



Date: October 19, 2008

Title: "The Sovereignty of God in Salvation" (Stand alone sermon)

Text: Ephesians 1:

Speaker: Brad Evangelista

Ephesians 1:3-14

Intro:

Predestination. It's a biblical term. But, what does it mean? Virtually all Christians, whether they realize it or not, believe in some form of predestination. At the core, the issue is, do we believe in Christ because God chose us, or did God choose us because we believed in Christ?

Two options:

1—ONE HANDED VIEW: Predestination is an act of God before creation in which he chooses some to be saved in Christ, not on account of any foreseen merit in them, but only because of his sovereign grace.

2—TWO HANDED VIEW: Predestination is God choosing believers in Christ based on the foreknowledge of their faith.

QUESTION #1: WHAT IS GOD'S HEART?

- Isaiah 55:1; Ezekiel 18:32; Ezekiel 33:11; 1 Tim 2:3-4; 2 Peter 3:9; John 3:16-17; Matthew 11:28; Acts 16:30-31; Acts 17:30; Romans 10:11-13; Revelation 22:17; John 5:39-40; John 12:47-48; Acts 7:51; Romans 10:21

1. God's heart is a heart of love.
2. No one who comes to God will be turned back.
3. God invites all people everywhere to come to him and trust in Jesus for life.
4. But, many do not. Why?

QUESTION #2: WHAT IS THE CONDITION OF HUMANITY? WHAT HAS SIN DONE TO US?

- Romans 5:12; Genesis 6:5; John 8:34; Romans 8:7; 1 Corinthians 2:14; Ephesians 2:1-3; Colossians 2:13; Romans 3:10-19

1. By our own rebellious choice, sin has left us spiritually dead, and completely unable to save ourselves.
2. We have no one to blame for this but ourselves.
3. Dead people cannot make choices.
4. God must decide to intervene in order for salvation to occur.

QUESTION #3: WHAT ABOUT FREE WILL?

1. This is a concept that must be carefully defined.
2. Scripture nowhere says we are free in the sense of being outside of God's control.
3. Due to sin, we are unable (not free) to do right apart from God's power.
4. True freedom would mean total independence of created from Creator.
5. We do have real choices, but not ultimate freedom.

QUESTIONS #4: SO HOW ARE PEOPLE SAVED?

- Ephesians 2:8-9; Titus 3:4-7

1. We are saved by God's grace.
2. He pursues us.

QUESTION #5: DOES GOD'S GRACE MERELY ENABLE US TO MAKE OUR OWN CHOICE, OR IS IT ALWAYS EFFECTIVE IN BRINGING PEOPLE TO CHRIST?

- *Prevenient / Enabling Grace*: grace that merely creates the possibility for salvation.
- *Effectual / Irresistible Grace*: grace that actually regenerates a person and saves them, guaranteeing that they become Christians.

Problems with Prevenient / Enabling Grace:

1. If grace merely makes salvation possible, we are still left to wonder why some people are saved and others are not. Is it because one was given more faith? Is it because one was stronger and more able in and of themselves to exercise that faith? To some degree, this makes faith a work the sinner brings to the table.
2. The response is often that faith is not a work, it is a gift. True, but what makes the Christian's gift of faith work and the hell-bound person's gift of faith not work? Is it because of some strength or intelligence in the Christian. Certainly not.
3. Biblical evidence is weak. Millard Erickson, a respected unbiased scholar writes, "The problem is that there is no clear and adequate basis in Scripture for this concept of universal enablement. The theory, appealing though it is in many ways simply is not taught explicitly in the Bible" (Erickson, Christian Theology, p. 938).
4. There are numerous examples of effectual / irresistible grace in the Scriptures (some examples are John 6, Ephesians 2:4-5; Colossians 2:13-14; Acts 9).

Objection: That's not fair!

Illustration: 10 dead swimmers.

I. ROMANS 8:28-30

1. The meaning of "foreknew."
 - One-handed view: It means a selective personal knowledge, which regards the individual with favor and makes that person an object of love.
 - Two-handed view: It means the knowledge of something about a person—namely, the foreseen future faith in that person.
2. Problem with Two-handed view:
 - Obviously not all are saved. So, if salvation is based on foreseen faith, does that mean that a Christian has a better form of faith than others? If so, then why did God not give everyone this type of faith? Foreseen faith inevitably leads to a work within the person apart from grace as the grounds for salvation. Salvation based on something good in us is the beginning of salvation by merit.
 - Additionally, if the main objection to the One-handed view of God choosing a person apart from faith is that it does not give people a free choice, then the same must be said about God choosing based on foreseen faith. In other words, if God can look into the future and see that person A *will* come to faith in Christ, and that person B *will not* come to faith in Christ, then those facts are already *fixed*, they are already *determined*.

II. ROMANS 9

Paul is answering three anticipated objections:

1. If many Jews did not love Jesus, did God's word fail? (v.6-13)
2. Is God unjust to choose some people for salvation and not others? (v.14-18)
3. Is God unfair to choose some people for salvation and not others? (v.19-24)

There is much debate as to whether this text refers to nations or individuals.

One-handed view: it refers to individuals and nations.

Two-handed view: it refers only to nations.

The main point is that man has not right tell God how to be God.

- Rom 9:20—"But who are you, O man, to answer back to God?"

III. JOHN 6:37-40, 44, 65

Three impossibilities:

1. It is impossible for a person to come to Christ without being drawn by God.
2. It is impossible for someone whom the Father draws *not* to come to him.
3. It is impossible for a person who is drawn and who comes to be cast out.

COMMON QUESTIONS:

1. What does this do to evangelism and prayer? Romans 10. Acts 18.
2. How is this not fatalism?
3. My loved one is not saved, what hope do I have? Ephesians 2:1-10
4. I'm doubting whether or not I am saved. What should I do?
Romans 8; Galatians 4; 1 John; Revelation 22:17.