

SOVEREIGNTY OF GOD

ELECTION AND PREDESTINATION

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Sovereignty of God : Election and Predestination

The following is not an original work in any way. The subject was approached so that I might be taught, so that I might teach others. The following is the result of what I have found. The primary sources material were:

- 1.) The Bible – first and foremost
- 2.) Dr. C. Norman Sellars’ notes on Election and Predestination was the basic layout that was used.
- 3.) Dr. Lewis Sperry Chafer’s Systematic Theology is extensively quoted throughout the paper.
- 4.) W. E. Vine’s Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words

Anyone who desires a further, more complete understanding of the subject should go to the original sources. I strongly encourage this, for the doctrine of Election and Predestination is one of the greatest doctrines that is contained in God’s revelation to man: The Bible.

I. TERMS

A. DECREE -----“God’s eternal purpose according to the council of His own will, whereby, for His own glory, He has ordained whatever comes to pass” (Westminster Catechism)

1.) There is one comprehensive plan in which all things have their place and by which they proceed. God did not decree anything concerning Himself, as to His own existence, attributes, subsistence in Three Persons or any inherent relationship or assumption of responsibilities within the Godhead.

2.) The decree of God relates to His acts which are outside His own Being. Consequently, everything that was, or is, or ever will be outside God’s own Person is included in the decree. (creation)

B. OMNISCIENCE ----- Knowledge of all things – both actual and possible

1.) God knows to an infinite degree and eternally all that is knowable, whether actual or possible. Consequently, the knowledge of God is not subject to increase or decrease.

2.) God never sees something, realizes something, finds out something, etc... Matt.11:21 – God knows what would happen under all circumstances, even under those circumstances which in His providence never occurs.

C. PRESCIENCE ----- To know beforehand or knowledge of future events. Knowledge of things before they exist or happen.

D. FOREKNOWLEDGE ----- This is not the same as prescience.

- 1.) The word is used 7 times in the Bible. Five times it is used as a verb and two times as a noun. The five times that it is used as a verb, God is the subject and Christ or believers is the object. The two times it is a noun, men are the subject.
- 2.) In each case where God is the subject, His foreknowing the person or persons is the result of a definite relationship with things previously determined. His foreknowing believers carries with it the idea of His having foreloved them.

- i. Rom.8:29 _____
- ii. Rom.11:2 _____
- iii. I Pet.1:2 _____
- iv. I Pet.1:20 _____
- v. Acts 2:23 _____

*God foreknows people not things

- 3.) Again, God’s foreknowing someone (persons, not things about them) does not mean that He simply knows about them ahead of time.

E. SOVEREIGN -----“Supreme power or Authority”

- 1.) When used in reference to God, it speaks of His ruling over all things. To say that God is sovereign states that God is the supreme ruler, but it does not include within its definition how He rules.

F. ELECTION----- The ACT of God’s choosing individuals to make up the elect or chosen group. John 17:9, Eph.. 1:4 – “before the foundation of the world.”

G. PREDESTINATION----- This is God’s predetermined purpose for the individuals whom He has elected.

1.) It is the GOAL of choosing. "The ones elected are predestined to certain destinies." Predestination carries with it a divine certainty about the ends for those who are elected.

2.) Again, PERSONS and not acts are predestined. The Bible only speaks of saved individuals as being predestined to anything.

3.) Rom.8:29,30 _____
Eph.1:5,11 _____
I Cor.2:7 _____

Acts 4:27-28 God did not predestinate the lost nations to do what they did as an end in itself. Everything that occurred in Christ's life was predestinated to occur and these nations were moved by their relation to Christ's life and God's purpose for it. _____

H. RETRIBUTION----- the DESERVED punishment of the unsaved.

I. PRETERITION----- to PASS BY. In God's action of choosing some, He passes by others. This is on the basis that....

1.) Out of total humanity, God has chosen out (elected) certain individuals for some glorious end.

2.) That He has not acted upon the rest of this total humanity at all.

That the reasons for His choosing the individuals that He did rests totally within Himself, and that He in no way responded to anything within or about the individual that was chosen.

