

# Divine Preordination

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Preacher: Prof Donald Macleod

[ 0 : 0 0 ]     Professor MacLeod's third lecture is entitled Divine Preordination. The first three minutes were regrettably not recorded, but in his introduction Professor MacLeod mentioned the three aspects he wished to deal with, namely cosmic foreordination, election and reprobation.

In turning to the first of these headings, Cosmic Preordination, Professor MacLeod referred to Ephesians 1, verse 11, in whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will.

We now join the lecture. God is working throughout created reality, and he is doing so in accordance with the counsel, the intelligence of his own will.

It was upon this passage that Eccardius has built its own affirmation that God has foreordained whatsoever comes to pass.

Unto this foreordination there is no exception whatsoever. Whatsoever comes to pass is covered by the foreordination of God.

[ 1 : 3 2 ]     There is nothing which is merely permitted without being foreordained. Every occurrence, every event, all that transpires, every entity, every fact, all of those things lie under the control of God's foreordination.

So there is a foreordination. There is a divine working. There is the counsel of the divine will.

Now when we say that this will embraces everything, we mean that every occurrence in the physical universe lies under this foreordination.

The fall of the fire, for example, is controlled by God's eternal purpose. We mean that contingent accidental events, like the fall of the dice, that who is controlled lies under God's eternal will and purpose.

We mean that the free actions of men, those things that men choose to do, and that men freely choose to do, these things lie under God's determination, God's will and purpose.

[ 3 : 0 0 ]     Remember in Philippians 2, Paul tells us that God works in us the willing and the doing, according to his own purpose. Not only is the doing under God's foreordination, but even the very willing itself, that free human decision, that free human choice, that free human choosing and decision lies under the working of the will and the purpose of God.

In fact, even the sinful actions of men lie under God's foreordination. You take the most spectacular sin in the whole history of mankind, the betraying of Jesus Christ, that says Peter in Acts, lay under God's determined counsel and foreknowledge.

You took the most spectacular sin in the whole history of God's foreknowledge. And by the hands of wicked men, you slew him. But this was done under God's determined counsel and under God's foreknowledge.

In fact, even the minutiae of our own individual lives lie under this purpose of God, the very hairs of your heads are numbered.

And so we have this great principal statement that God's purpose overreaches everything, the whole cosmos, the whole of reality.

[ 4 : 42 ] We mean under that, every occurrence in the physical universe, every contingent event, every free action of men, every sinful action in the moral universe, even the minutiae of individual existences, all of these lie under this principle of God's all-comprehensive foreordination.

Now, that is a principle of enormous comfort and importance to us. It reminds us that history is purposive, it is teleological, it is moving in a certain deliberate direction.

It is not meaningless, it is not directionless, it is not cyclical, it is not simply going round and round. It is being worked out according to the plan of God.

And that is true, on the scale of the macrocosm, the universe in its magnitude and its infinitude has this great overarching purpose.

But even the minutiae of our own lives, even these two lie under this great comprehensive principle of purpose, of intelligibility.

[ 6 : 11 ] In fact, it is something of enormous importance, even for the current scientific quest of mankind. Because science is based on the assumption that every event has meaning, that every event has a cause.

Science assumes intelligibility. And the only foundation for such intelligibility is this. that the universe finds coherence in the will and in the purpose of God himself.

Because God Almighty has established bonds between the various events, occurrences and facts. Because such bonds exist, and such meaning exists, and God's own mind, and God's own purpose, we can hope to discover such purpose, and elucidate such meaning.

It's important to bear in mind, always, that before God spoke the universe into being, God thought it. It is in the reason of God, and decedently to its being spoken into being, by God.

And because it is in the reason of God, it is logical with the logic of God. Now today we live in an age, which is dominated by despair, and by an overwhelming sense of meaninglessness, of despondency and pessimism.

[ 7 : 54 ] And it is really one of the great gospel affirmations, that there is a king, there is a sovereign, there is control, there is purpose, there is someone who knows, where it's all going, and is determined to bring it, to the destination, of its own personal choosing.

And so we have this great principle, of cosmic, all comprehending, for ordination. In the fourth theology, the statement, of this principle, has been surrounded, by three great words, of caution.

In other words, we say, God has foreordained, whatsoever comes to pass. And yet, the moment we say that, we move in with three great caveats, three great words of caution.

Let me mention those briefly. The first is this, God is not the author of sin. Now God, has foreordained sin.

