

Lesson for September 6, 2009

Review of Our Spiritual Assets

Predestination and Election

Predestination

The Greek word for predestinate is “proorizo.” “Pro” means *before* and “orizo” means *to mark or to design*. Combined these words mean “to determine or to design beforehand.” As with the doctrine of election, the question we must ask is, “What is it that is predetermined or predesigned by God?” We know from many Scriptures that God does not decide ahead of time who will believe in Christ and who will reject Him. This decision is always left to the free will of the individual. So what is predetermined or predesigned?

God predesigned a perfect plan for every believer in eternity past. God decided that anyone who believed in Christ would receive certain blessings on earth and even greater blessings in eternity. This plan was predetermined or predesigned by God for the believer’s maximum happiness. The spiritual assets that we have been studying are a part of these blessings, but there is much more awaiting the believer who executes the Christian Way of Life. (Romans 8:29; Ephesians 1:3-12)

A person enters the plan of God at salvation by freely choosing to believe in Christ. After salvation, the believer may or may not continue in God’s plan. In either case, God does not predetermine who will or will not believe or who will or will not execute His plan - that decision is always left up to the individual’s volition. (John 3:16-18)

Since God knows ahead of time exactly what you will or will not choose to do, He is able ahead of time to design a perfect plan for your life. Within the framework of God’s plan for the believer is His directive will, His permissive will and His overruling will. All three impact the life of the believer at different times and in different ways. In all cases, however, God is working all things together for good for those who are advancing in the Christian Way of Life. (Romans 8:28)

The Plan of God

God’s plan for the believer comes in three stages. Stage one is faith in Christ at salvation. Stage two is the execution of the Christian Way of Life. Stage three is eternity. All three stages are possible only through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

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Stage one is clearly stated over 150 times in the New Testament alone. It is the moment when an unbeliever believes in Christ for salvation. Salvation is the term used to explain what occurs when a person believes in Christ as Savior. Words such as saved, redeemed, regenerated, justified, accepting Christ as Savior, going to Heaven and having eternal life are often used as synonyms to describe what takes place when a person believes in Christ. Believing in Christ means that a person has reached God-consciousness, has heard the Gospel and has made a mental decision to believe the truth of the Gospel. Belief is tantamount to trust, faith or acceptance of the truth. Stage one is when the eternal relationship between God and man begins.

Stage two is also clearly stated in the Bible. It is that period of time in which a believer lives on earth. It is this stage that must be executed by the utilization of the power of the Holy Spirit. All believers will go to Heaven, but not all believers will successfully complete stage two. Stage two calls for the believer to be faithful in learning accurate Bible doctrine and executing God's will by applying what he learns. Failure to learn and apply doctrinal truths will result in a life of reversionism, which leads to a life of misery and shame. God's plan in stage two was designed in eternity past specifically for you. It is a perfect plan designed by perfect God. By fulfilling God's plan, the believer brings honor and glory to God. However, you cannot execute what you don't know. This is the reason we are told time and time again throughout the Scriptures to learn and apply Bible doctrine. (Romans 12:1-3)

Stage three of God's plan for the believer is eternity. Every believer receives eternal life at salvation. All believers will be eternally happy regardless of spiritual advance. However, greater blessings and rewards await those who faithfully execute this plan. The believer will also be given a glorified body that will be like the resurrection body of Christ. We will recognize one another and have the ability to move through time and space in a similar manner as Christ. This all occurs for the Church Age believer at the Rapture of the Church (the time in which all believers of this age meet Jesus Christ in the air).

Election

Election is the plan of God for believers only, whereby He chooses or selects certain things to be true. The Greek word for *election* is "eklektos" and means picked out, selected, or chosen for privilege. The question that must be answered in order to clearly understand this doctrine is "What are these things that God chooses for the believer?" Please notice that it is not God choosing a person for *salvation* as some teach; rather it is God choosing certain things to be true *of* the believer. An unbeliever must still use his volition to choose to believe in Christ or to reject Christ. (Ephesians 1:4)

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The *false doctrine* that says God chooses some to be saved and others to be lost is called “limited atonement.” What is taught is that Christ’s atonement on the Cross was for only those who God had selected ahead time to believe. What the Bible teaches is “unlimited atonement.” The Bible teaches that *any* person may come to Christ by faith. God is not willing that anyone should perish but that all should come to know Christ as Savior. (II Peter 3:9) At salvation, God has decreed (chosen or elected) certain things to be true for those who have believed.

