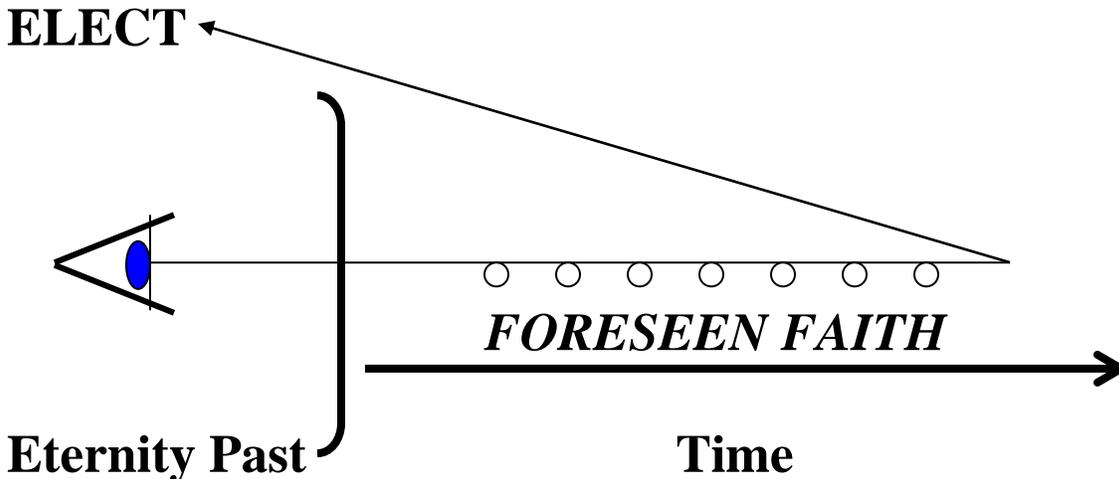


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C0420 -- May 19, 2004 -- Ephesians 1:5-6 -- Predestination to Adoption

Last week we looked at the Doctrine of Election. We began by identifying the parts of speech for the all-important phrase **He chose us in Him**. The subject, the one doing the choosing, was “God the Father.” The verb is **chose**. God the Father **chose**. Who did He choose? The object is **us**; God the Father chose **us**. The verb **chose** is middle voice meaning He chose us “for Himself” or “for His own benefit” with great personal interest. The **in Him** is a dative of instrument meaning He chose us “in connection” with Christ, and particularly in connection with the sacrifice of Christ which is outlined in vv. 7-12. We also looked at the 3 views of election;

