

Predestined

Intro

➤ *Heavyweight Podcast*

"Hope is the most practical power in the world. It overcomes discouragement and depression and irritability and anxiety and suicide. It gives new life to old jobs and old marriages and old friendships and old churches. It opens the future and invites vision and dreams and planning and prayer. It conquers lust and greed and vain ambition, because these are just short-term substitutes for people who have lost hope in something really great and beautiful and satisfying in their lives." –**John Piper**

Romans 8:28-29

And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose. 29 For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the firstborn among many brothers...

How can all things work together for good?

"Those whom he foreknew he also predestined"

- Is God reacting to our circumstances, making the best of them that he can?

The term *predestined* "stresses the preordained plan of God that will certainly come to pass (Acts 4:28; 1 Cor. 2:7; Eph. 1:5, 11) in accordance with his will."

–**Thomas Schreiner**, *Romans*, 444-445

- God has guaranteed the destiny of the people that he has foreknown.

"God has destined all things for our good and for our salvation."

–**John Calvin**, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, I.14

Exhaustive Divine Sovereignty

- God's sovereign purposes extend to all reality.
- God is not just attempting to turn things around so that they work out for good. He is directing the entire show.

"Our God is in the heavens; he does all that he pleases." (Psalm 115:3)

"for his dominion is an everlasting dominion, and his kingdom endures from generation to generation; 35 all the inhabitants of the earth are accounted as nothing, and he does according to his will among the host of heaven and among the inhabitants of the earth; and none can stay his hand or say to him, 'What have you done?'" (Daniel 4:34-35)

"The lot is cast into the lap, but its every decision is from the Lord" (Prov. 16:33).

"The king's heart is a stream of water in the hand of the Lord; he turns it wherever he will." (Prov. 21:1)

"Behold, I have created the smith who blows the fire of coals and produces a weapon for its purpose. I have also created the ravager to destroy; 17 no weapon that is fashioned against you shall succeed, and you shall refute every tongue that rises against you in judgment." (Isaiah 54:16-17)

"God, from all eternity, did—by the most wise and holy counsel of his own will—freely and unchangeably ordain whatever comes to pass. Yet he ordered all things in such a way that he is not the author of sin, nor does he force his creatures to act against their wills; neither is the liberty or contingency of second causes taken away, but rather established."

—Westminster Confession of Faith, III.1

Meaningful Human Choice

- We make genuine choices for which we are responsible.

"I call heaven and earth to witness against you today, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and curse. Therefore choose life, that you and your offspring may live" (Deut. 30:19)

"But the Lord said to David my father, 'Whereas it was in your heart to build a house for my name, you did well that it was in your heart.'" (2 Chron. 6:8)

"I have sent to you all my servants the prophets, sending them persistently, saying, 'Turn now every one of you from his evil way, and amend your deeds, and do not go after other gods to serve them, and then you shall dwell in the land that I gave to you and your fathers.' But you did not incline your ear or listen to me." (Jer. 35:15)

"A distinctly biblical form of compatibilism holds that there is a dual explanation for every choice that humans make. God determines the choices of every person, yet every person freely makes his or her own choices. Thus, divine sovereignty is compatible with human freedom and responsibility. In this model, people are free when they voluntarily choose what they most want to choose as long as their choices are made in an unhindered way. ...Biblical compatibilism says that our choices proceed from the most compelling motives and desires we have, which in turn is conditioned on our base nature, whether good or evil."
-**Scott Christensen**, *What About Free Will? Reconciling Our Choices with God's Sovereignty*, 6

"As for you, you meant evil against me, but God meant it for good, to bring it about that many people should be kept alive, as they are today." (Genesis 50:20)

"This Jesus, delivered up according to the definite plan and foreknowledge of God, you crucified and killed by the hands of lawless men." (Acts 2:23)

"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 plan had predestined to take place." (Acts 4:27-28)

What is this "good"?

"To be conformed to the image of his Son"

- The "good" that God is working all things toward is not abstract. God is not just bringing about "good things" out of "bad things." This good is *personal*.

"The 'good' of verse 28 now receives further definition: the good is achieved when believers are conformed to the likeness of Jesus Christ." -**Thomas Schreiner**, *Romans*, 445

Current Change

- How do you see God arranging life for you today in ways that are making you more like Jesus?

Future Glory

“That he might be the firstborn among many brothers”

- The ultimate good is the glory of Christ—to the everlasting enjoyment of his people.

“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places, 4 even as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him. In love 5 he predestined us for adoption to himself as sons through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of his will, 6 to the praise of his glorious grace, with which he has blessed us in the Beloved.” (Ephesians 1:3-6)

Discussion Guide

- How does an awareness of God’s sovereignty anchor our hope more deeply?
- How does Romans 8:29 clarify the “good” that God is working in all things in verse 28? How does this relate to the glory of Jesus?
- Scripture teaches that God has designed our circumstances to conform us into the image of his Son. How do you see God arranging life for you today in ways that are making you more like Jesus? What blessings, opportunities, difficulties, trials, and relationships are serving God’s work of transformation in your life?
- How are you *responding* to the “lot” of life that God has assigned?
- How should *predestination* bring comfort to us? How does it help ensure that we will make it all the way home?