
Subject: Biblical Theology Outline

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Provided and written by Dr. Freeman at FA as a supplemental guide for the Biblical Theology series.

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BIBLICAL THEOLOGY

I. PREDESTINATION

Definition: Predestination is God's Eternal Plan whereby He foreordained all things which come to pass. Ephesians 1:1-11

1. God's Eternal Plan includes: Creation (universe, man, angels, etc.); Adam's fall; redemption; rise of Israel; crucifixion; all the events of history; the movements of the earth and planets; the elements of nature; all things.

2. God's Eternal Plan is:

(1) Unconditional: Eph. 1:11

(2) Eternal; Eph. 3:7-11; Acts 15:18

(3) Sovereign: Ps. 135:6; Dan. 4:34-35

Although God's Plan is unconditional, eternal, and sovereign and not dependent upon man's choices and actions, He, nevertheless, is not responsible for nor the cause of sin or evil, inasmuch as Predestination of all things includes man's free choices and actions.

Acts 2:22-23; 4:27-28

Isaiah 10:5-12

Genesis 50:15-20

These passages show that God predestinated the events (inasmuch as no event could occur unless included in God's Eternal Plan), and that man freely chose to act as he did.

Likewise in the matter of redemption, the Scriptures teach that the predestination and election of those who believe was a part of God's Plan before the world began (Eph. 1:4-5, 11; Rom. 8:28-33). His Plan also decreed the "œfaith" to believe (Eph. 2:8-9; Acts 18:27; Rom. 8:29).

However, God's Plan decreed that they must exercise faith and freely choose to believe and receive Christ (2 Thess. 2:13-14).

God's Eternal Plan had to be unconditional. If any part of the Plan was conditioned upon what man might or might not do, then the whole Plan would have been conditional and uncertain of fulfillment (e.g., the crucifixion of Christ would not have been certain). No event is isolated or stands alone. For God to decree even ONE event as certain (Christ's death) would make all events certain. Otherwise God would not be sovereign, but dependent upon what man or Satan might or might not do. However, the Scriptures declare that God is dependent upon nothing or no one:

Daniel 4:35; Isaiah 14:27; 46:10

Ephesians 1:11

Acts 15:18

Romans 9:15-18

Proverbs 19:21; 16:33

Psalms 33:11

Nothing that man or Satan does can take God by surprise, nor can anything change or suspend God's Eternal Plan; for even man's free choices, plans, and actions are included in God's Plan (Luke 22:21-22; Acts 1:16, 20).

3. Explanation of Terms:

1. Predestination and Foreordination[B]

The terms mean the same thing. To predestinate an event is to foreordain it to come to pass. The terms signify the certainty of a future event; it will come to pass (1 Pet. 1:18-20; Eph. 1:11).

(2) Foreknowledge

This signifies the perfect knowledge of God from eternity of the certainty of all events that shall occur (Acts 15:18, "Known unto God are all his works from the beginning of the world"; cf. Rom 8:29).

(3) Election

Election is the sovereign choice of God's people before the foundation of the world. These would be effectually called, justified, and glorified: "Whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and who he called, them he also justified: and who he justified, them he also glorified" Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? (Rom. 8:30, 33.)

Election is not based upon God foreseeing who would believe and then choosing these, for this would be salvation based upon works and not grace. On the contrary, God "hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began" (2 Tim. 1:9; cf. Eph. 1:1-11; Rom. 9:11-13).

Foreknowledge of an event and predestination of that event are inseparably related. See Acts 2:23. Why? Because God could not have foreknowledge of an event unless it was certain to come to pass. The reason the event is certain is because God predestinated it to occur. God foreknows all future events because He has foreordained them (Acts 15:18).

It is impossible to foreknow an event which is uncertain or merely probable. God knows all events as certain only because He has decreed them to come to pass. Foreknowledge and predestination are simultaneous with God.