He has foreordained, whatsoever comes to pass. And sin, has come to pass. And God's purpose, controls, limits, preserves, governs the universe, even in the presence, of this fact of sin.

[ 9 : 22 ] So sin, doesn't lie, adrift, from the purpose, or beyond, the divine control. And yet, our confession says, God is not the author of sin.

He does not himself sin. He does not condone sin. He does not constrain to sin. He does not induce to sin.

He does not tempt to sin. And so, though we say that God foreordains it, we deny immediately, that God is the author of it, or is, in any sense, the cause of it.

Now you may ask, if that is the case, how then does sin come in, and how does sin relate, to the purpose of God? Well, I would like to share, on that, beyond this, beyond reminding you, of John's great definition, of sin, in 1 John chapter 2, sin, he says, is lawlessness.

Sin is, not only, transgression of the law, but sin is lawlessness. Sin has no meaning, sin has no logic, sin has no purpose, sin has no fruit.

[ 10 : 44 ] Sin is the end of law. Now, when you say about sin, why sin, how sin, we are really forgetting, that sin is lawlessness.

Because, we are asking, when we say, why, what is the law, about sin? What is the cause of sin? What is the logic of sin? And, John is suggesting to us, with this very profound affirmation, that really, all these questions, are misguided.

Because, sin is, the black hole. At the point of sin, logic collapses. There is no way, of knowing, how or why, sin, entered heaven.

There is no, answer to the query, how could, Satan tempt, Adam and Eve? Because, they were perfect, they were holy, they were so close with God.

There is no, answer to the question, why did God permit it? Because, it is, a black hole. I believe, that hell is also, a black hole.

[ 11 : 59 ] It is the place, into which at last, all the lawlessness, is carried. And so, we say, God foreordains it.

But, God is not the cause of it. Now, we know in our own lives, at the point of our own sin, we know this very same principle. We know the absurdity of sin.

We know the indefensibility of it. We know, it's utter inexplicability. Because, in us, too, sin, is lawlessness.

How can, someone, who is a new creation, who is indwelt, by the spirit of God, who is in Christ, how can, that person sin?

How can, we sin, in Christ, in Christ? You can't, suspend the union, and suspend, the indwelling, while you go and sin.

[ 13 : 01 ] But, you sin, in Christ. And that, surely, is the ultimate, in lawlessness, and, in anomalousness. So, God foreordains, whatever comes to pass, that God is not the author of sin.

The second caveat is this. The fact of God's foreordination, does not eliminate contingency. Or, put it this way, it doesn't rule out, what we call, chance or accident.

Now, one very often hears, good and pious people, saying, there is no such thing, as chance or accident. Well, our confessions, don't agree with that.

Our confession, tells us, that, foreordination, does not take away, the liberty, or contingency, of second causes.

Now, when I say, that some things, are contingent, that they occur, by chance, that they are accidents, I don't mean, that, they aren't foreseen, by God.

[ 14 : 11 ] And, I don't mean, that they aren't covered, by God's foreordination. But, I mean, that they are, in principle, unpredictable, so far, as we humans, are concerned.

In other words, suppose, we knew, all the facts, and could, gather them all, into our own, statistical calculations. There are still, certain events, in the cosmos, which, are contingent, and accidental, and which, are inherently, unpredictable.

Now, this isn't simply, a matter, of the limitations, of our own, human powers, of observation. Physicists, tell us, that, there is a principle, of indeterminacy, at the very heart, of, the primary particles, that constitute, mass, and energy.

And, that means, that it is, in principle, impossible, for us, to predict, simultaneously, where the particles are, and where those particles, are going.

Now, I'm sure, that I, grossly, oversimplify, that whole, situation. But, it still remains true, that there are, occurrences, such as, the fall of the dice, and the behavior, of, subatomic particles, which are, in principle, contingent, so far, as our human situation, is concerned.

[ 15 : 44 ] and, divine, foreordination, does not, eliminate that fact. It is a very, interesting question, how the behavior, of subatomic particles, relates, to, God's, foreordination.

But, the position is, that, there are, in our physical universe, particles, which, do behave, contingently, and, unpredictably.

The third, caveat is this, that, God's, foreordination, does not, eliminate, human freedom. It, does not, take away, our own liberty, or, absolve us, our responsibility, for our own, personal actions.

You think again, of Judas Iscariot. He betrays, the Lord Jesus Christ, he betrays him, by God's, determined counsel, and foreknowledge.

In other words, God, foreordained, that Judas, would, betray Jesus. But, God, foreordained, that Judas, would, freely, betray Jesus.