- 3.) Logically therefore, by choosing only certain members of the whole, He must have passed by the other members of the whole.

J. FREEDOM----- The absence of any restrictions.

- 1.) All freedom is LIMITED (by birth, circumstances, the age in which one is born or lives, money, ability, intelligence, exposure, etc...). Freedom is always restricted by bounds which by definition, results in limited freedom. Even God is not totally free. God cannot lie, etc... The only thing that restricts God is His own nature. Freedom, though limited, is real.

II. THE DECREE OF GOD

A. DEFINITION----- (see decree under "TERMS")

B. CHARACTERISTICS OF THE DECREE

- 1.) The Decree of God is singular.
There is one all-inclusive plan. We speak of the separate features of this one Decree as "the Decrees of God", but in reality there is but one immutable decree, embracing in itself, every detail.

- 2.) The Decree of God is Free, and not necessary.
God has decreed all that has come to pass because He wanted to. He needs nothing. All things exist for God, not He for them.

Ps.135:6 _____

Ps.115:3 _____

Rev.4:11 _____

Rom.11:33-36 _____

Being alone when His Decree was, His determinations were influenced by no other being. He was FREE to do or not to do. (No obligation, no need, no outside motivation).

3.) The Decree of God is Eternal in Nature

Eph.3:11 & 1:11 (called “the eternal purpose” or “His purpose”)
The Decree, being eternal, all its parts are in the mind of God, but one, though in its realization there is succession.

4.) The Decree of God is Wise, being the Outworking of His Infinite Wisdom
The wisdom of God behind the Decree of God assures us of the ultimate (even infinite) goodness that will come out of God’s plan. There is a worthy reason for all that God has done or will do. Even His permission of evil will, like the wrath of man, be made to praise him.
Ps.76:10 & Rom.11:33

Note: When we praise Him for all this it will be because He is worthy of praise for it. We see little now, when all is revealed, we will praise Him.

5.) The Decree of God is Unconditional

It includes everything, both large and small
Eph.1:11

The execution of it is in no way dependent upon conditions which may or may not emerge. There is no uncertainty or change.
Is.46:9,10

6.) The Decree of God is All-Inclusive: Eph.1:11 & Ps.103:19

God has not decreed certain things and left others to man’s free will or chance. Everything is included in God’s plan.

C. PROPOSTIONS ABOUT THE DECREE

- 1.) The origin of the decree is in God Himself. No one forced Him to do it. No one advised Him concerning it.
Rom.9:11,16-18,21

All through the Bible it is said that God is working things “according to His purpose” or plan. It is also said that this plan is from before the foundation of the world, thus excluding anything from having influenced Him from this realm.

It also states that “no one has been His counselor concerning these things”, thereby excluding His angels. It is also spoken of as “His eternal purpose”. God only, being eternal, would exclude any other creature from influencing it. Consequently, all things are the outworking of an eternal purpose which God alone has planned which incorporates all things.Eph.1:11

- 2.) It is not incompatible with human responsibility, it includes it.
At no place in the scriptures are creatures permitted to trace responsibility for themselves back to God.
 - a.) When God pronounced judgment upon Adam, He did not say “I am partly to blame since I created you” or “I am partly to blame since I created the circumstances you found yourself in”. the blame rested on Adam alone. The race fell in Adam and became that which they are, “the children of wrath”. Eph.2:1-3

b.) Likewise, when every child of God stands at the reward seat for his service that was wrought only by the enabling power of the Spirit of God, God will not say, “I claim the larger share in all you did for Me”. The honor and credit will rest upon the faithful servant alone, as undividedly as though they had wrought it in their own strength; though the Bible refers to our good works as “good works which we were predestined to walk in”.

SOMETHING “GREAT” TO THINK ABOUT

* The above “truth”, negatively stated: God is not following a plan which is not worthy of Him, or that He is only partially in authority over, or that He has failed and is seeking to salvage something out of the wreckage, or that He is conforming to things which He has no control over. All that has taken place or ever will take place is a part of His decree.

