

**The 1689 Confession of Faith; Chapter 3, Paragraph 7 – “Of God’s Decree”, Message # 27 –  
“The Lamb’s Book of Life”, Presented in the Adult Sunday School Class  
by Pastor Paul Rendall, on February 13<sup>th</sup>, 2022.**

**Paragraph 3** – By the decree of God, for the manifestation of his glory, some men and angels are predestinated, or foreordained to eternal life through Jesus Christ, to the praise of his glorious grace; others being left to act in their sin to their just condemnation, to the praise of his glorious justice.

**Paragraph 7** – The doctrine of the high mystery of predestination is to be handled with special prudence and care, that men attending the will of God revealed in his Word, and yielding obedience thereunto, may, from the certainty of their effectual vocation, be assured of their eternal election; so shall this doctrine afford matter of praise, reverence, and admiration of God, and of humility, diligence, and abundant consolation to all that sincerely obey the gospel.

**The “high mystery of predestination” as it is called, needs to be understood by us, as having two doctrinal considerations in it.**

**The 1<sup>st</sup> Doctrinal Consideration – God has predestined a particular number of people**, who He chose in Christ before the foundation of the world, to eternal life.

**Last Sunday we looked at Ephesians chapter 1, verses 3-6 and 11 and 12**, to establish the truth that we, as God’s elect people, were chosen in Christ by the Father, before time began.

We saw how the truth of this doctrine ought to lead us to praise, reverence and admiration of God. And furthermore, it ought to lead us to have greater humility, to exercise greater diligence in our pursuing righteousness and holiness, and it ought to bring us abundant consolation as we sincerely obey the gospel.

**I want to have you turn with me now, once again, over to Romans chapter 11**, and I will re-read these verses, and we will interact together over the 2<sup>nd</sup> Doctrinal Consideration in relation to the high mystery of Predestination – What is called Preterition or Reprobation.

**Romans 11: 1-11** – “I say then, has God cast away His people? Certainly not! For I also am an Israelite, of the seed of Abraham, of the tribe of Benjamin.

(2) God has not cast away His people whom He foreknew. Or do you not know what the Scripture says of Elijah, how he pleads with God against Israel, saying,

(3) "LORD, THEY HAVE KILLED YOUR PROPHETS AND TORN DOWN YOUR ALTARS, AND I ALONE AM LEFT, AND THEY SEEK MY LIFE"?

(4) But what does the divine response say to him? "I HAVE RESERVED FOR MYSELF SEVEN THOUSAND MEN WHO HAVE NOT BOWED THE KNEE TO BAAL."

(5) Even so then, at this present time there is a remnant according to the election of grace.

(6) And if by grace, then it is no longer of works; otherwise grace is no longer grace. But if it is of works, it is no longer grace; otherwise work is no longer work.

(7) What then? Israel has not obtained what it seeks; but the elect have obtained it, and the rest were blinded.

(8) Just as it is written: "GOD HAS GIVEN THEM A SPIRIT OF STUPOR, EYES THAT THEY SHOULD NOT SEE AND EARS THAT THEY SHOULD NOT HEAR, TO THIS VERY DAY."

(9) And David says: "LET THEIR TABLE BECOME A SNARE AND A TRAP, A STUMBLING BLOCK AND A RECOMPENSE TO THEM.

(10) LET THEIR EYES BE DARKENED, SO THAT THEY DO NOT SEE, AND BOW DOWN THEIR BACK ALWAYS."

(11) I say then, have they stumbled that they should fall? Certainly not! But through their fall, to provoke them to jealousy, salvation has come to the Gentiles."

**These verses reveal both what God’s Preterition is, and what His Reprobation is.**

**1. The Doctrine of God’s Preterition in verses 4-6.**

**The word preterition means “passed by”.** Where do we see this doctrine declared in these verses?

We see it in verse 4, first of all, where God says – “I have reserved for Myself 7,000 men who have not bowed the knee to Baal.” His “reserving” these 7,000 means that not only did He purpose to save the 7,000, save them and call them to Himself and to the true worship of Him, the only true and living God.