[ 17 : 03 ] That he would, choose to do it. That he would, desire to do it. That he would, want to do it. That he would, freely, plan to do it. God, does not, simply, foreordain, in the sense, that his, whole purpose, moves in, and forces Judas, to this particular act.

But, God, foreordains, that without, compulsion, or, coercion, Judas, will, freely, volitionally, by his, own personal choice, with all the moral force, of his own personality, he will express himself, in betraying, the Lord Jesus Christ.

Now, that again, is something, that our confession, insists on, with her remarkable, explicitness. It says, God, foreordains, whatsoever, comes to pass, yet, so as, the liberty, of second causes, is not taken away, but rather established.

Foreordination, is not destructive, of freedom. And in fact, God has foreordained freedom. And our confession, with great courage, says, that, in fact, foreordination, is what establishes freedom.

In other words, nothing can take away, from a human being. The liberty, is essential, to moral responsibility. Because, God has foreordained, the freedom, of men, at the point, of, moral decision making.

[ 18 : 49 ] God, foreordains, their actions, but he foreordains, them, as free actions, as things, they choose, to do, as things, they do, by their own, personal, evolution.

Let me put it, to you this way. It is very often, assumed, that, Calvinism, is the same, as, determinism.

Or at least, that Calvinism, implies, determinism. Or at least, still, that Calvinism, will support, and identify, with determinism.

Now to me, there is, a radical confusion, in such an assumption. And the confusion, is this. It is, a confusing, of, a philosophical, theory, with, a theological, doctrine.

Determinism, is, a philosophical, theory, to the effect, that, every event, within history, has, a cause, within history, which makes, the event, itself, inevitable, and, infallibly certain.

[ 20 : 08 ] That, means, that, some, moral philosophers, have argued, that, even, our human, moral choices, are determined, by, our history, our heredity, our genetic composition, our environment, and so on.

Now many philosophers, have so held. Calvinism, is not, a philosophical, theory. It is, a theological, statement, to the effect.

Not, that, all, events, in history, have a cause, within history, but, that, God, has foreordained, whatsoever, comes to pass.

Now, some, Calvinists, have been, determinists. Some, I think, have even, confused, Calvinism, and determinism.

Jonathan Edwards, was a determinist. Thomas Chalmers, was a determinist. But, there is, no reason, why a, Calvinist, should not, at the level, of his philosophy, be a libertarian, and believe, in human freedom, of choice, and the, ultimacy, of human volition.

[ 21 : 30 ] In actual fact, it seems, to me, that our confession, is pointing, very firmly, in that direction, of libertarianism. And, that's a position, that I certainly, hold to.

But, I hold to it, only as a, philosophical theory. I would not, die for it. I would die, for ordination. But, I would not, die, for libertarianism.

Because, the one, is, a biblically, revealed truth. The other, is, a philosophical theorem, and that's all. And, it seems to be, so important, to grasp this.

That, God has, foreordained, that at many points, in our experience, we shall act freely. Now, in some ways, the stimulus to this, in my thought, came through, Archibald Alexander Hodge, a 19th century, Princeton theologian.

And, you know, Hodge made a very, interesting comment. He said, in our day, it is more, important for us, Calvinists, to proclaim, liberty, than to proclaim, foreordination.

[ 22 : 47 ] Now, that was very, perceptive, in the late, 19th century. It was, perceptive, because, then, the imposition, of the methodology, of the physical science, upon, the behavioural sciences, was just beginning.

And, Hodge saw the danger. He saw that, already, the concept of freedom, and with it, the more important concept, of responsibility, was under threat, and under assault.

And, he was saying, to his fellow Calvinists, the great issue, today, is liberty. The issue, is responsibility. Because, these sciences, under the impulse, of, Darwinian determinism, were beginning to say, that, human beings, could not help, the way they behaved.

Because, behaviour, was the result, of, various glands, of, various, biological, factors, and their input. Now, that was required, as a warning, when Hodge spoke, how much more so, do we need, that word of caution, today?

Because, one of the great problems, of society, is precisely, this elimination, of freedom, the elimination, the whole idea, of responsibility. Sociology, criminology, penology, psychology, all of these, are based, on deterministic, assumptions, that environment, heredity, education, genetic, factors, that these, determine, and influence, human behaviour.

[ 24 : 37 ] And that, men do not answer, for their conduct. And that's why, I want us to grasp, this synthesis, that we have, in A. Hodge, and we have, in William Cunningham, and we have, in Rabbi Duncan, this synthesis, between, for ordination, on the one hand, and freedom, responsibility, on the other hand.