* Positively stated: The plan of God as ordained and as it is being achieved is, and in the end will prove to be, the best plan and purpose that could have been devised by infinite wisdom, consummated by infinite power, and that which will be the supreme satisfaction to infinite love.

IN SHORT: THE PRESENT PLAN IS AS PERFECT AS ITS AUTHOR!

3.) In relation to the wicked, the Decree includes Retribution (deserved punishment) and Pretorition (passed by).

Note: Pretorition does not imply:

1. that God delights in it - I Tim.2:4_____

2. that they are driven against their will to reject Christ - Matt.23:37_____

3. that the gospel isn't whosoever will..._____

4. that man is not responsible_____

Note: According to the Bible, God does not damn anyone to hell, they “chose” that end themselves.

4.) The Decree of God must be distinguished from the Desires of God.

God has not purposed to do all that He desires to do. God is not willing that any should perish but His Decree includes it. God has not decreed all that He has desired.

Note: The Biblical teaching concerning the “fact” that God has decreed all things is very clear in scripture. The “fact” that He is sovereign is very clear. The “fact” that man is free to choose or reject his life and consequent destiny is just as clear. Logically, a finite mind cannot put these two “truths” together. Yet the Bible teaches both. God’s ways are past finding out! We need to try and understand what God has chosen to reveal to us. We must accept what God describes! BUT; we MUST NOT try to limit God’s activities to our desires, understanding, etc...

III. THE WORKING OF THE DECREE (FOUR WAYS THAT GOD IS SEEN IN WORKING OUT HIS DECREE)

A. PREVENTATIVE ACTS OF GOD (Gen.20:6)

B. PERMISSIVE ACTS OF GOD

1.) Textual evidence:

a.) Rom.1:24 _____

b.) Rom.9:22-24 _____

c.) Acts 14:16 _____

d.) Ps.78:21-33, esp. vs. 29 _____

2.) Theological evidence

There is evil in the world. God is a Holy God. Since both these are true, God did not directly put evil in the world, He permitted it but He still controls it.

GREATEST EVIL IN THE WORLD
GREATEST WORK GOD HAS EVER DONE

CRUCIFIXION OF
CHRIST

Evil men had a major part in the outworking of God's plan, yet we don't thank evil men for our salvation.

C. DIRECTIVE ACTS OF GOD

(Gen.50:20, Prov.21:1, Dan 2:37; 4:17,24-25 Rom.13:1-2)

D. LIMITATIVE ACTS OF GOD

(Job 1:12, II Thes.2:7)

NOTE: 1. Rulers sometimes inadvertently serve God. Yet God will judge them for their evil acts. Is.10:5-15
2. God tempts no man, Jas.1:13,14 (He does test)
Also Note: Deut.12:8; Judges 2:1,2 3:1 17:6
God permitted these nations to remain. Israel caused their continued existence by their sin. God made use of them (God works all things according to His own purpose), but God takes no part in sin and judges man accordingly. God righteously judged Israel for allowing those nations to remain.

IV. WORKING OUT OF THE DECREE IN SALVATION AND THE CHRISTIAN LIFE

* EPHESIANS 1

- A. GOD’S ELECTING (choosing) INDIVIDUALS to salvation OCCURRED IN ETERNITY PAST
God’s choice was certain before anything that is, was.
Eph.1:4 (also note II Tim.1:9, & II Thes.2:13)
NOTE ON II Thes.2:13 - election to salvation is “from the beginning” which corresponds to that beginning cited in John 1:1. The gospel was the means by which God fulfilled the eternal election to salvation. Man’s responding to the gospel for salvation was not the basis for the election, but rather, the means for working out the salvation of the one elected.
II Tim.2:8-10; II Thes.2:13-14; Acts 13:48, 18:10 (Acts 15:18 - bad translation: literally in the Greek = “known from eternity are to God all His works.”)
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- B. IN LOVE
God has determined to make those He has chosen, the recipients of His love. This is said to come out of His love. God is doing something FOR the ones He has chosen, not TO them. Eph.1:5; I John 3:1
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- C. ALL THIS IS SAID TO BE ACCORDING TO HIS OWN GOOD PLEASURE (Eph.1:5,9,11)
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D. THE ULTIMATE PURPOSE FOR GOD’S HAVING DONE THIS IS STATED:
FOR THE GLORY OF GOD: (Eph.1:6,12,14 Phil.1:29 2:9-11)