The Election of Jesus Christ

The first election by God took place in eternity past when the plan was formulated for the redemption of mankind. Jesus Christ volunteered to become the Savior and was elected to privilege by God at that time. It is the inheritance of Christ that the believer shares with Him because of his unique relationship as Royal Family of God. Jesus Christ was chosen by God for a service. That service was for Him to become a human being, live a sinless life and pay the penalty for sin by His death on the Cross. As a result of Christ’s accomplishment, He now sits at the place of extreme privilege and honor - “the right hand of God.”

God is completely satisfied with the work of Christ and He (Christ) has been given His rightful place of royalty in Heaven. As Royal Family of God, every Church Age believer has been elected to these same special privileges by God. These privileges begin at salvation and continue throughout all eternity. We call these privileges “Spiritual Assets.” (I Peter 1:2; 2:4-10)

The Election of the Church Age Believer

The Church Age believer also has been chosen by God for a service. This service is to be Royal Family of God and a Royal Ambassador of the Lord Jesus Christ. Every person who believes in Christ during this dispensation becomes Royal Family of God and a Royal Ambassador for Christ. As royalty, it is the responsibility of each believer to fulfill his election by the execution of the Christian Way of Life. (II Thessalonians 2:13-14)

The Christian Way of Life involves a life of discipline in order to learn God’s grace system for success. There is no shortcut when it comes to learning Bible doctrine and applying it to daily experience. Even Jesus had to learn Bible doctrine by studying and He also had to apply it. At the age of twelve, He confounded the Hebrew scholars with His knowledge of God’s Word and when tempted by Satan, He applied what He had learned to overcome the legitimate, but flawed offers of Satan. (Luke 2:41-52, 4:1-13)

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If we are to make our “calling certain,” as Peter tells us to do in II Peter 1:10, we must become knowledgeable of the doctrines of God’s Word and how they apply to our lives. This requires a life of consistent and persistent intake of accurate Bible teaching. In order to fully understand spiritual information from the Word of God, the believer must rely upon the teaching ministry of God the Holy Spirit. Spiritual things are revealed by the Holy Spirit only to the spiritual believer (those who are in fellowship with God and controlled by the Holy Spirit).

God elected you for a service. We know that this service is our “reasonable service.” (Romans 12:1-2) We know from the study of His Word what this service is and we know how to accomplish it. We also know from Scripture the alternative to fulfilling God’s plan. Therefore, it is still a matter of personal volition (free will). Some will and some will not chose to fulfill this service for God. For the believer who chooses to fulfill this service, there awaits a life of peace, joy and contentment. Royalty has privilege, but it also has great responsibility. This is the case with the believer in Christ. The privileges that are available to us as Royal Family of God are innumerable and beyond human comprehension. (Colossians 3:12-17)

Foreknowledge

God’s foreknowledge is often studied in connection with the doctrine of election. It is often erroneously stated that because God knew in advance who would believe in Christ and who would not, He chooses for salvation those who He already knows will believe. Nothing could be further from the truth and this is false doctrine. (Romans 8:29)

Foreknowledge is part of God’s attribute of omniscience. God, of course, knows all the knowable and He has always known it. It was no surprise to God when you believed in Christ, but God did not force you to believe. Foreknowledge never determines what is going to be, it is only the *knowledge* of what *is* going to be. Foreknowledge is an attribute and election is an act.

The foreknowledge of God *makes* nothing certain, but it merely *perceives* what is certain. What God knows right now, He has always known. God even knows the possibilities had you or I taken a different path in life. This does not, however, mean that God made the choices for us; He leaves that up to us. Of course, God in His grace directs us, influences us and (when allowed) guides us to people, places and circumstances.