For ordination, our confession says, does not, destroy liberty, in fact it says, it establishes liberty.

And you know, it is very well worth, your glorying in it. I am free, because God, for ordain my freedom. And I am not, the plaything, of environmental factors.

I am not, the plaything, of internal, endocrinological factors. I am free. I make my own decisions.

I am the cause, the ultimate, answering cause, the responsible cause, of my own decisions. It's so important, to grasp this fact, that God has foreordained, that we shall act, freely.

[ 25 : 54 ] Well, that's the first, area of concern, this emphasis, upon, a cosmic, foreordination. Let me turn, to my second, area of concern, the doctrine, of election.

And will you turn, now to 1st Peter chapter 1, and the opening verse, of this chapter. 1st Peter 1, and verse 1. Peter, the apostle of Jesus Christ, to the elect, scattered, throughout various parts, of the Roman Empire.

And you pick up, the connection this way. Elect, according to the foreknowledge, of God the Father. By the consecration, of the Spirit, with our view, to obedience, and the sprinkling, of the blood, of Jesus Christ.

It's a great statement, of the doctrine, of election. Now the word, elect, itself, is, simply, the word, to select.

Remember, when David, went to meet Goliath, it shows, five smooth stones, out of the brook. There was, a selection, of five.

[ 27 : 18 ] There was, a non-selection, of others. And, when the Bible, uses the word, election, it uses it, conscious, of this particular, background, that election, means, some kind, of selection.

Peter, tells us, that, we've been elect, according to God's, foreknowledge. We've been elect, with a view, to, obedience, and, sprinkling, of the blood of Christ.

And, he tells us, that election, is effected, by, an act, of consecration, on the part, of the Spirit of God. I shall not, go to Peter's own words, too, too thoroughly.

Let me explore it, maybe, along, three or four, directions. The doctrine, means, first of all, that, God, has set, his special, affection, on particular, men, and women, from all, eternity.

He has set, his love, his affection, upon, particular, men, and women, from all eternity. Now, Peter speaks, of election, according to, God's, foreknowledge.

[ 28 : 44 ] In the Bible, this idea, foreknowledge, is, generally, held to mean, God's, prior love. Knowledge, and love, overlapping, very, very, significantly.

In love, he foreordained us, to the adoption, of children, by Jesus Christ, to himself. But the position, was this.

There is, a love, on God's part, for the whole, of mankind. God loves, all men. But, there is, a love, which is, special, which, secures, and aims, at, for them, not simply, the blessings, of common grace, but something more.

There are, individuals, who are special, to God. Whose names, are in the Lamb's, book of life. Whose names, are engraven, on the palms, of Jehovah's hand.

It is, selective love. It is, specific, it is, particular, it is, personal. He loved, me.

[ 29 : 59 ] He gave, himself, for me. I am, poor, and needy, but the Lord, thinks, upon me. And that, really is, the basic idea, of election, the idea, that beyond, the general, love of God, for the whole, of mankind, there is, a special, love of God, for those, who are his own, choice people.

Indeed, I put it this way, there are people, and God is in love, with them. He's in love, with them. In fact, I put it this way, God has never been, without loving them.

And that's, a remarkable fact. Because, if it's eternal, it means, it has always, been there. And I find that, so amazing, if you bear with me, because, in a way, this love, of God, for his choice, once, it's contingent.

You see, there is a love, of God the Father, for God the Son, which is, essential, to the very nature, of God himself. It's part, of the shape of God, part of the being, of God.

But, God's love, for his people, God's special affection, for his choice ones, is optional, and discretionary, and gracious. It is contingent.

[ 31 : 27 ] And how amazing, it is, you know, that God, has never been, without loving his people. He has never been, without having your name, engraven, on the palms, of his hands.

He has never been, without knowing you, without caring for you. That's always been a factor, in the consciousness of God.

There was no point, at which God fell in love with you, or God began to love you. But you were always choice, you were always precious, you were always select, you were always elect, you were always loved, by God.

That love, was always there, with an intense, personalness, and particularism. The second thing is this, God, has destined, these choice ones, to salvation.

He has, been in love with them, from eternity. And he has, destined them, to salvation. I spoke, of a general love, on God's part, for the whole human race.

[ 32 : 49 ] That love, confers upon mankind, a vast array, of precious blessings. The sun shines, the rain falls, all the blessings, of art, and science, technology, of affluence, of fecundity, of human friendship, and love, and all the preciousness, of our own relationships.

