



Ephesians 1 on Predestination

Read – Ephesians Ch 1 v 3 – 14

Discuss Question – How do you think people come to Salvation?

What do you think Man's role is in this process?

What do you think God's role is in this process?

The idea of Predestination comes from the bible's teaching about how God saves the individual through Christ. Paul in Romans and Ephesians teaches a doctrine of Predestination. Throughout church history people have struggled to understand what this idea of predestination is.

Read – Romans Ch 8 v 28 – 30, Mark Ch 13 v 20

Two views of What Predestination means:-

Predestination

The first view is based on the fact that God is all knowing. He knows what has happened and what is going to happen in the past, the present and the future. As a result God already has a **foreknowledge** of those people through human history who will respond to Him. As Jesus is shared with the lost He knows those who will receive, respond and live their lives in obedience to the gospel. As a result of this from the beginning of time God predestines them to salvation. Because He knows who will respond to Him in every generation He actively works in the lives of those who will chose Him to save them.

Double Predestination:-

354 years after Jesus' death and resurrection a man called Augustine while reflecting on what the bible said on man's slavery to sin and absolute lostness came to form the view double predestination.

View States –

Man is completely lost in sin and rebellion against God.

His fallen will and pride is so corrupt that he will not seek out the one true God or seek out salvation.

In this sense man has no free will – he is died in sin

Salvation therefore is completely dependent on God's initiative – God's grace seeks, restores, saves and preserves the sinner. Even the act of someone looking into faith shows God's hand at work.

The fact that some people find salvation and others do not rests in God and His sovereign purposes.

Strong points – takes seriously the bible's teaching of Sin. It magnifies God's grace in saving the lost.

Problem s – Teaches that God passes over some sinners and therefore leaves them in their sin and unable to respond. Read Romans Ch 9 V10 – 23 those who defend this view point say God is not obliged to save anyone – all have sinned and therefore all should be condemned. If God chooses to save some and therefore show His mercy and grace – or condemn others and therefore show His justice then that is up to God and His eternal plan for humanity.

For two Centuries Early Baptists believed in the idea of double predestination. After this some broke away and followed the path and idea of God's foreknowledge. Those who believed in double predestination were called Particular Baptists and those who believed in God's foreknowledge were called General Baptists.

Arminianism – Third view developed in 1610 – very late view – does not take seriously sin and teaches a false unbiblical view of freedom of the human will.

God Chooses to save all

Jesus died for all

Salvation is conditional not a work of God, but on man responding to what God has Done.

Man has complete free will and never is so fallen that he cannot respond to God

God does not chose anyone – salvation is universal – man chooses God

Throughout the church history predestination has been the overwhelming belief of what Christians understand happens in salvation. Predestination does not take away our responsibility as Christ's witnesses because the bible makes it clear that God has given over the responsibility to share to gospel to the church.

God has appointed preaching, evangelism and the church as the means by which He will accomplish His saving purposes.

Paul who gives us the doctrine of predestination makes it absolutely clear that God has bound Himself to the willingness of the church to witness to Him. Just as God entrusted Jesus with the task of securing salvation by His death on the cross and that was dependent on Jesus being obedient to God's call on Him, so God in His sovereign will has entrusted the church with the gospel of life. Therefore if the church does not witness to Jesus, people will not be saved and the church will be judged because it has not fulfilled God's intended purposes. What God says He will do He will do, What God has entrusted the church to do the church had better do. **Read Romans Ch 10 v 14 – 15, Ezekiel Ch 33 v 7 – 9**

This is the wonder of God's sovereign will that He will entrust you and me with a part of His intended purpose. If we are not faithful to our calling we will find ourselves, like the Israelites that Moses led, kept outside the promised land, dying in the wilderness and the next generation will be the inheritors and fulfillers of God's plans.

You have read the different ideas about Salvation and how it works – Now Discuss!!