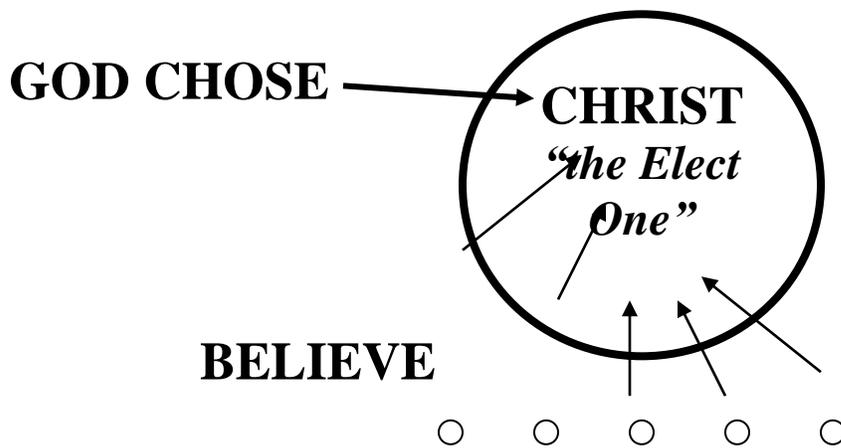
1. GOD CHOSE THOSE HE FOREKNEW WOULD ACCEPT CHRIST



This view states that God looked down through the corridors of time and saw who would respond and He elected them. This view has at least five problems. *First*, the language of the Bible never says this. *Second*, this view destroys God’s freedom of choice. It says that God’s will is determined by the human decision of faith. God may have elected us but we obligated God to elect us by our faith. *Third*, it implies that God gains knowledge in time and bases His decisions on time. *Fourth*, this view confuses God’s foreknowledge with foresight. Foreknowledge does not mean mere foresight or foreseeing what will happen. Of course, God knew beforehand who would believe; He is omniscient; He knows all things actual and possible. But foreknowledge means more than mere foresight. Foreknowledge means “to know before time intimately”. It does not mean to have cognitive knowledge but intimate knowledge (e.g., man and wife vs. man and other men’s wives). 1 Peter 1:1-2 shows that there is a causative relationship between foreknowledge and election but the exact connection is not spelled out.

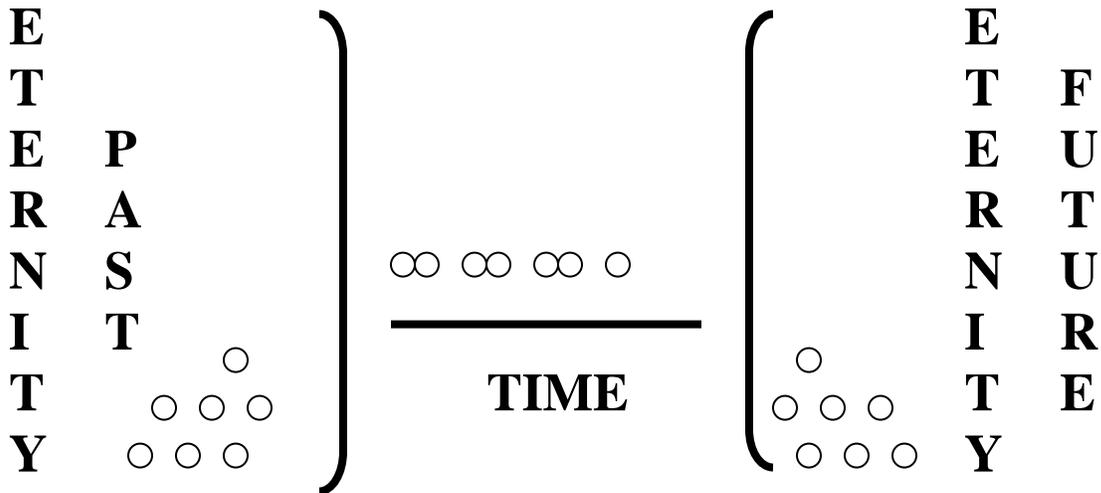
All we know is that the relationship has something to do with the choice. How God made the choice is inherent in the word foreknowledge. Additionally, God did not foresee faith, the Scriptures always declare that God foreknew people, not faith (Rom. 8:29-30). And finally, the *Fifth problem*, it does not adequately deal with man's depravity. Man is not able to take a single step toward God because all men were dead in their sins and walking according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air (Eph. 2:1-2). If faith was the basis of God's election then no one would ever believe and be saved. This view amounts to basing election on human faith rather than faith on election. Will anyone who is elect not believe? No. Will anyone who believes not be elect? No. Those who believe and those who are elect are the exact same people. No one will believe who is not elect and no one who is elect will not believe.

2. CORPORATE OR GROUP ELECTION



Corporate election is the view that God does not choose individuals but only chose Christ and that those who believe in Christ are therefore elect because "in Christ". Christ is the sphere in which God's elective purposes take place. It is my perspective that this is not a total answer to election, but only a partial answer. It is true that those who believe in Christ are elect but what is meant is that their belief makes them elect. It is not true that our belief is what makes us elect. It is also not true that God does not choose individuals. He certainly does choose individuals. There were four reasons this is only a partial answer. *First, A Logical Reason:* to show that corporate election is true does not mean individual election is false. *Second, Individual Election Passages:* certain passages teach individual election (e.g., John 15:19; Romans 9; et. Al.). *Third, Denies Total Depravity:* if election is based on human faith and men are totally depraved then no one would ever choose Christ (because depraved) and no one would ever be saved (because no one would choose to be in Christ). God must take the initiative. *Fourth, Promises are not for Individuals:* if election is corporate only then all the promises can only be claimed corporately and not individually. This means you, as an individual, cannot claim eternal security or assurance of salvation. But obviously Paul did not see only corporate election any more than he only saw corporate eternal security or assurance.