It also means, by way of implication, that He would pass by, and not choose the others outside of that 7,000 in Israel. He would leave them to themselves, and to their own sinful independence. And thus they would perish in their sins. We should understand that He did not predestine them or foreordain them to damnation, but to this doom they would most certainly come. They would bring themselves to this place of judgment, where God would have to judge them; that He will most certainly punish them, according to their works.

**You see the doctrine of God's Reprobation set forth in verses 7-11 where Paul says** – What then? Israel has not obtained what it seeks; but the elect have obtained it, and the rest were blinded, or as it is translated in the NASB – they were hardened. Why was it that they were hardened? Because they would not receive God's word to them through the prophet, that they should believe in God alone for salvation, and worship Him alone. But they went on to reject God's word which would have done them good in every way, had they repented of their sins. It was for their repeated and continual rejection of His word to them, that they were delivered over to spiritual blindness.

**Verse 8.** GOD HAS GIVEN THEM A SPIRIT OF STUPOR, EYES THAT THEY SHOULD NOT SEE AND EARS THAT THEY SHOULD NOT HEAR, TO THIS VERY DAY. And David says: LET THEIR TABLE BECOME A SNARE AND A TRAP, A STUMBLING BLOCK AND A RECOMPENSE TO THEM. LET THEIR EYES BE DARKENED, SO THAT THEY DO NOT SEE, AND BOW DOWN THEIR BACK ALWAYS.

**These were real judgments which were given to them, but they came to them because they would not hear God's word to them. This is reprobation.** And it is important that we see it in this way. People are rejected by God on account of their willful persistent sin. He does not arbitrarily assign them this lot in life. All men are guilty sinners. It is His mercy that any of us are saved. And when we think that we are a Christian we should still obey the injunction of 2<sup>nd</sup> Corinthians 13: 5 and 6 – “Examine yourselves as to whether you are in the faith.” “Test yourselves.” “Do you no know yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you? – Unless indeed you are disqualified.” KJV – Except ye be reprobates?

## **2. The Doctrine of God's Reprobation.**

**What is It? Answer: According to God's Divine Foreknowledge and Predestinating Purpose to only save some, and not all men, it is His rejection of sinners who will not repent of their sins and believe in Jesus Christ.**

How Should we understand the relationship between Preterition and Reprobation?

In Preterition, Esau's name was not found written in the Book of life.

**Revelation 20, verse 15** – “And anyone not found written in the Book of Life was cast into the lake of fire.”

**They were appointed to this doom in the Divine Decree because God is a God of strict and unwavering Justice in regard to their rejection of His word and His promise of salvation in Christ.** His purpose is to demonstrate His wrath and make His power known. And so, He will, at the time of the Last Judgment, cast them into hell, forever, for their sins. But He will take no pleasure in the death of the wicked. He does take pleasure in the salvation of His elect people. He leaves all reprobates to the love of their sin. He has determined this in His decree, before the foundation of the world; that He would leave them in their natural state.

**He leaves them to live their own lives according to their own will.** He does not interfere with their living this way, any farther than that He shows them His common grace and goodness to them at many points in their lives. He righteously strives with them by His Holy Spirit. He strives with them with them about their unrighteousness in their rejection of His word, and especially their rejection of His

offers of salvation in Christ. He passed by them in His decree before the foundation of the world. But He reprobates them in time and space over the course of their lives, in relation to how they will treat His word, His servants, and especially His Son, Jesus Christ.

**When it says in Romans chapter 9, verse 13, “Esau I have hated”**, God did not hate him with the sinful hatred or malice that wicked people manifest toward Him, or towards each other. He does not hate them in terms of the way that He created them. God did not create men to damn them, although Esau did end up being punished by God in hell. Rather, God “hated” Esau in the sense that He passed by and did not choose Esau unto salvation, in the decree. He left him out of it; that is, His showing him saving mercy and grace in Christ. He reprobated Esau in relation to his selfish and sinful ways. He rejected him.