Therefore, it is theological nonsense to say as some do: "God foresaw what man might do under certain circumstances. He saw all the possibilities and then foreordained all the possible choices. This leaves man's freedom intact."

This is erroneous inasmuch as it is impossible to foresee probabilities; only actualities can be foreseen. You cannot foresee what may not occur. Only an event that is absolutely certain of taking place can be foreseen. Thus, predestination of all things before they occur is the only way (Acts 15:18; Eph. 1:11).

Predestination and foreknowledge of an event does not mean that God is the immediate cause of the event. For example, God had to foreordain Adam's free choice and Fall as well as Christ's crucifixion or these events could not have happened. Nothing can occur which was not predestinated (Acts 2:23; 4:27-28; 1:16, 20). God's decree that Judas would betray Jesus did not compel Judas to sin, for he said: "I have sinned in that I have betrayed the innocent blood: (Matt. 27:4).

Predestination only makes the action certain; it does not compel it. It is certain because God is in control of all circumstances, secondary causes, influences, etc. See Isaiah 10:5f.

There are 2 kinds of Decrees of God:

(1) Causative

In this instance what God predestinates He will personally cause to come to pass; e.g., the birth of Jesus, creation of the world, miracles, and so on.

(2) Permissive

Permissive decrees are predestinated also, but these events are foreordained to come to pass through the free actions of men; e.g., Adam's Fall; the betrayal and crucifixion of Jesus; Joseph's servitude in Egypt, etc. (cf. Matt. 18:7; Luke 22:21-22).

God's Eternal Plan concerning all events is certain of fulfillment, although man is free in his choices. While a sinner makes his decisions freely, God can limit the time, place, conditions, influences, and circumstances in order to bring to pass His perfect will. See John 7:30; Genesis 50:20; 20:1-6; Isaiah 10.

4. Predestination is not Fatalism

Fatalism is blind, unintelligent, inevitable fate. The Scriptures show that predestination is based upon the perfect wisdom of a righteous God.

The argument: "Why pray if all events are bound to come to pass anyway?" overlooks the fact that predestination cannot influence man's free choices, since God's eternal decrees are not revealed to us; they become known only after the event occurs. See: Genesis 50:20; Acts 4:27-28; 1 Cor. 2:7-8.

Why pray if all events have been predestinated? Because predestination includes our prayers and free actions to bring the events to pass. God has not only foreordained that an event should happen, but also the means by which it happens. Thus, prayer, action, and effort on man's part are necessary. See Acts 27: 22-44. (Cf. Phil. 2:12-14; Acts 9:10-25; 2 Thess. 2: 13-14.)

5. Conclusion: God predestinated all events in heaven and earth

Greatest events (Acts 4:27-28). Smallest events (Matt. 10:29). Good actions of men (Eph. 2:10). Evil acts of men (Acts 2:23; Isa. 10). Life (John 1:9). Death (Heb. 9:27). Salvation of believers (1 Pet. 1:5). Destruction of the wicked (1 Pet. 2: 6-8). All events (Acts 15:18; Ps. 119:89-91; Eph. 1:11).

II. EXECUTION OF GOD'S ETERNAL PLAN

The execution of the Plan (Predestination) begins with creation. Creation means: In the beginning God brought into existence, without the use of preexisting materials, the whole visible and invisible universe (Col. 1:16; Gen: 1-2).

1. Views of the nature of creation

(1) Dualism

Both God and Matter are eternal and co-existent. From chaotic matter God created the universe. In refutation see: Hebrews 11:3 (creation out of nothing); Colossians 1:15-16. In Genesis 2:1 the Hebrew term means "created" not "formed".

(2) Pantheism

God and matter are essentially one and the same. God is by nature creative; thus the universe is the outflow of Divine Being. However, the Scriptures always clearly distinguish between God and His creation (Rom. 1:20-25).

(3) Evolution

The naturalistic evolutionary theory teaches that millions or billions of years ago life began spontaneously and mysteriously. From this original living matter intelligent life has slowly evolved. Theistic evolutionists hold that God "created" man by the slow evolutionary process.