God has done so much, for mankind. But for the choice ones, there is more. For the choice ones, God wants something greater, and something stupendous.

it's put here, in this way, we are elect, unto the sprinkling, of the blood of Christ. In other words, we are chosen, to be beneficiaries, under Christ, of everything, that his obedience, and sacrifice, deserve.

serve. We are chosen, to be in Christ, to be covered, by the righteousness, by the intercession, by the pleading, by the status, of Christ, in heaven.

Elect, unto the sprinkling, of the blood. It isn't, elect, to hear in the gospel, or to church membership. It's more than that.

[ 34 : 20 ] It is elect, into the very experience, of salvation, in the fullest, possible degree. We are elect, unto the adoption, of children, by Jesus Christ, to himself.

We are elect, to participate, in that love, that means, that God wishes for us, that we shall know, everlasting life.

You go through, all those, great statements, my God shall supply, all your need, according to his riches, and glory, by Christ Jesus. We are elect, to that, to have all, our needs met, according to, all the glory, God possesses, and according, to all that Jesus, deserves.

We speak, of fellowship, with Christ. Sharing, in the things, of Christ, Christ. That's what, being elect means. It means, sharing, everything Jesus has.

It means, sharing his righteousness, sharing his spirit, sharing his sonship, sharing his inheritance, sharing, in the love, that God has for him.

[ 35 : 37 ] It's a great question, whether God, loves his own son, more than he loves you. God gave his own son, for you.

We are chosen, in Christ, to be partakers, of the divine nature. Father, I will, that they be, with me, where I am.

We know, that we shall be, like him, for we shall see him, as he is. We shall be, like him. I cannot think of anything, that Christ has, that we don't have.

We are elect, to salvation, on this, scale of hyperbole. We are more, than conquerors. We are, hyper exalted.

We are filled, with all the fullness, of God. Being elect, means, God has always loved us. Being elect, means, that God, cannot do enough, for you.

[ 36 : 39 ] He wants, to lavish, upon you, every spiritual, blessing, in the heavenlies, in Christ Jesus. So God loves us, and God has, destined us, to participate, in this magnificent, salvation.

Election, means this thirdly. It means, that it is, God himself, who, originates, spiritual life, in us. God loves us.

God, destines us, for salvation, and God, originates, spiritual life, in us. Well, of course, we participate, in salvation, through faith, and through repentance.

But how, can we believe, and how, can we repent? Because, in ourselves, we have no capacity, for either, of these graces.

By ourselves, we have no desire, for Christ. We have no appreciation, of Christ. We have no patience, with Christ. By ourselves, we can't want to.

[ 37 : 46 ] By ourselves, we can't stand him. By ourselves, we cannot, not resist him. We can't prepare for him.

We cannot, even, not be, averse to him. Until, God himself, comes. And, God gives us, that faith, which is, not of ourselves, but is, the gift of God.

The risen Christ, pours upon us, the grace, of repentance. How does it, see in 1st Peter 1, we are elect, to the sprinkling, of blood, by the sanctification, by the consecration, of the spirit.

God's chosen ones, when God chooses them, they are spiritually, dead. They have to be born again. They have to be quickened, into life, by the impulse, of grace.

They don't want grace. They don't seek grace. They can't, but persist grace. But, God comes. And, God consecrates them.

[ 38 : 59 ] And, God transforms them. He does it. And, it is his intervention, that makes the difference, between this man, and that man.

Some are spiritually alive. Why? Because, God quickened them. And, he quickened those, whom he chose to quicken.

And, there is no other reason, for the difference. So, God loves us. God, destines us, to salvation. and, God originates, such spiritual life, as we possess.

And, the fourth thing, in the election, is this. It, means, that God, is committed, to our sanctification. He is himself, assuming, shall I say, the responsibility, for making us holy.

We see, in 1st Peter itself, here in this very statement, that, we are elect, to be saved, by the sanctification, of the spirit.

[ 40 : 06 ] Or, as Paul says, more explicitly, we are elect, unto holiness. Let me put it to you, in this way. One, great argument, against this whole doctrine, is, that, it encourages, antinomianism, careless living, ungodliness, impiety, immorality, careless conduct.

After all, if we elect, we'll be saved anyway. If we aren't elect, we won't be saved anyway. So, let's live as we please. The elect are saved, do what they will.

The non-elect are not saved, do what they will. And, it's easy to argue that, in logical terms, that this doctrine, encourages, unholiness.