The Bible teaches that ultimately, “everything” will be to God’s glory, even the evil that has occurred. Prov 16:4

- NOTE: 1. It being God’s glory which is involved, God has allowed no chance or any other creature the option of determining how much or in what way He will be glorified.
2. God’s purpose in saving people and walking with believers is His own glory; not our comfort, etc... We are His servants, not He ours.

*ROMANS 8

A. GOD WORKS ALL THINGS TOGETHER FOR GOOD (vs.28)

In sovereign love and wisdom, God causes “everything” to “converge upon” and contribute to a goal. This everything is inclusive of both good and evil.

The ones God works this for are:

1. the one who loves God - this is the one to whom this assurance belongs.

2. the one who is called according to His purpose - is a further definition of those to whom the assurance belongs.

3. the first clause characterizes the individual in terms of their subjective attitude

4. the second, in terms of God’s action exclusively. God working out His purpose guarantees that such will be the result.

NOTE: All things work for good for those who love God (believers) not as long as they love God.

B. EVERYONE GOD FORKNEW, HE PREDESTINED TO BE CONFORMED TO THE IMAGE OF HIS SON.

This predestination happened in eternity past, (v.29); purpose is given: His ultimate glory in being first among many.

C. GOD CALLED AND JUSTIFIED THOSE SAME PEOPLE IN TIME, (v.30)

Rom.11:29 5:1 John 6:37, 44, 65

D. GOD WILL GLORIFY THOSE SAME PEOPLE IN ETERNITY FUTURE, (v.30)
(spoken of as already accomplished) I Peter 1:3-5

E. THE RESULT IS GIVEN:

1. no condemnation (v.31-34)

2. no separation (v.35-39)

QUESTION: Why did God pre-determine every step, from choosing to glory?

ANSWER: His purpose is at stake. He will carry it out. You can bank on it.

NOTE: Concerning God “FOREKNOWING” people -

When God “knows” something or someone, it means more than prescience. He foreknows because He has had an active part in...

Amos 3:2 - God has known Israel because He elected them.

Isa.45:4

Deut.7:6, Is.65:9, 22, etc. - Why was Israel chosen by God?

NOTE: God has a plan for the ones he has chosen. He never forsakes His chosen ones!
Misusing the word “foreknow” in the area of choosing argues that God’s choice was based upon something He knew in advance about the one chosen.

In Israel’s case it is clear that they are and remain a chosen people.

To date, what has God seen in their relationship with Him?

- a. Was there something about Israel that caused God to choose Her?
Acts 7:51-53 _____
- b. Has Israel proven to “be the right choice” to date?
Ezk 16:44-47, 52; 20:3-44
- c. Did Israel chose or reject her God?
Matt 27:17-26
- d. Even today, as we speak, has she proven to be the one who choose God? It is a crime punishable by imprisonment to proclaim Christ
In that nation. _____
- e. As a nation is she chosen? Will anything ever take away that fact?
Rom 11:11-29
- f. The time of her fulfillment is the question, not the fact of it.
Matt 24 _____
- g. CONCLUSION IN THE CASE OF ISRAEL:
God’s choice of her is not based on what He has seen in her, but
Rather, it is based on His eternal plan that He has for her.
She is the object of His love (as are we), not the basis for it.
God knows two things: His plans (decree) and our unworthiness.

Jesus Christ was foreknown. Acts 2:23, I Pet.1:20

NOTE: In I Pet.1:2 and Rom.8:29 foreknowing precedes predestination. In Acts 2:23 the order is reversed. Both are true. They are not sequential. (See Appendix I)

* ROMANS 9 The elect Israel is put forth.