3. INDIVIDUAL ELECTION



“He chose us” “approp. by faith” “in His presence”

Individual election states that God, before time, chose individuals to be saved. It seems to me that God chose individuals before the foundation of the world to be in His presence eternally. It seems to both be reasonable and in line with Scripture to teach that individual election is the basis for corporate election. Individual people make up a group. This view carefully observes the doctrine of total depravity and makes applicable all the promises of God to the individual. It seems best in light of the grammar to understand that we were chosen *in Him* not as us being chosen *because of Him* but *in connection* with His sacrificial work.

The purpose for which *He chose us* is also given in v. 4. God elected you *to be holy and faultless before Him in love. Before Him* is the Greek word *katenopion* and it means “in His presence”. God elected us before the foundation of the world *to be* (present infinitive *ei=nai* expresses purpose) *holy and faultless in His presence*.

2. The Basis of Spiritual Blessings (1:4-14)

a. God’s Election for Himself (1:4-6)

(1) Activity: Election before Creation (1:4)

Greek Text: 1:4-5 kaqw.j evxele,xato h`ma/j evn auvtw/| pro. katabolh/j ko,smou ei=nai h`ma/j a`gi,ouj kai. avmw,mouj katenw,pion auvtou/ evn avga,ph|(5 proori,saj h`ma/j eivj ui`oqesi,an dia. VIhsou/ Cristou/ eivj auvtou,n(kata. th.n euvdoki,an tou/ qelh,matoj auvtou/(

Translation: 1:4-5 because He chose us (for Himself) in Him before the foundation of the world to be holy and faultless before Him in love, 5 having predestined us to adoption through Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will, **evn avga,ph**, “in love”. Paul uses the word *love* in all 13 of His epistles but 33% of Paul’s uses occur in the Epistle to the Ephesians. That is why we said the first week that *love* is one of the major themes of Ephesians. First let’s define the word because the Greek language actually has four words for love.

	<i>Agapao</i>	<i>Erao</i>	<i>Storge</i>	<i>Phileo</i>
TYPE OF LOVE	affectionate	lustful	familial	friendship
	selective, security	impulsive, satisfaction, physical, possessive		

Leon Morris made an insightful comment on the contrast between *agape* love and *eros* love when he says: “*eros* has two principal characteristics: it is a love of the worthy and it is a love that desires to possess. *Agape* is in contrast at both points: it is not a love of the worthy, and it is not a love that desires to possess. On the contrary, it is a love given quite irrespective of merit, and it is a love that seeks to give.” Hoehner says, “a proper concept of love is based on God’s love in that he extends it to the undeserving and unloving as seen in his continuing love for the sinner and the wayward believer. Love, then, is seeking the highest good in the one loved. Ultimately, for the believer the highest good is the will of God for him or her.” This is why I often do things that my wife does not like at all, but because I know God’s will through His commandments, I know how to love her properly. This is where you as a husband need to realize how to truly love your wife. Truly loving your wife does not mean giving her material possessions as you try to satiate her. When you do that you only satisfy her impulsive, possessive desires, that’s *erao* but not *agape* love. I’m warning you though, that this will never satisfy her. What she really wants, regardless of what she says, is a man who loves her with *agape* love. She wants your selective love. She wants to be the one you uniquely love. She also wants security. She wants to rest assured of your protection and care for her and she wants it unconditionally. She wants a *giving* love, not a *possessing* love.

