

What I Believe on Predestination

Discussed briefly in the classical TULIP format

Bud Morris

THE TOTAL DEPRAVITY OF MAN:

I believe that the Scriptures teach that all men are spiritually dead in sin.
And you...were dead in trespasses and sins.” Ephesians 2:1
We are so morally depraved that we are unable to please God.
Those who are in the flesh cannot please God. Romans 8:8

I believe that God loves us and has provided a righteous way to forgive our sins and restore spiritual life to us.
God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish, but have eternal life. John 3:16

I believe that God offers forgiveness, reconciliation, and eternal life to everyone who will repent and believe the gospel.
Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you, and learn of Me... Matthew 11:28

I do not believe that being spiritually dead prevents us from being able to hear or respond to God's offer of salvation. Lazarus dialoged with Abraham from the very gates of Hades (*Luke 16:19-31*). If the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men (*Titus 2:11*), surely they can hear His voice as well.

I believe that we are so motivated by the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life (*I John 2:16*) that we are naturally unwilling to accept God's offer of forgiveness through repentance and faith in Christ for the remission of our sins.
You are not willing to come to Me that you may have life. John 5:40
The natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit. I Corinthians 2:14

I believe that we are unable to come to God only in the sense that we are too proud to admit our guilt, and we love our sins too much to repent and give them up. We cannot come in the same way that we cannot have our cake and eat it.
How can you believe, who receive honor from one another, and do not seek the honor that comes only from God? John 5:44

UNMERITED ELECTION:

I believe that God genuinely invites, and honestly wants all men to be saved.
Whosoever will, let him take of the water of life freely. Revelation 22:17
Look unto Me and be saved, all you ends of the earth! Isaiah 45:22
The Lord...is longsuffering towards us, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance. II Peter 3:9

I believe that before He laid the foundations the world God knew that no one would naturally choose to accept His offer of salvation, so He chose to mollify the natural rebelliousness of certain selected individuals that He knew in advance would be born.

He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world. Ephesians 1:4

I believe that this selection is more than an omniscient God's foreknowledge of who would or would not be compliant enough to respond to the gospel. Without His intervention no one would respond.

It is the goodness of God that leads you to repentance. Romans 2:4

Election is a sovereign God's selection of those who He would cause to respond to the gospel.

LIMITLESS (NOT LIMITED) ATONEMENT:

I believe that Christ's death on the cross is infinitely sufficient to satisfy God for all the sins of the whole world.

All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned, every one, to his own way; And the Lord has laid on Him the iniquity of us all.. Isaiah 53:6

He Himself is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only, but also for the whole world.. 1 John 2:2

I see no other way that God could sincerely plead with the non-elect to repent and believe the gospel. The forgiveness is there, awaiting application to the sinner's account through faith. But payment cannot be credited to any account if the debt is not acknowledged; nor will it be credited if the terms of the transaction are rejected. Faith in Christ involves acknowledgment of guilt and reconciliation to God through repentance.

IRRESISTIBLE GRACE:

I do not believe that God forces Himself on the elect. I believe that the Holy Spirit reveals God's greatness and love to them in ways that convince them of their needs and His ability to satisfy them, so that they voluntarily choose to repent and come to Christ. Occasionally He may find a clout alongside the head necessary to get our attention. The Lord simply "Opened" Lydia's heart to heed the things spoken by Paul (*Acts 16:4*), but He had to blind "A chosen vessel," like Paul with a bright light to reach him (*Acts 9*)

I do not believe that God simply clicks some psychological switch in us that causes us to submit to Him, but that He convicts us and woos us until we are convinced that we want to come. Christ wants a bride, not a concubine!

I believe the election of God becomes the crucial factor on who will get saved.

All that the Father gives Me will come to Me. John 6:37

No one can come to Me unless the Father...draws him . John 6:44 (& 65)

I do not believe that anyone is elected to condemnation. We all deserve eternal damnation for our sins. God does not owe salvation to anyone, but He can justly choose to mollify the rebelliousness of some with grace without owing the same persistence of grace to others. His genuine offer of grace to

all negates any charge that it is his non-interference with them that consigns them to hell. It is their refusal to repent of their sins and accept God's genuine offer of forgiveness that consigns them to hell.

THE PERSEVERENCE OF THE SAINTS:

I believe that everyone who repents and believes the gospel is born again as a child of God with a new life which cannot sin.

Whoever has been born of God does not sin, for His seed remains in him; and he cannot sin, because he is born of God. I John 3:9

I believe that as long as we are in the flesh, we are prone to the sins of the flesh. As long as we walk in the Spirit, we will not fulfill the lusts of the flesh (*Galatians 5:16*). We are responsible to reckon ourselves dead unto sin and alive to God (*Romans 6:11*). I do not believe that a true Christian will ever renounce God in his heart, but we do not keep ourselves saved by our perseverance. Rather, *If anyone sins, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous. I John 2:1*

I believe that Christians that persists in wilful sin will be chastened by God, and eventually taken on home if they will not repent (*I Corinthians 11:30 & 31*).

SO WHAT?

I believed that the Lord has predestined the elect, whom He foreknew would exist (and exactly how much prompting each would require), to a glorious future.

We know that all things work together for good to those who are called according to His purpose. For whom He foreknew He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son that He might be the firstborn among many brethren. Moreover whom He predestined, these He also called; whom He called, these He also justified; and whom He justified, these He also glorified. Romans 8:28-30

I believe that the waters of the seemingly contradictory scriptures dealing with God's sovereignty and man's responsibility have been muddied by radical stands for exclusive election on the one side and absolute free will on the other. We go astray when we trust our reasoning to carry our arguments for either concept beyond what the scriptures actually say. I have tried to adopt a moderate view that embraces both sides of the issue, well knowing that I am not entirely consistent in my understanding. Few people are! Most Free-willers are not beyond praying that God will intervene to save their loved ones even though they insist that the choice is entirely up to the individual. Likewise, even the five pointed Calvinist pleads to God for his loved one's salvation while insisting that the issue was unalterably settled by God before the foundations of the world.

O the depth of the riches of both the wisdom and the knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments and His ways past finding out. "For who has known the mind of the Lord? Or who has become His counselor." Romans 11:33