

100 BIBLE LESSONS

Give these lessons to people you visit, youth groups, hospital patients, church visitors and new members. Use them in Sunday School, bus ministry, jail services, nursing homes, Christian schools, small discussion groups and many other places. God's Word will answer your questions and help solve your problems.

LESSON 14 – PREDESTINATION & ELECTION

INTRODUCTION

We should not be surprised when we find mysteries in the word of God. The temptation however, is to undercut one truth by stressing another. To assert man's responsibility in a way that excludes God's choice or to affirm God's choice in a way that destroys human responsibility. Both are mistakes that need to be guarded against.

In John 6, Jesus set before us several very significant doctrines: human responsibility, predestination or election and preservation of the saints. Jesus refers to these doctrines without any tension, any awareness of possible contradiction or any need to explain how these doctrines actually work out in our salvation. Yet the Church has struggled with this for years.

Western thinking says that something must be either black or white. Eastern thinking (from which the Bible is derived) can carry two seemingly opposing truths side by side. The truth is, Scripture teaches predestination, election and human responsibility. God's choice and man's responsibility are indeed taught to us side by side in the same Bible and sometimes, even in the same text (See Luke 22:22). Predestination is a reality, and man's responsibility is a reality too.

How shall we deal with predestination, election and human responsibility? We should not oppose them against each other, for the Bible does not oppose them against each other. Nor should we modify, or water down them, for this is not what the Bible does. What the Bible does is to assert these truths side by side in the strongest possible ways. C.H. Spurgeon was once asked if he could reconcile these truths. He said, "I wouldn't try, I never reconcile friends." This is the point we have to grasp. Predestination, Divine choice, and human responsibility are not enemies.

The Shorter Oxford Dictionary defines an *antinomy* as 'a contradiction between conclusions which seem equally logical, reasonable or necessary.' A theological *antinomy* exists when a pair of principles stand side by side, seemingly irreconcilable, yet both undeniable. There are good reasons for believing each of them; each rests on clear and solid evidence; but it is a mystery to you how they can be squared with each other. You see that each must be true on its own, but you do not see how they can both be true together. Welcome to the reality of true Bible study and a God that is far above your mind (Isa. 55:8-9).

I. WHAT IS PREDESTINATION & ELECTION?

Let us begin by defining predestination. It contains the prefix “pre,” which means “before.” “Destination” is the place we are ultimately trying to reach. Another word that we can use in this context is *destiny*.

Predestination, therefore, is the doctrine that “from all eternity, God somehow and in some way predetermines.” Predestination means to choose beforehand. In this sense, God makes decisions in advance, which means He has perfect foreknowledge of what will happen in the future. “Election” means “to pick or to choose.”

Most Christians will agree on the above definition of predestination. Where they differ is how God makes His decision regarding our individual destinies.

II. 15 FACTS ABOUT PREDESTINATION

1. Predestination is a manifestation of God’s great love.

Dt. 4:37...He loved thy fathers, therefore He chose...

Dt. 7:6-8...the LORD thy God hath chosen thee to be a special people unto Himself, above all people that are upon the face of the earth. 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: But because the LORD loved you...

Eph. 1:4b-5 (New American Standard Bible), In love He predestined us...

2. Predestination is a blessing of God to His people.

Psa. 65:4 ... Blessed is the man whom Thou chooseth, and causeth to approach unto thee...

3. Luke in the book of Acts gives witness to God’s predestinating power.

Acts 2:47 ...the Lord added to...such as should be saved.

Acts 11:18 ...God..granted repentance unto life.

Acts 11:21-23 ...the hand of the Lord was with them:...a great number believed, and turned unto the Lord... Who, when he came, and had seen the grace of God..

Acts 13:48 ...as many as were ordained to eternal life believed.

Acts 13:48 (New International Version) ...all who were appointed for eternal life believed.

Acts 13:48 (Bible in Basic English) *...and those marked out by God for eternal life had faith.*

Acts 14:27 *...they rehearsed all that God had done...and how He opened the door of faith...*

Acts 16:14 *...whose heart the Lord opened, that she attended unto the things which were spoken of Paul.*

Acts 18:27 *...had believed through grace.*

Acts 18:27 (New International Version) *...by grace had believed.*

4. In John's Gospel, Christ saves particular individuals whom His Father has *given* Him.

John 6:37 *All that the Father giveth Me shall come to Me...*

John 6:39 *...this is the Father's will...all which He hath given Me I should lose nothing...*

John 17:2 *...that He should give eternal life to as many as Thou has given Him.*