The next question about the phrase **evn avga,ph**, “*in love*” is what does it refer to? The older commentators say it refers back to *exelexato* so it would mean that God’s choice was born out of His love and was not a random choice. This view is not accepted by modern commentators for three reasons. *First*, if Paul wanted to make this connection the prepositional phrase would not be so far removed from the verb. *Second*, the fact that God elects already reveals God’s love and no additional modifying phrase is needed to express this. *Third*, the predominant way Paul uses *agape* in Ephesians is a reference to believer’s love and not God’s love. The *second* view is that *in love* refers to *predestine* in verse 5 so that the phrase means that God’s predestination is born in love. The NASB translators took it

upon themselves to set *in love* off by a period in order to convey this idea. However, this was probably not Paul's intention. *First*, this has little support in the Paul's context because his point is that the purpose of the chosen is to be holy and blameless not before other humans but before God himself and this is perfectly blended with love. *Second*, God's predestination is already a demonstration of God's love. There is no reason to repeat that concept. The *third* view, one held by many commentators and translations is that *in love* is united to *holy and without blame* in verse 4. There are several reasons why this is the best understanding. First, within this context the verbs and participles describing God's actions always precede the qualifying phrases (cf. vv. 3-11). Second, every time Paul uses *en agape* in Ephesians it modifies the previous clause.

Eph. 3:17 so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; *and* that you, being rooted and grounded *in love*,

Eph 4:2 with all humility and gentleness, with patience, showing tolerance for one another *in love*,

Eph 4:15 but speaking the truth *in love*, we are to grow up in all *aspects* into Him who is the head, *even* Christ,

Eph 4:16 from whom the whole body, being fitted and held together by what every joint supplies, according to the proper working of each individual part, causes the growth of the body for the building up of itself *in love*.

Eph 5:2 and walk *in love*, just as Christ also loved you and gave Himself up for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God as a fragrant aroma.

It is very fitting with Paul to join love with *holy and blameless*. Together they balance each other out. Therefore, holiness and blamelessness are affected by love. We are to manifest love with holiness as a result of being elected. The full realization of this will happen in the future when believers will stand in God's presence. However, in the here and now God calls us to personal holiness and love toward one another. When we have personal holiness and love toward one another this manifests God's character and work in the believer. Now for verse 5...

(2) Cause: Predestination to Adoption (1:5)

Greek Text: 1:5 proori,saj h`ma/j eivj ui`oqesi,an dia. VIhsou/ Cristou/ eivj auvto,n(kata. th.n euvdoki,an tou/ qelh,matoj auvtou/(

Translation: 1:5 having predestined us to adoption as sons through Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will,

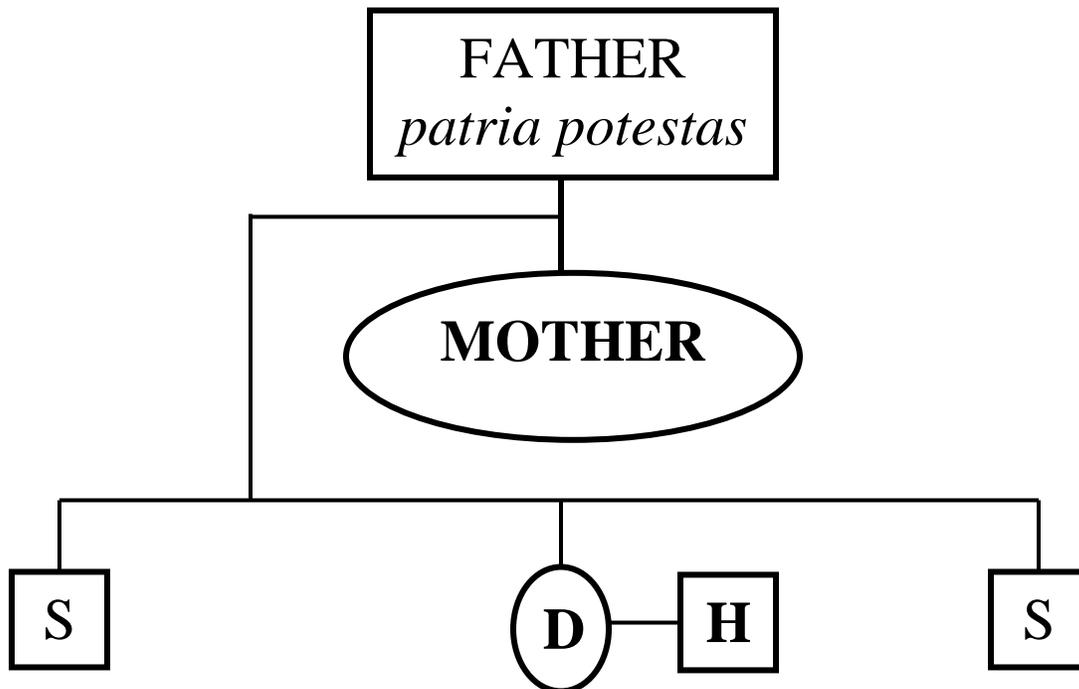
proori,saj h`ma/j eivj ui`oqesi,an, "having predestined us to adoption as sons". **proori,saj** is a compound word that comes from two Greek words, *pro* meaning "before" and *orizo* meaning "to set a boundary, to separate, to mark out",