But, you see, the whole, argument, is an absurdity, at the level of experience. Because, we are elect, unto holiness.

If it were a matter, of formal logic, I could say, I'm going to live aside, please, because I'm elect. But, it isn't a matter, of formal logic.

[ 41 : 21 ] I am elect, to not being, able to live, as I please. I'm elect, to being holy. I am caught up, in God's, determination, to save, all love, that will not, let me go.

And, that love, you know, what it's, what it's, primary commitment is. Hermes did for know, he did for ordain, to be conformed, to the image, of a son.

You can't say, oh, I'm elect, I'm going to live, like a devil, because I'm saved anyway. Because, being elect, means, that God has, foreordained, that we shall be, Christ like.



Good works, which God has, foreordained, that we should walk in. On the level, of pure logic, you can stand, before election, and say, I'm elect, I live as I please.

But, election means, that I'm caught up, I say again, I am caught up, in God's, invincible, determination, to make me, Christ like.

[ 42 : 38 ] And, to him, who is able, to keep us, from falling. And, to present us, faultless, before the face, of his glory.

That's, God's determination. Christ, loved the church, and gave himself, for it, that he might, sanctify, and cleanse it, with the washing, of water, by the word.

That's what, God's love means. God's love, means, his determination, to make us, exactly, like his only begotten.

And, when Jude speaks, of, being presented, with exceeding joy, glory. What he means, is this, that when God, sees the, ransomed, church of God, being brought, into glory, there will be, joy in his heart, because, every single, one of them, bears the exact, image, of his beloved.

The exact image, of the only begotten. And that's why, there is such joy, joy, in heaven. To be, elect, means, that we're caught, in the grip, of God's, determination, to make us, holy.

[ 43 : 56 ] Now, Augustine spoke, of, irresistible grace. He did not, mean by that, that you and I, don't resist grace, because we do.

But that old, Latin word, irresistible, is, it meant, not irresistible, it meant, invincible. You could never, overcome, the grace of God.

And isn't it a great thing, you know, tonight, as we lie here, struggling with ourselves, temperaments, personalities, and so on. To be able to, grasp this fact, that God is, invincibly, and irrevisibly, committed, to making us, like, the Lord Jesus Christ.

lost. And so, we've seen something, of cosmic, predestination, we've seen something, of election, we must see something, also, of, reprobation.

The reprobation, is the way, that God's decree, bears, upon, the destiny, of the lost, of the unbelieving, and, of the impenitent.

[ 45 : 05 ] Turn, for a moment, to 1st Peter 2, and, verse 8. 1st Peter 2, and, verse 8.

You see, the quotation, from the Old Testament, that says, that Christ is, a stone of stumbling, and, a rock, of offense. And, Peter goes on, to say, that certain people, stumble, at the word, being disobedient, or being, unbelieving, to which, also, they were, appointed.

So, they, are offended, they take offense, at Christ, they do so, because, they're, unbelieving, and, this state of, unbelief, Peter says, is, due to, God's, appointment.

Now, it is, very solemn, and, a very difficult teaching. you may know, that, John Calvin, is supposed to have spoken, of, the horrible decree, the horrible decree, of, reprobation.

Now, with all due respect, to Calvin, what Calvin said, was not, the horrible decree, he spoke, of, the decretum, horrible, which meant, not horrible, but terrible, and awe-inspiring.

[ 46 : 27 ] And, it is that. This, speaking forth to us, so vividly, of the holiness of God, and our, total dependence, upon him, that, even our, unbelief, and even our, being offended by Christ, that these things, don't lie adrift, from the purpose of God.

Now, our confession of faith, puts it for us this way. It speaks of the elect, pedestrian to salvation, and then goes on to tell us, that the rest of mankind, God was pleased to pass by, and to ordain, to dishonor, and wrath, for their sins.

God was pleased, to pass by, and to ordain, to dishonor, and wrath, for their sins. Now, if you'll bear with me, there are, in this doctrine, of reprobation, which, by the way, our confession, never uses.

There are, in the doctrine, two elements. One, of those elements, is sovereign, and the other element, is judicial.

The first element, I'm going to use a technical word for this, is preterition, which is simply, the Latin, way, of saying, passed by.

[ 47 : 59 ] God was pleased, to pass by. Now, the position taken here, is that, God, sovereignly, passes by, with his grace, the non-elect.

He finds them sinners, he passes them by. The Lord Jesus, himself, referred to it, in those terms, I thank thee, Father, Lord of heaven, and earth, that thou hast hid, these things, from the wise, and prudent.