A. GOD’S CHOICE IS NOT BASED ON NATURAL GENERATION, (v.7)

Isaac and Ishmael were both sons, God chose Isaac.

B. NOT BASED ON HUMAN ACHIEVEMENT, (v.10-13,16)

God chose Jacob in order that God’s purpose according to His choice might stand, not because of works.

**C. GOD’S CHOICES ARE SAID TO BE RELATED TO HIS MERCY, (v.14-18)
AND TO HIS OMNIPOTENCE, (v.18)**

**D. If a person understands what Paul is saying, there are TWO QUESTIONS THAT
ARISE IMMEDIATELY:**

1. (V.14) answer: Don’t even think it! God is just, even though you understand right, that

it is all God’s purpose being worked out.

2. (v.19) answer: If you understand that it is “Jehovah” that has done this, you shouldn’t have the problem.

**NOTE: THESE QUESTIONS WOULDN’T EVEN ARISE IF GOD WAS REACTING
TO FORESEEN FAITH!**

* I Thess.1:4,9-10 James 2:14-26

* ISA.42:1; I PET.2:4,6

A. JESUS CHRIST IS REFERRED TO AS “ELECT” (CHOSEN) OF GOD.

That does not mean that Jesus was chosen by God because He was willing to do His “works” for God. But rather, His obedience to the point of death on the cross was in harmony with His place in the Godhead’s all-inclusive, eternal plan for this creation.

B. ELECT OR CHOSEN - IS AN ADJECTIVE IN THE VERSES, NOT A VERB.

Consequently, the word elect, modifies the noun stone, which means that Christ is a chosen Christ and not that a Christ was chosen as the Christ.

C. If a person argues that sometime in eternity past, God saw, realized, looked down time, etc. that man was going to sin and chose Jesus Christ to be the Savior; then he is arguing that God's knowledge "increased" at that time. God would then not be omniscient. That person would be **WRONG**.

V. SEVERAL ADDITIONAL THOUGHTS CONCERNING GOD'S CHOOSING OF INDIVIDUALS FOR GLORY AND PASSING BY OTHERS

A. DIVINE ELECTION is not limited to God's choice of some out of many for eternal glory; IT IS OBSERVABLE ANYWHERE IN THE UNIVERSE.

There is tremendous variety in all God's creation _____
There are classifications among the angels. One star (angel) is said to differ from another star in glory.

Men are not born of the same race, with the same advantages, nor with the same abilities.

THESE DIFFERENCES ARE NOT THE RESULT OF THE CREATURES' "FREE WILL"

1. In respect to the angels, they were directly created in their respective positions. (No extenuating circumstances can be argued at all.) The angels who did not follow Satan are said to be the ones "elected" by God not to, I Tim.5:21.

2. Men do not choose their race, their life conditions, their natural gifts, etc.; though they often try to argue that they do.

B. ON THE OTHER HAND:

God's attitude toward the entire human family is one of infinite compassion and boundless sacrificial love, to the extent of God's Unique Son.

C. THE ABOVE TWO TRUTHS (REVEALED FACTS) CANNOT BE RECONCILED WITHIN THE SPHERE OF HUMAN UNDERSTANDING. God may be honored by BELIEVING and by RESTING in Him.

D. THE BIBLE BEGINS WITH “IN THE BEGINNING, GOD”

He it is who planned; He executes; and He it is who will realize to an infinite degree all that He has purposed.

He will never be defeated nor disappointed.

The true system of Biblical understanding and thought always begins with God, defends God, and glorifies God; and the creature is conformed to the plan and purpose of the Creator. It is “He” who is at work accomplishing His good pleasure.

E. NO OBLIGATION RESTS UPON GOD IN THE EXERCISE OF HIS GRACE.

He may and does choose whom He will. He neither sees, nor foresees, any good in man which might form a basis of His blessings. There is nothing good to see.