4. Divine Creation by God

Various views concerning Genesis 1-2.

- a. Geological-Day Theory
- b. Geological-Break Theory
- c. Vision-Day Theory
- d. Gap Theory
- e. Biblical View: A Day in Genesis 1 is a literal 24-hour period.

2. Origin and Nature of Man

(1) Origin

The Scriptures clearly teach, not evolution, but special creation by God (Gen. 1:27; 2:7).

God created an original pair from whom all mankind has descended (Rom. 5:12-14; 1 Cor. 15:22; Gen. 3:20).

Evolutionary theory denies the creation of man who fell into sin from his original state of purity and innocence. Man is said to be progressively developing morally and intellectually through the evolutionary process.

World Wars I and II together with the declining moral conditions of the 20th century have done

much to discredit this idealistic view of man and his inherent goodness and upward progress.

Jesus settles the matter of special creation versus evolution for the Christian (Matt. 19:3-6; cf. Gen. 1:31 with Gen. 3; Psalm 8; Eccl. 7:29).

(2) Nature. What distinguishes man from animal creation?

Physically man was created from the dust; spiritually he was made in the Image of God.

Creation in the Image of God is ascribed to no other creature. Only man has an inner nature like the nature of God---spirit. Man was given a spiritual nature because of the divine purpose for him. He was to have fellowship and communion with God.

The "soul" is not that which distinguishes man from animals, inasmuch as the Hebrew Scriptures show that even animals have souls. The term "living soul" used of man in Genesis 2:7 is the identical term used of animals in 1:24 and 2:19 (nephesh chayah). It was the impartation of the Image of God to man when He breathed into his nostrils the breath of life that distinguishes man from animal.

The Image of God is what makes man a moral, rational, spiritual personality.

(3) Views regarding man's nature

a. Duality

Man consists of only body and soul. The term "spirit" is synonymous with soul in Scripture. The terms are interchangeable.

b. Trinity

Man is by nature body, soul, and spirit. If the 3 terms are used together, then they cannot be reduced to 2.

1 Thess. 5:23; Hebrews 4:12; Luke 24:46-47; Isaiah 26:9.

(4) What is the soul:

In Scripture the soul is seen to be:

a. The seat of the emotions, appetites, affections (love, hate, joy, etc.), desires, and so on. 1 Kings 11:37; Deuteronomy 6:5; 12:20.

b. The person himself (or one's life). Genesis 36:6; 46:18; 12:5. Psalm 23:3 (life).

(5) Relation of the Soul and Spirit

The spirit is the life principle which comes from God (Zech. 12:1). Man is not spirit; he has it from God. He is soul (Gen. 2:7). Only God is Spirit (Isa. 31:1-3; John 4:24).

Man's soul is spiritual because he is created in the Image of God. Animals have souls, but only man received the divine inbreathing of God's Image.

God breathed His spirit (spiritual image) into man's body which had been created from the dust, and man became a living soul. Thus, body plus spirit equals soul or [u]person.

Man is not spirit; but he is spiritual (Luke 24:36-39; I Cor. 15:42-44; Heb. 1:7 with 2:7). As a living soul (or person) who is spiritual (Image of God) he has the capacity to worship and fellowship with God. He worships in spirit (John 4:23); but the worshipper is the living soul or person.

(6) Origin of the soul

a. [B]Pre-existence of the soul[B]

Refuted by Genesis 1-2.

b. Creationism

The soul is immediately created by God and united with the baby's body either at conception, in the womb, or at birth (Zech. 12:1; Isa. 42:5).

Objections:

Creationism raises the moral problem of God creating a pure soul and putting it into a sinful body (Rom. 5:12; 3:10, 23; 1 Cor. 15:22).

It confuses the soul with the spirit.

Creationism overlooks the fact that offspring have many personality traits of parents (not merely physical, but mental and character traits). It must mean that parents transmit more than mere biological life through procreation (i.e., the whole person).

c. Traducianism

(Latin: transmit; reproduce.) This is the historic view of the Christian Church.