There is, a not revealing, there is, a not enlightening, there is, a not illuminating, there is, a not effectually calling, there is, a passing by.

Now, this sovereign element, in reprobation, it isn't effective, it doesn't do, it doesn't change, these people at all, you see, it leaves them.

That is how Calvinism, must put it. the sovereign thing, is that God, passes them by, grace passes, some people by. Secondly, there is this, there is condemnation, there is, pre-tourition, or passing by, there is condemnation.

[ 49 : 30 ] Now, if the pre-tourition, was sovereign, the condemnation, is judicial. They are ordained, to dishonor, and wrath, for their sins.

Now, you notice, they are not ordained, to dishonor, and wrath, because they're non-elect. They're ordained, to dishonor, and wrath, because they're sinners.

God will not condemn, does not condemn, any non-sinner. Not a single non-sinner, will go to hell.

Let me put it to you this way, God is a just judge. God is a most compassionate, and a most fair-minded judge.

And I will say, to every one of us, to you, every one of you, if you have a good case, if you have excuses, explanations, extenuations, mitigations, God will listen, to all of them.

[ 50 : 40 ] Because, he will do right, and, he will only, ordain you, to dishonor, and wrath, if you're a sinner. And, the ordination, to, dishonor, and wrath, will be, commensurate, with the degree, of your, disobedience, and, if you can plead, extenuating circumstances, your plea will receive, the very best, and the kindest, possible hearing.

I give, an assurance in that, to everybody. There is a passing by, which is sovereign. But the condemnation, is not sovereign.

God doesn't condemn you, for people, for the whim of it. That was so, Rabbi, Rabbi Burns put it, sends aim to heaven, and tend to hell, all for his glory.

Apart from the proportions, being all wrong, that the elect, it's a vast multitude, which no man can numb. God only sends men, to sinners, most, most reluctantly.

He has no pleasure, in the death of the wicked. He does it, only because, they're sinners. There is, a sovereign, passing by. There is a condemnation, that relates, simply and directly, to the fact, that they're sinners.

[ 52 : 08 ] They're condemned, for their sins. So there are those, two elements, in reprobation. There is, preterition, which is sovereign, and condemnation, which is judicial.

Now, I want to raise, a question with you. Again, using fairly, technical words. Are the two decrees, if I can so speak, of election, and reprobation, are they, symmetrical?

Or, as it's some, sometimes, spout, are they equally, ultimate? Is the one, of the same status, and of the same importance, and of the same, revelatory, in fact, as the other?

Now, I'm going to say, that the decrees, are not symmetrical, and the decrees, are not, equally, ultimate. That, reprobation, and election, do not have, the same status.

And that's why, I do not speak, of double predestination, because, that, in my view, distorts, the biblical perspective. I believe, in election, and I believe, in reprobation, but I do not believe, that they are, symmetrical.

[ 53 : 33 ] or that they are equal. Well, what do I mean by that? There are two differences. First of all, there is this difference. The decree, of election, is, effectuating.

The decree, of preterition, or reprobation, is not. There is, an effectual, calling, to holiness, and to faith, and Christ.

There is, there is no, effectual, calling, to unbelief, and to impiety. God's grace, works, along, the channel, of election, invincibly, creatively, redemptively, transformationally.

It renews, it sanctifies, it transforms. forms. The decree, of preterition, does not, make men, unbelievers, it finds them, unbelievers.

God is not, the author, of the unbelief, of the impenitent, as he is, the author, of the faith, of his children. The two decrees, are asymmetrical, at that point.

[ 54 : 53 ] The one, is effectuating, and the other, is not. The second element, of asymmetry, is this. The two decrees, do not, equally express, God's nature.

They do not, equally express, God's nature. Now, they do express, God's nature. But, biblically, they do not, express it equally.

This God, do you see, of the Bible, of the Old Testament, this God, is reluctant, to condemn. Judgment, is his, strange work.

You remember, Hosea 11, how, shall I give thee over? Remember, the great words, of the Old Testament, he has no, pleasure, in the death, of the wicked.

In other words, you see, God, loves, saving people. God, feels, fulfilled, in saving people. God, delights, in pardon.

[ 56 : 03 ] Now, God, will condemn, if need be. Because, God, isn't sentimental, than we are. He will do, what's right. But, he will do it, reluctantly.

He has no, pleasure in it. It's strange, there is a, shrinking, from condemnation. There is that, in God. So, the two decrees, do not, symmetrically, and equally, give us, the picture of God.