from which we get the word *horizon*. It is only used six times in the NT (Acts 4:28; Rom. 8:29, 30; 1 Co. 2:7; Eph. 1:5, 11). We might say it means “to pre-plan”. The word doesn’t have so much to do with the people as it does with the destiny of people. Election has to do with the people. For example, you plan a party. *proorizo* would have to do with planning the party, election would correspond to the people you invited to the party. So, the two are different. Predestination is a pre-planned destiny to which He elects people. Basically, it means to pre-plan or plan ahead. To see what it means turn to Rom. 8:29 (READ). If it means to pre-plan then what exactly is the plan? The plan means to share the destiny and character of Christ. That’s what predestine is all about. Predestine has nothing to do with hell. The word means to pre-plan a person’s destiny to be that of Jesus Christ. V. 29 shows you what the plan is. So, if you want a quick sidewalk definition of predestine it means to “share the destiny of Christ”. Now let’s go back to Eph. 1. There Paul is saying basically the same thing but just a little differently. READ v. 5a, “He predestined us to adoption...”. That’s all it says, it doesn’t say “as sons” or “as children”, you can just drop that. Now, what is this adoption? Well, there are three basic views as to what this adoption is. The first two are easily rejected. Some say Paul’s concept of adoption came from Israel since he was an Israelite. But the problem with this is that the Jews had no custom for adoption in the Jewish law, the closest thing was the Levirate marriage where if a man died childless, his brother was to marry the widow and raise up children to be the heirs of his brother’s estate (Dt. 25:5-10) but this is never identified as adoption. Others say the background for Paul’s view of adoption was the Greek law where during his life a man may adopt a male citizen to receive both the legal and religious privileges and responsibilities of a real son. This is highly unlikely because the Romans had overtaken the Greek territory more than a century before and would therefore be following Roman law not Greek law. The final option is that Paul had in mind Roman law when he talked about adoption. This is clearly the case because Paul was addressing people under Roman rule, Paul was born a Roman citizen, and adoption was common under Roman rule so it would be common knowledge for the Ephesians.

ROMAN ADOPTION

To understand adoption, one must understand the structure of the Roman family.

STRUCTURE OF THE ROMAN FAMILY



The father had absolute power (*patria potestas*) over the members of his family so that he could take the life of a family member and that act would not be considered murder. This authority was usually only exercised with newborns but he could legally put to death anyone in his family (e.g., Herod). During Paul's day a father had control over his children even after they married. If his daughter was being married, she would enter what is called *sine manus*, which meant that the father, not the husband, was her absolute authority. The wife was therefore independent from and not legally subject to her husband. She could divorce him in conjunction with her father and her father could in fact even initiate a divorce. In light of this historical background, when we get to Eph. 5, you are going to see how radical Paul's teaching on marriage really is, for it came in direct contradiction to the Roman legal structure for marriage. The wife submitting to the husband rather than her father confronted head on the family structure of the day. With regard to property, the father had absolute full legal ownership of everything the family had and he could dispose of it anyway he saw fit. Roman law for adoption had two steps.

