

Toward a Biblical View of Foreknowledge, Predestination, Calling, Election & Salvation

Foreknowledge

Προγινώσκω / proginosko = *to know beforehand* (verb, used 5 times; noun, used 2 times)

- Foreknowledge is an attribute of God, not an _____ of God.
- The God revealed in the Bible, the God of Christianity has absolute foreknowledge. Acts 15:18
- Foreknowledge is not causative (most Reformed theologians say it is).
- Election is in accord with God's foreknowledge. 1 Peter 1:2

Predestination

Προορίζω / proorizo = *to set bounds or limits, to mark out a destiny, to determine*

Predestination is God's act of marking out predetermined limits upon believers beforehand; these relate to the believer's ultimate _____.

- As used with believers in the New Testament: 4 times
Ephesians 1:5 ...*having predestined us to adoption as sons...*
Ephesians 1:11 ...*in him we have obtained an inheritance being predestined according to the purpose of him who works all things according to the counsel of his will...*
Romans 8:29 ...*for whom he foreknew, he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his son.* (On this *image*, see 2 Corinthians 3:18; Colossians 3:10)
Romans 8:30 ...*whom he predestined, he also called...*
- Conclusion #1: *predestination* as used of believers in the New Testament relates to their future, eternal destiny.
- Conclusion #2: *predestination* is not used in the New Testament relative to Phase #1 of one's salvation.
- Conclusion #3: *predestination* is used in the New Testament relative to Phases #2 and #3 of one's salvation.

Calling

- God is in the business of calling sinners into the fellowship of Christ.

1 Corinthians 1:9 *God is faithful, by whom you were called into the fellowship of his son, Jesus Christ our Lord.*

- Individuals are called by the Gospel (a universal calling).

2 Thessalonians 2:13-14 *...but we are bound to give thanks to God always for you, brethren beloved by the lord, because God from the beginning chose you for salvation through sanctification by the Spirit and belief in the truth, to which He called you by our gospel, for the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ.*

- This calling has a functional directive; it displays God's glory and grace to a reprobate world.
1 Corinthians 1:26-30
- Believers are to walk worthy of their calling; they are to make their calling and election sure.
1 Thessalonians 2:12, Ephesians 4:1, 2 Peter 1:10
- *Calling* can relate to vocational function. 1Corinthians 7:20-24

Election & Salvation

- Paul & the apostles did not preach election; they preached the saving merits of the Gospel because election is not the sinner's basis for believing the Gospel. The basis for trusting the Gospel is man's entrapment by sin.

Romans 5:6 *...when we were still without strength...Christ died for the ungodly...*

Romans 5:8 *...while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us...*

Romans 5:10 *...when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his son...*

I am (you are) a candidate for salvation because I am (you are) a sinner, not because you are elect.

- Paul taught election in Christ as a corporate fact, Ephesians 1:4- 5.

Election or *elected* as used in reference to persons is normally a corporate term.

- Jesus Christ is the elect one, Isaiah 42:1, 1 Peter 2:6

- Israel as an elect nation, Isaiah 41:8-9

- Corporate Jewish believers of both the Old and New Testaments (remnant), Romans 11:4- 5

- Corporate Gentile believers, Ephesians 1:4-5, 2 Thessalonians 2:13

- Tribulation believers, Matthew 24:22, 24

- Corporate election in Christ (Ephesians 1:4-5, 2 Corinthians 5:17) indicates at least 4 things:
 - 1) positional election in the Beloved, Isaiah 42:1, Matthew 12:18-20, Ephesians 1:4.

- 2) positional sanctification in the redemptive plan, Hebrews 10:10.
- 3) positional heirship in the eternal plan, Romans 8:16-17, Galatians 4:6-7.
- 4) positional exaltation in the creative order, Ephesians 2:6, compare 1:20-21.

A CLOSING EXHORTATION

Somewhere along life's way – in college, seminary, grad school, church, I am not certain – a knowledgeable speaker warned, “When defining an attribute of God, be careful that you do not isolate it from other attributes and then take it to its logical extreme... because you will end up in a heresy.”

How right he was. Sovereignty taken to its logical end makes puppets of its subjects. Love taken to its logical end makes God wishy-washy in His dealing with men. Righteousness without justice diminishes its intrinsic value.

God's attributes do not function separate from one another. His essence, the sum total of His attributes, marks Him out as the most harmonious of beings.

Reformed Theology fails in this regard. In no way in their soteriology do sovereignty and love meet on common ground.

Biblical theology harmonizes these two attributes along with the others. See to it that your theology, your understanding of Deity and Deity's salvific plan, is not grounded in the theses of several 16th century historical figures¹ – rather in the verities of God's own self-revelation, the Word of God.

¹ I love, respect, and highly value every 16th century Reformer. They were the focus of my Ph.D. program.