We see God, really, throwing himself, with all the fullness, of his being, into, consummating, the purpose, the decree, of election.

Well, we've seen, those three areas, the cosmic, for ordination, election, and the reprobation. I want, in conclusion, to make three points, briefly.

The first is this, that many of the objections, to this doctrine, are philosophical, rather than theological.

[ 57 : 07 ] Almost all, of the objections, that you put, against this doctrine, are of this form, how do you reconcile, election with this, or, with that?

How do you reconcile, divine, for ordination, with human, responsibility? How do you reconcile? Now, I could give you, an answer, to that question, maybe.

But, my answer, would only be, a philosophical, answer, to a philosophical, difficulty. There is no, theological, there is no reveal, there is no, biblical solution, to that, particular dilemma.

It's a problem, of reconciling, two, equally important, truths. But, there is no, biblical revelation, of the solution, of that problem.

Or, how do you reconcile, election, and reprobation, with the free offer, of the gospel? Again, you see, the problem, is a logical one, philosophical, how do you reconcile?

[ 58 : 19 ] And again, I say, I could give my theory, of that, but I could not, claim, biblical support, for my theory. What then, do I do? Well, I do this.

I believe, with all my heart, in foreordination, and I believe, with all my heart, in responsibility, and I believe, with all my heart, in human freedom, and I, do not try, to reconcile them.

I take, each of these facts, on its own, independent evidence. I believe, that God knows, how to reconcile them. I believe, that someday, he may tell me how, but at the moment, I don't know.

We take the facts, on their own, independent evidence. It's the same, with the free offer, of the gospel. How do I reconcile, that free offer?

Offering Christ, to every creature, with foreordination. Knowing, that not all are elect. Well, what do I do? I say again, I believe, in election.

[ 59 : 27 ] I believe, in reprobation. I believe, in the free offer. I believe, in them, not because, I can reconcile them, but because, each stands, on its own, independent evidence.

I go, preach to, every creature, because that's, what the sovereign said. I believe, in the sovereignty of God, the Calvinist says. And the sovereign says, God, to every creature.

And the theologian, says, with such boldness, ah, but God on the throne, you haven't chosen them all. And God on the throne says, you go. Who are you, man, to reply against God?

Now, there is no other answer, to that. Second point, I want to make, is this. The proportionate importance, of this doctrine. How much emphasis, ought we to give to it?

It's biblical. It ought to be preached, in biblical proportion, and balance. But, it would be a sad thing, if it came to be, the foremost item, or element, to no preaching, and no witness.

[ 60 : 36 ] Charles Hodge, put it this way, this doctrine, of the divine sovereignty, he says, bears the same relation, to other doctrines, as the granite does, to the other strata, of the earth's rocks.

Now, Hodge knew, at least a little geology, and he meant, by that, this, that, undergirding, all the strata, all the deposits, on the surface of the earth, there was granite.

And that granite, was everywhere. But that granite, did not outcrop, everywhere. It wasn't visible, everywhere.

It outcrops, here and there. But it doesn't, outcrop all the time. Now, the same way, he said, the sovereignty of God, underlies, all our theology, underlies, all our preaching.

But, woe betide you, if it outcrops, in every sermon. Because then, you've got the balance, wrong. You've got the proportions, wrong.

[ 61 : 52 ] It's a great doctrine. It can become, all too easily, the war cry of sects. It must never do that, it's too precious.

It must live, and function, in biblical proportion, and balance. The third point, I want to make, and the most important point, I want to make, is this.

Remember, that, at the heart, of the sovereignty, of God, there lies, Jesus Christ. Remember, that the lamb, is in the midst, of the throne.

Remember, that all the authority, is his, in heaven, and in earth. Remember, the decree, is Christ, shaped.

cosmic, forordination, is forordination, by Christ. Election, is election, by Christ.

[ 62 : 56 ] And in particular, never forget, that Christ, is present, in, and at, the reprobation, too. And in that decree, in that reprobation, there will be, nothing, un-Christ-like, at all.

Everything, in the decree, is consistent, with what God, has said, about himself, in the Lord, Jesus Christ. In him, it's fashion, formed in him, it's Christ-shaped.

Your providence, is Christ-shaped. The whole decree, as it bears, on the cosmos, on the church, even on the reprobate, is Christ-shaped.

Let's never forget, that the lamb, is, in the midst, of the throne. Well, I shall leave it there, and, await any questions, you may want to, to put.