**In Preterition, Esau’s name was not found written in the Book of life, those chosen by God to obtain eternal life.**

**Revelation 20, verse 15** – “And anyone not found written in the Book of Life was cast into the lake of fire.”

**3. In Reprobation, those who have sinned and who will persist in their sin with no desire to repent, they are blotted out of God’s book of Life.**

**Exodus 32: 30-32** – “Now it came to pass on the next day that Moses said to the people, ‘You have committed a great sin.’ “So now I will go up to the Lord; perhaps I can make atonement for your sin.” “Then Moses returned to the Lord and said, ‘Oh, these people have committed a great sin, and have made for themselves a god of gold!’ “Yet now, if You will forgive their sin – but if not, I pray, blot me out of Your book which You have written.” “And the Lord said to Moses, ‘Whoever has sinned against Me, I will blot him out of My book.’”

So the book of Life here is the Book of the Life of all those people created by God. They are all sinners, but if they persist in their sin, and God has passed by them in Preterition, He will confirm His just recompense upon them, the justice of their being punished forever by His blotting them out of His book of life. He gave them their life, and everything good according to His common grace. They did not choose to seek Him or to do His will. Therefore, they will suffer everlasting punishment in the lake of fire.

**4. Persevering in faith in Christ, and learning to keep your garments from being defiled will win the Lord’s commendation that you are worthy of His confessing your name before the Father and His angels.**

**Revelation 3: 4-6** – “You have a few names, even in Sardis who have not defiled their garments; and they shall walk with Me in white, for they are worthy.” “He who overcomes shall be clothed in white garments, and I will not blot out his name from the book of Life; but I will confess his name before My Father and before His angels.”

So, in relation to the doctrine of Predestination, those chosen by God, and effectually called, they believe in the Lord Jesus Christ. Then they Persevere in their faith and obedience to God’s word, and they overcome the world, the flesh, and the Devil; Christ will not blot out their names from the Book of Life. That is, as those who He has chosen from the foundation of the world, created and brought into life to fulfill His purpose, their names will be remembered, their lives will be preserved. They are worthy of His having shown them all this grace that He did, and He will confess their names before the Father and before the angels.

**Revelation 21: 24-27** – “And the nations of those who are saved shall walk in its light, and the kings of the earth bring their glory and honor into it.” “Its gates shall not be shut at all by day (there shall be no

night there), and they shall bring the glory and the honor of the nations into it.” “But there shall by no means enter it anything that defiles, or causes an abomination or a lie, but only those who are written in the Lamb’s book of life.”

Those who enter in to the New Jerusalem are the nations of those who are saved. They shall walk in its light and the kings of the earth shall bring their glory into it. Which shows that there will be nations in the eternal state as well as simply individual people. But nothing shall enter in to this city that defiles or causes an abomination, or a lie; only those people who are written in the Lamb’s book of life; that is, those who were predestined to eternal life. They are those who believed in Him for salvation and who cleansed themselves from all defilement of flesh and spirit. (2<sup>nd</sup> Corinthians 7: 1) They will all be perfected in righteousness, and all of them will be holy unto the Lord forever.

**In Conclusion –**

**How Thankful we ought to be that the Lord has had such mercy on us; sinners who do not deserve to have been shown God’s mercy in Christ!**

**1<sup>st</sup> Thessalonians 5, verses 9-11** – “For God did not appoint us to wrath, but to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ, who died for us, that whether we wake or sleep, we should live together with Him.” “Therefore comfort each other and edify one another, just as you also are doing.”

You can see how the certainty of God’s Decree is intended by Him to be used by us as a means of comforting and edifying each other. May we do that very thing.