Whatever good is found in redeemed man is accomplished (by) in him by divine grace. [If the first man, when unfallen and wholly free to choose, did not choose God, how much more is it certain that fallen man will not of himself choose God!] Perverted, sinful, dead man (Rom.3:10-18; Eph.2:1-2) must be divinely moved!

F. IT IS GOD WHO HAS CHOSEN HIS ELECT

And while this selection is both sovereign and final, never-the-less not one human being who desires to be saved, and who responds to the gospel, will ever be lost. This truth encompasses two basic truths:

1. This is God’s universe; all created intelligences are the work of His hands and **THEREFORE** are to be disposed of as He shall choose.

2. God’s infinite power and infinite wisdom are always manifested with infinite love.

G. IN VIEW OF - the truth that God has designed, created, and executed all that is, and that it progresses to the conclusion that He has foreordained, it should not be thought strange or unreasonable that HE DETERMINES THE COURSE AND DESTINY OF HUMAN HISTORY.

Men choose their course by what seems to them a free will and they glory in the fact that they are wise enough to adjust themselves to the circumstances but, GOD IS THE AUTHOR OF CIRCUMSTANCES.

Man blindly responds to the emotions of his heart but, GOD SEARCHES THE HEART OF MAN and is able to create and control every sentiment which sways the mind of man.

NO EQUAL GAME OF COMPETITION FOR SUPREMACY IS ON BETWEEN GOD AND MAN. It is Common Sanity to give God His rightful place and to acknowledge His sovereign right in elective purpose in all that He has made, to exist.

G. EXAMPLES OF GOD'S CHOOSING TO THINK ABOUT
(Rom 4:1-3; Ezk 16:3,45)

1. Why was Abraham chosen by God to bring blessings to all the families of the earth? _____

a.) Did God choose Abraham because of his life? _____

b.) Or was his life the result of having been chosen by God to fulfill a place in God's plan? _____

2. Mary the mother of Jesus (Luke 1:28)

a.) Did she qualify for the position and that's why God chose her? _____

b.) Or was she, in grace, blessed by God by her place of blessing in God's unfolding plan? _____

3. What about Naaman the Syrian, being cleansed (Luke 4:25-27)

4. What about kings? Pharaoh and Cyrus -

a.) Pharaoh was chosen by God for hardening (Ex.9:16)

b.) Cyrus was chosen by God and blessed to produce similar results (Is.45:1-7)

5. What about the Apostles (John 15:16,19)

What about Judas (John 13:18, 6:70)

6. What about Assyria (Isaiah 10:5-11)

7. Time is not sufficient to give all the Biblical examples!

VI. OBJECTIONS TO THE DECREE

A. IT IS INCONSISTENT WITH FREE-WILL

1. Hopefully, it is evident that everything that God purposes, He brings to fruition. In Romans 8:28-30 we saw that God's purpose for believers is all-inclusive in its nature. That God has predetermined everything that occurs from His choosing us with an eternal choice all the way through to our future glorification.

2. It must be realized, at the same time, that the Bible just as clearly states that it is a person's conscious "free" choice to receive the grace God offers in Christ Jesus which brings about this salvation. Consequently, the will of man is stated as being a part of the saving process.

There are several things that should be remembered concerning this:

a.) The will of man is guided by what he knows and what he desires.

b.) Man is only conscious of doing what he actually does: he chooses as an act of his own “free” will to accept or reject the claims of Christ.

c.) The divine method of reaching the will is by increasing man’s knowledge and by stimulating his desires, while on the divine side of this method, there remains not a shadow of possible failure. Consequently, the human will is recognized as a secondary cause, God’s purpose remaining the primary cause.

d.) It is a problem to the mind of man how God can predetermine and realize the eternal salvation of an exact number of humans, guaranteeing that not one will be lost, yet at the same time each one of that company is allowed the free exercise of his own will and could, if he so determined, reject every offer of divine grace.

Yet, this is precisely what God has and is doing. God has never coerced anyone into being saved and He has never stopped any lost person from being saved.