This view teaches that the parents transmit the total person (body and soul) through procreation.

The Bible shows that when God created the original pair He gave them the power of procreation of full persons, not merely their bodies. God created the species or human race in Adam, and then perpetuated the race through man's procreative powers.

Genesis 1:27-28; Romans 5:12; 1 Cor. 15:22; Acts 17:26, Genesis 3:20.

Moreover, descendants are said to be in the "loins" (seed) of their ancestors. Genesis 46:26; Hebrews 7:9-10.

All other animals and plants reproduced "after its kind" by the power God placed in the original pair. Genesis 1.

The statement in 1 Cor. 15:22 that "in Adam all die" only makes sense if the parents transmit whole persons, not mere bodies.

III. PROVIDENCE

God not only created the world, but He also preserves and sustains it. Providence is the activity of God whereby He preserves, sustains, and directs all things created to fulfill His eternal purposes.

A. There are 3 aspects to Divine Providence: Preservation, Government, and Concurrence.

1. Preservation

The continuous work of God by which He upholds and sustains all that He created.

God ceased His creative work on the 6th day, but He did not cease to work: Genesis 2:2 with John 5:17-20.

This continuous work is called in Scripture Preservation (Neh 9:6).

He preserves and sustains creation through the operation of physical laws of nature (gravity), secondary cause and effect (sun and rain), the operation of the inherent powers endowed to all living things, and by direct agency (miracles). Psalms 104: 145:15-16: Colossians 1:16-17; Acts 14:17; Matthew 5:44-45.

2. Government

The rule of God over the universe He created. As sovereign King He rules, controls, and directs all nature, men, and events toward their predestinated purpose.

His government is universal: Psalm 103:19.

He controls the greatest events in history to the most insignificant occurrence. From the rise and fall of nations (Dan. 4:17, 25; Ps. 75:5-7) to the fall of a sparrow (Matt. 10:29-30).

All things are in His hands: Psalm 104:29-30; Esther 6-7; I Kings 22:26-38.

3. Concurrence

The providential work of God whereby He sustains and directs the free actions of men to accomplish His own wise purposes.

Concurrence means that God sustains man in his free choices; it does not mean that God is responsible for those choices. Man could not live, will, choose, or act apart from God sustaining him in these things.

God's providence must extend to man's free choices and actions or His control of history and the fulfillment of His eternal Plan would be impossible. Daniel 4:34-35; Proverbs 21:1; 16:9, 33; 19:21; Exodus 12:36.

In Isaiah God concurs in Assyria's actions. He is not responsible. He only sustains them in their choices and actions. The choices and actions were the Assyrians; the control and outcome was God's (Isa. 10).

8. PROVIDENTIAL CONTROL

Providential control with respect to men's actions is 4-fold:

1. Preventive Control

See Genesis 20:6; 31:24. Preventive control can be exercised by God by law, custom, conscience, parental control, moral teaching, Christian influence, or direct intervention by God (warning in a dream, judgment, etc.).

2. Permissive Control

See Acts 14:16; Psalm 81:10-14; John 19:8-II. God permits men to work out the desires of their own hearts, but controls and directs events to accomplish His own purposes. See 1 Samuel 8:4ff;

Isaiah 10.

3. Directive Control

See Genesis 50:20; Acts 2:23; 4:27-28. God can direct the free actions of wicked men to ends unforeseen and unintended by them. This is not simply God waiting to see what turn man's sin will take and then directing it toward His purpose. See also Exodus 4:23 with 7:13 and Romans 9:17-18.

4. Determinative Control

See Job 1:6-12; 2:6; 1 Corinthians 10:13. God Himself determines the limits or bounds beyond which the evil intentions or action of men and Satan cannot go. See also Acts 9:1-6; 2 Thess. 2:7. Note especially Job 1:12 and 2:6.