STEP ONE: THE RELEASE

First, the son being adopted had to be released from the control of his natural father. This release was done by a procedure whereby the natural father sold his son as a slave three times to the adopter. The adopter would release his newly adopted son two times and the adopted son would automatically come under his natural father's control again. However, with the third sale, the adopted son was freed from his natural father.

STEP TWO: THE NEW BOND

With all authority of the natural father gone the adopter now had absolute authority and power over the adopted son. He would retain this control until death or until the adopter freed the son. The son was no longer responsible to his natural father but only to his newly acquired father. The purpose of this adoption was so that the adopted son could take the position of a natural son in order to continue the family line and maintain property ownership. This adopted son became the *patria potestas* in the next generation.

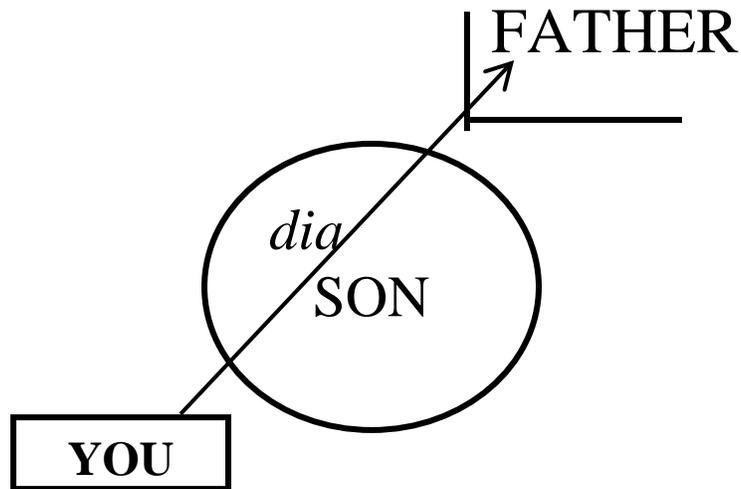
CHRISTIAN ADOPTION

Saints have been predestined to adoption by God. This means that even though you were once labeled “sons of disobedience” and “children of wrath” (Eph. 2:2-3), you have absolutely no responsibility or obligation to your old father, the devil (John 8:38, 44), the one who is the prince of the power of the air (Eph. 2:2). Instead, you are now God’s sons and daughters and He controls your lives and property. Since God does not die you will always be under His control and authority. This is why God has the right to discipline believers (Heb. 12:5-11). Adoption should not be perceived as evil or with mal intent. Under Roman law the reason for adoption was to continue a family name and its property. The point is that the adopted son acquired a new status, privilege and property that he would not have had under his old father. There would be no reason for adoption if it were not advantageous to both the new father and the adopted son. For the new father it would pass on his name, privileges, and property. This is advantageous for both God and the adopted. It is advantageous for God because you now pass on His name, the privileges of being His son, and the message of the spiritual blessings He provides to all saints. This adoption is also advantageous for the believer. As a saint you once were under a tyrant, the devil; a thief who came to steal, kill, and destroy. But, in contrast, as saints you are under the authority of one who is loving, caring, and wants you to have an abundant life. While we presently enjoy this newly acquired status of adoption the full realization and joy will be when we are resurrected and no longer able to be tempted by the devil to return to him.

	BELIEVER	UNBELIEVER
FATHER	God	Devil
PRIVILEGES	Love, care, abundant life	Steal, kill, destroy
PROPERTY	Spiritual blessings	Eternal separation from God
FULL REALIZATION	At rapture/resurrection	At Great White Throne Judgment

dia. Vihsou/ Cristou/ eivj auvto,n, “through Jesus Christ to Himself.” *Dia* with the genitive always means agency, or the means through which you were adopted. What was the means through which you were adopted? You were adopted *through Jesus Christ*. This means that you were adopted through the work of

Christ on the cross, through His sacrifice, which Paul is going to talk about in verses 7-12. The prepositional phrase *eis auton*, **to Himself**, is thought by some to refer to Christ but here in the context it makes much more sense as referring to the Father. Christ is the means by which you were adopted but you were adopted by God the Father. The preposition *eis* denotes direction and relationship. You have come *to* the Father and *into* a relationship with the Father.