It’s man’s free choice and he will be judged accordingly. At the same time, those who respond to God for salvation are responding to His efficacious (produces the desired effect) call. (Rom.11:29)

e.) Fortunately, God is not limited to acting in a manner in which we can understand.

f.) Secondary causes are treated as real in God’s Word - Preventive Acts, Permissive Acts, Directive Acts, Free Will, Etc. They are treated as being just as real as God’s sovereignty because God states that they are.

CONCLUSION: DECREE INCLUDES FREE WILL AND WORKS WITH IT.

B. IT IS THE SAME AS FATALISM

The acceptance of all things as inevitable predetermination. (Submit yourself to your fate.)

1. It is not the same at all!

Behind the decree we find an infinitely wise, loving, intelligent God; a God to whom the means are just as important as the end.

C. IT MAKES GOD THE AUTHOR OF SIN

1. The presence of sin in the universe is due to the fact that God permits it. He is Himself, totally free from the slightest involvement with the evil that He permits.

a.) LOGICAL

Sin is present. God has no part in its presence. THEREFORE: He must have allowed it to enter, not caused it.

b.) BIBLICAL: JEHOVAH, JOB, SATAN

Satan recognized the sovereign permission of God with respect to evil, (Job 1:11)...Jehovah permitted Satan to act whereby under SOVEREIGN RESTRICTIONS, Job passed from the hand of God to the hand of Satan, (Job 1:12) ...When the calamity fell on Job, Jehovah disclaimed any responsibility for the evil, (Job 2:3).

c.) THOUGHTS ABOUT SIN'S PRESENCE

Sin must serve some justifiable purpose, attainable in no other way, else, God would not have permitted it, or, having permitted it, He would terminate it without delay.

The present universe, as planned, and as it is being executed, is the best plan and purpose that could be devised by infinite wisdom, executed by infinite power, and will be the fullest possible satisfaction to infinite love.

God permitted sin in spite of His holy hatred of it (Ps.5:5), and in spite of His own anticipation of the fact that it would not only bring untold suffering and eternal ruin to His creatures whom He would love, and in spite of the fact that it would cost Him the sacrifice of His own Son.

The divine purpose in allowing sin HAS NOT been revealed to man and doubtless the human mind could not comprehend all that is involved anyway. To fill this void, man has determined possible reasons for the divine permission:

- i. the divine recognition of the creature's free choice
 - ii. the value of the redeemed beings' having "the righteousness of Christ"
 - iii. the acquisition of divine knowledge
 - iv. the instruction of angels
 - v. the demonstration of the divine hatred of evil
 - vi. the manifestation and exercise of divine grace...etc...
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BUT: the divine purpose in allowing sin HAS NOT BEEN REVEALED!

CONCLUSION: 1. God hates sin.

- 2. The responsibility for committing sin is always placed on the creature.
 - 3. God's plan does include sin, making it part of God's plan, but God only permits sin, He is not the author of sin.
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D. THERE IS THEREFORE NO NEED TO PREACH OR WITNESS

1. THE ANSWER IS WRONG AGAIN!

Acts 23:11-18 27:23-25,31 Rom.10:13-17

God recognizes and works with and through secondary means. We will be judged and rewarded on the basis of our "free-will" commitment, not on the basis of God's eternal decree.

VII. PROPOSED SOLUTIONS TO THE PROBLEM OF ELECTION AND FREE WILL

A. FORSEEN FAITH

(God saw beforehand who would believe and chose them)
Armenian view - "Big Eyeball Theory"

ANSWER: We have already seen that God's knowing or foreknowing individuals is not synonymous with prescience. God foreknows because He has already predetermined.

B. CORPORATE ELECTION - {God chose a group (the church) but He did not choose the individuals to make up the group - Armenian}

ANSWER: Christ is not the only one who is said to be "elect". Israel, the church, individuals, are all called "elect". Believers don't become elect by getting into Christ. There is no believer apart from Christ.