John 17:6 *I have manifested Thy name unto the men which Thou gavest Me out of the world...Thou gavest them Me; and they have kept Thy word.*

John 17:9 *...I pray not for the world, but for them which Thou hast given Me...*

John 17:24 *...whom Thou hast given Me, be with Me where I am...*

John 18:9 *...of them which Thou gavest Me have I lost none.*

5. These individuals are His sheep and His own.

John 10:14 *...know My sheep...am known of Mine.*

John 10:14 (New International Version) *...I know my sheep and My sheep know Me.*

John 10:26 *...ye believe not, because ye are not of My sheep...*

John 13:1 *...having loved His own which were in the world...*

6. It was for them that He specifically prayed.

John 17:9 *...I pray not for the world, but for them which Thou hast given Me..*

John 17:20 *Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on Me...*

7. He undertakes to *draw* them to Himself by His Spirit.

John 6:44 *No man can come to Me, except the Father which hath sent Me draw him..*

John 6:65 *...no man can come unto Me, except it were given unto him of my Father.*

John 6:65 (New International Version) *He went on to say, "This is why I told you that no one can come to me unless the Father has enabled him."*

John 10:16 *...they shall hear My voice; and there shall be one fold...*

John 10:27 *My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me.*

8. He gives them eternal life.

John 10:28 *And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of My hand.*

John 17:2 *...that He should give eternal life to as many as Thou hast given Him.*

Matthew 11:27 *All things are delivered unto Me of my Father: and no man knoweth the Son, but the Father; neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal him.*

Matthew 11:27 (New International Version) *...no-one knows the Father except the Son and those to whom the Son chooses to reveal Him.*

9. He keeps them, losing none.

John 6:39 *And this is the Father's will which hath sent Me, that of all which He hath given Me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day.*

John 10:28 *And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of My hand.*

10. They are predestine to His glory.

Rom. 8:29-30 *....did predestinate to be conformed to the image of His Son...them He also glorified.*

11. From all eternity God had a plan. The aim of the plan is that men should be made God's adopted sons and grow to the fullness of Christ.

Eph. 1:5-6 *Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children...to the praise of ..His grace.*

Eph. 4:13 *Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ.*

12. Predestination is according to God's own purpose and grace.

1 Tim. 1:9 *...and called us with an holy calling...according to His own purpose and grace...*

Eph. 1:4-6 *...having predestinated us...according to the good pleasure of His will..*

Romans 9:11 *For the children being not yet born, neither having done any good or evil, that the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works, but of Him that calleth.*

Romans 9:15-16 *For he saith to Moses, I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion. So then it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that showeth mercy.*

Romans 9:15-16 (New International Version) *For he says to Moses, "I will have mercy on whom I have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I have compassion." It does not, therefore, depend on man's desire or effort, but on God's mercy.*

13. God's choice was wholly of grace and not according to what we deserve.

Eph. 2:1; Jn. 15:19 *...in time past ye walked according to the course of this world...but I have chosen you out of the world...*

Rom. 9:11 (New International Version) *Yet, before the twins were born or had done anything good or bad--in order that God's purpose in election might stand: not by works but by Him who calls...*

Rom. 11:5-6 *....there is a remnant according to the election of grace. And if by grace, then is it no more of works...*

14. Paul gave this great teaching on predestination, in order to make Christians realize the extent of God's great love and their debt to His mercy.

Eph. 1:4a-5 (New International Version) *In love having predestinated us...*

Eph. 1:6 *To the praise ofHis grace...*

15. We are to make our calling and election sure.

2 Peter 1:5-7 ...*give diligence to make your calling and election sure...*

“The believer who pursues the spiritual qualities mentioned in 2 Peter 1:5-7 guarantees to himself by spiritual fruit that he was called and chosen by God to salvation (MacArthur Study Bible). This may be what the writers of the New Testament are saying when they admonish believers not to turn away from Christ, or drift away from the gospel, or go back to deliberate sin. By do doing, they assure themselves that they indeed are the called ones of God and His chosen.

Sources: *New Bible Dictionary; Table Talk; MacArthur Study Bible; The Sovereignty of God.*

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. How shall we deal with the subjects of predestination, election and human responsibility?
2. What is a theological *antinomy*?
3. Define predestination.
4. Define election.
5. How is predestination an act of love? (give Scripture)
6. How is predestination a blessing of God to His people?
7. Read and give your thoughts about Acts 13:48.
8. How was Lydia's heart opened?
9. What has to take place before a person can come to Christ?
10. How are we assured that we are God's chosen?
11. Read Romans 9. What does the passage say? Give your comments.