's design or construction.

The Lord Jesus said '**I will build my church**' and dare I say that the Father gives Him the 'living stones' to build with. The Church is not yet complete, when it will be completed is known to the Father, and the Saints, Christians, Stones, which are being prepared and used in the Building are still being mined and fashioned to fit in the right place, without any rough edges, protrusions or misshapen parts. God alone knows each believer and the best place for that person; our duty is to seek to do the will of God where He wants us to be and do it in the way He teaches us in His word.

Foreknowledge

Foreknowledge is absolutely true of God, nothing can be hidden from Him and as Peter said to the Lord Jesus, **Thou knowest all things**, add to that that God knows our hearts and our thoughts, He knows the way that we take and the way we intend to take; nothing is hidden from God.

Because God knows the way I take is not saying or implying that He set me on that course. God is not the author of evil, neither of anything unholy, 1Corinthians 14:33 **For God is not the author of confusion, but of peace.**

The knowledge God has of all things practical and spiritual is not the reason or cause for them to happen, my will is known to God but my sin cannot ever be said to be because He knows I will sin.

We learn from a very early age that to play with fire is dangerous, we still experiment to see if what we are told is true, we gain experience from testing the truth of the instructions and prohibitions. Wisdom is rightly applying what we know. God is not a man as we, He does not need to test the validity of the instructions He has given; foreknowledge precludes any need for checking the soundness of the instruction or of the information or facts revealed.

The knowledge man has, the understanding of human, natural and divine things is limited to time and experience; God is not confined to time, neither limited by time, with Him all is present so there is no conflict with knowing all that to us is still future; God is conversant with my whole life, from birth to grave and the whole Church, with every member of that Body from the first one to have faith in the Lord Jesus Christ to the last member to be saved and placed in the Body prior to the Rapture, Christ coming for and calling the Bride away. Nothing is hidden from Him, nothing can surprise Him, and God knows all things, has known all things and will always know all things.

The work the Father is engaged in, fashioning a Bride for His Son began when God chose the Church as the Bride, the work is continuing, and the Church is still being built at present. The Living Stones for the Building are still being fashioned in the peculiar way necessary for them to fit where the Father sees they will best display the special features He likes, something of His Son. It is a great comfort for me to have the assurance that God knows where I will serve Him though that place may not be my choice. In this knowledge I can rest assured that all things will work together for good, more so when the primary factor in my life is love to God with faith in the revelation of Himself in His Son, through His word, the Bible.

Foreknowledge must not be confused with planning, or programming a course of action. Knowledge is not action. God knows all things, in the context of the Church He knows each member and in the context of eternity He knows all things. Knowledge does not make things happen but it does have full cognisance of the results of a course of action.

Yes it is true God could stop an activity that would be harmful to the perpetrator or the victim; that does not make an Omniscient God guilty of the deed.