This is the *means* of your adoption. It is *through* the Son, *to* the Father and *into* a relationship with the Father. Sorry boys, there's only one way to God the Father and it's through the Son.

kata. th.n euvdoki,an tou/ qelh,matoj auytou/, “according to the good pleasure of His will”. *Kata* with the accusative always gives us the standard. The standard by which God’s actions were accomplished is **the good pleasure of His will**. **Good pleasure** comes from the word *eudokia*, and has the sense of “well pleasing, satisfaction, good pleasure.” When *eudokia* is used of God in the New Testament it refers to God’s sovereignty. In the context of Eph. 1:5 and 9 notice that God’s good pleasure is expressed freely from his own will and is not influenced by any other person or thing. So, the standard for predestination had nothing to do with how good a boy you were. It had nothing to do with your will and everything to do with God’s will. What this is saying is that God’s predestination to adoption into His family was not unpleasant but was an expression of His **good pleasure**. This is “not a grim Lord watching over the execution of his predetermined plan, but a smiling Father is praised. He enjoys imparting his riches to many children.” (Hoehner, *Ephesians: An Exegetical Commentary*, 199). When humans do things according to their good pleasure, we have a problem because we may operate out of the old sin nature, but God is infinitely righteous, just, loving, and holy. So, when He operates according to His good pleasure it is always in accordance with His all-benevolent nature. What good pleasure is He speaking about? The *thelematos*, “will” is a genitive of source showing that the **good pleasure** comes from **His will**.

In conclusion, predestination puts emphasis on the “destiny” more than the people. “God took the initiative to predetermine our destiny as adopted sons into the family of God. He accomplished this through (*dia*) his Son Jesus Christ to bring us to (*eis*) God himself. This was done all according (*kata*) to his pleasure freely operating from his own will.” (Hoehner, *Ephesians: An Exegetical Commentary*, 199).

DIVINE SOVEREIGNTY AND HUMAN FREEDOM

INDETERMINISM

The Bible teaches that man has a form of freedom but it does not tell us what type of freedom is in view. There are basically two types of freedom and I want to lodge these two views in your mind now so we can address them more fully when we get to Eph. 1:11; *indeterministic* and *deterministic*. Most people, including Christians, assume without any biblical evidence that the only kind of freedom is *indeterministic* freedom. What this means is that they believe that you can always choose contrary to the choice you made. They teach that no one is free who *could not have done otherwise*. They claim that *determinism* removes freedom. What I will argue is that the Bible never teaches this form of freedom anywhere. It is a human viewpoint assumption. Given *indeterminism*, I see no way for God to be in control of the world as outlined in Scripture (e.g., Eph. 1:11). Indeterminists claim that no matter how much God inclines someone’s will toward what he has chosen, such inclinations, on an indeterministic account of freedom, can never be sufficient to produce God’s decreed action. The bottom line is that if we can always choose contrary to the choice we made, then God cannot be in control of the world.

DETERMINISM

By determinism is not meant what is meant in the natural sciences. Human sciences do not operate in the same way as natural sciences so that human behavior is absolutely predictable. There are conditions that precede a person’s choices but these conditions are so complex that one could never specify the conditions that always result in some behavior. Nor is determinism to be confused with fatalism. Fatalism teaches that God had to create the world He did, that there was no other option for God, He had to create this universe. I reject this and hold that God had an infinite number of options open to Him but once He chose to create a certain world (e.g., a world with Adam as a sinner) then things necessarily follow as a consequence (e.g., God sent His Son as a Redeemer). That is, God created a cause-effect universe. I believe that there is genuine freedom even though human actions are causally determined. Let me explain and then give an example. There are two types of causes which influence and determine actions. First, there are constraining causes. Constraining causes force a person to act against his/her will (e.g., physical constraint, gun to the head). Second, there are non-constraining causes. Non-constraining causes do not force a person to act against his will, desires, or wishes, but they are sufficient to bring about an action

(e.g., a persuasive argument). My understanding is that an action is free even if causally determined so long as the causes are *non-constraining*. That is, as long as the causes don't force me to act against my will, desire, or wishes. I also understand that an action is not free if causally determined by constraining causes, that is, causes that force me to act against my will, desire, or wishes (e.g., a gun to the head).