B. MAN HAS NO FREE WILL: GOD'S SOVEREIGNTY OVERRIDES MAN'S WILL

ARGUMENTS: 1. man cannot respond to God apart from being regenerated
2. because God is sovereign, man cannot have free will
3. Christ died only for the elect

ANSWER: Christ died for the sins of the whole world, making salvation possible for everyone. (I John 2:2) : The gospel is "whosoever will may come"; the Scriptures make this clear. : All men are held justly accountable by God : God recognizes man's free will. He has included it.

VIII. A PROPOSED SOLUTION:

DECREE

Directive

Permissive

PLAN OF GOD

A. OBSERVATIONS

1. It is God's plan.
2. There is evil in the plan.
3. The evil is there by God's permission, not by His direction. (Evil not caused by God)
4. Everything in the plan is guaranteed to come to pass.
5. The small things, as well as the large, are under God's control and used for God's purposes.
6. The evil things, as well as the good, are under God's control and used for God's purposes.

B. QUESTIONS

1. What is the over-all purpose of God in His dealing with man? HIS GLORY!
2. Which would bring more glory to God: a.) unfallen man or b.) fallen and redeemed man?
3. What is the greatest crime ever committed by man?
4. What is the greatest display of the glory of God?

IX. PRACTICAL APPLICATION OF THE DOCTRINE OF THE SOVEREIGNTY OF GOD

AND PREDESTINATION

- A. Man lives in the area of Responsibility - not in the area of sovereignty.

SOVEREIGNTY OF GOD

RESPONSIBILITY OF MAN

B. Man's decisions are made apart from a knowledge of the sovereign plan of God, but in confidence that he cannot spoil (or has not spoiled) that plan.

PAST/Sovereignty

PRESENT/Responsibility

FUTURE/Sovereignty

X. OBJECTIONS OFFERED BY DR. AUGUSTUS H. STRONG (in his Systematic Theology)

A. It is unjust to those who are not included in this purpose of salvation.

ANSWER: Election deals, not simply with creatures, but with sinful, guilty, and condemned creatures. That any should be saved, is matter of pure grace, and those who are not included in this purpose of salvation suffer only the due reward of their deeds. There is, therefore, no injustice in God's election. We may better praise God that He saves any, than charge Him with injustice because He saves so few...

B. It represents God as partial in His dealings and a respecter of persons.

ANSWER: Since there is nothing in men that determines God's choice of one rather than another, the objection is invalid. It would equally apply to God's selection of certain nations, as Israel, and certain individuals, as Cyrus, to be recipients of special temporal gifts. If God is not to be regarded as partial in not providing salvation for fallen angels, He cannot be regarded as partial in not providing regenerating influences of His Spirit for the whole race of fallen men...

C. It represents God as arbitrary.

ANSWER: It represents God, not as arbitrary, but as exercising the free choice of a wise and sovereign will, in ways and for reasons which are inscrutable to us. To deny the possibility of such choice is to deny God's personality. To deny that God has reasons for His choice is to deny His wisdom. The doctrine of election finds these reasons, not in men, but in God.

D. It tends to immorality, by representing men's salvation as independent of their own obedience.

ANSWER: The objection ignores the fact that the salvation of believers is ordained only in connection with their regeneration and sanctification, as means; and that the certainty of final triumph is the strongest incentive to strenuous conflict to sin...

E. It inspires pride in those who think themselves elect.

ANSWER: This is possible only in the case of those who pervert the doctrine. On the contrary, its proper influence is to humble men. Those who exalt themselves above others, upon the ground that they are special favorites of God, have reason to question their election.

F. It discourages effort for the salvation of the impenitent, whether on their own part or on the part of others.

ANSWER: Since it is a secret decree, it cannot hinder or discourage such effort. On the other hand, it is a ground of encouragement, and so a stimulus to effort; for, without election, it is certain that all would be lost (Acts 18:10). While it humbles the sinner, so that he is willing to cry for mercy, it encourages him also by showing him that some will be saved, and (since election and faith are inseparably connected) that he will be saved, if he will only believe...

G. The decree of election implies a decree of reprobation.

ANSWER: The decree of reprobation is not a positive decree, like that of election, but a permissive decree to leave the sinner to his self-chosen rebellion and its natural consequences of punishment.