EXAMPLE

Let me give an illustration to explain. Let's say I want one of you here tonight to leave this room. There are at least three ways I can do this. First, if I were physically strong enough, I could pick you up and remove you from the room. This would be the strongest form of constraint. Your leaving the room would not be considered a free action on your part.

Second, I could hold a gun to your head and tell you to leave or I'll kill you. You would probably leave the room not because you wanted to leave the room but because you wanted to live. This would be another form of a constraining cause. Of your own will you left but not because you wanted to leave the room, it was because you wanted to live. You did this under constraint or compulsion. This is also not a free action because you didn't want to do it.

Third, I could try to persuade you to leave the room. Such persuasion does not include threatening because that would be constraining. Instead, I give you reasons why it is beneficial for you to leave the room (maybe there's a brand-new car outside waiting for you, maybe there's a limousine waiting to take you to the airport for an all expense paid trip to Italy). Having heard my case you decide that it is in your best interest to leave the room. Initially, you had no desire to leave the room; but after considering all that I told you, you changed your desires. In such a case your actions were causally determined yet free. You left the room freely since you were not constrained to act against your desires. This is what is meant by *compatibilism* or *soft-determinism*. The point is that there are reasons we do things. For example, there has to be a reason why you believed in God. By non-constraining causes God can and does decisively persuade us, by a multitude of means, to desire to believe. The problem with indeterminism is that there are no sufficient causes that direct us to a course of action decisively. The problem is that we are never told why we make a choice. If we say I just wanted to that doesn't answer the question. Why do we make certain choices? Are human actions just random? There has to be a reason I choose one thing over another and *indeterministic* systems don't have an answer to what the reason is? This is the unanswerable problem for indeterminist freedom.

Here are some passages concerned with the relationship between divine and human action and make sense in a *compatibilist* view of freedom:

Proverbs 16:9 ⁹The mind of man plans his way, But the LORD directs his steps.

John 6:37 ³⁷ "All that the Father gives Me will come to Me, and the one who comes to Me I will certainly not cast out. **John 6:44** ⁴⁴ "No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him; and I will raise him up on the last day.

Acts 2:23 ²³ this *Man*, delivered over by the predetermined plan and foreknowledge of God, you nailed to a cross by the hands of godless men and put *Him* to death.

Acts 4:27-28 ²⁷ "For truly in this city there were gathered together against Your holy servant Jesus, whom You anointed, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, along with the Gentiles and the peoples of Israel, ²⁸ to do whatever Your hand and Your purpose predestined to occur.

Philippians 2:12-13 ¹² So then, my beloved, just as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your salvation with fear and trembling; ¹³ for it is God who is at work in you, both to will and to work for *His* good pleasure.

Hebrews 13:20-21 *even* Jesus our Lord, ²¹ equip you in every good thing to do His will, working in us that which is pleasing in His sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom *be* the glory forever and ever. Amen.

1 Peter 2:6-8 ⁶ For *this* is contained in Scripture: "BEHOLD, I LAY IN ZION A CHOICE STONE, A PRECIOUS CORNER *stone*, AND HE WHO BELIEVES IN HIM WILL NOT BE DISAPPOINTED." ⁷ This precious value, then, is for you who believe; but for those who disbelieve, "THE STONE WHICH THE BUILDERS REJECTED, THIS BECAME THE VERY CORNER *stone*," ⁸ and, "A STONE OF STUMBLING AND A ROCK OF OFFENSE"; for they stumble because they are disobedient to the word, and to this *doom* they were also appointed.

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