

Having a Biblical Understanding of Predestination

- The doctrine of Predestination is basically the idea that God pre-decided who He was going to save before He created the world. (Ephesians 1:4-5; Acts 13:48)
- There are certain things we have to understand in order to have biblical understanding of predestination. So we're going to break it down and look at them in detail.

1. God has His moral will, and His sovereign will (Genesis 50:20; Exodus 4:21)

- God has several things that He wills or that He desires, and sometimes, some of them seem to contradict each other. This is because there are certain things God doesn't like or doesn't desire (such as sin or suffering) that in the big picture, lead to greater good
- Therefore, sometimes God wills that evil should happen or wills to allow it to happen, in order to accomplish a greater good that He desires. These two aspects of His will, *the hating of sin*, and *the desire to allow sin to happen for greater good* are often referred to as His "Moral Will" and His "Sovereign Will"

2. God is committed to His glory above all else

- Out of all the things that God desires, there isn't anything He desires more or values more than to manifest and to enjoy His glory
- When I say God's "glory" I am not merely referring to Him being praised by creatures. Glory can also mean "magnificence" or "great beauty" or "awesomeness." So when I say that God doesn't have any desire greater than His desire to enjoy His glory, I'm talking about Him enjoying His own beauty and awesomeness

God Enjoys His glory

- One of the ways to see God's enjoyment of His glory is to look at the Father's delight in the Son (Hebrews 1:1-3)
- When God the Father enjoys any of the qualities of God the Son, He is enjoying the beauty and awesomeness of Yahweh. God is delighting in the glory of God.
- So, since God enjoys His beauty and excellence, He necessarily enjoys manifesting His beauty and excellence
 - If you enjoy your own ability to cook well, you would get more enjoyment of it by cooking something awesome and showing it and looking at it than by just theoretically knowing that you can cook well
 - God the Father gets more enjoyment of the beauty of God when He sees God the being merciful to sinners, more enjoyment than if He just theoretically knew that God the Son is merciful.

There are really only two possibilities worth considering for what God cares about most. It is either the wellbeing of humans, or it is His enjoying and manifesting His glory

- God is more committed to His glory
 - 1. There were times were God spared people, explicitly for His own sake (for His glory)
 - Isaiah 48:9-11, 43:25; Ezekiel 36:22-23, 32
 - 2. God could have saved everyone, but He decided not to
 - Matthew 11:21-22; Romans 9:21-23; Proverbs 16:4
 - God is glorified in His justice being shown, in that is why He would choose to not save everyone even though He could save everyone

God is not wrong or unjust or even unreasonable to have such great desire for His glory

- God is the most important being in the universe and all that exists, exists for Him. Romans 11:36; Colossians 1:16
- Since all things exist for God, He is the most important being in existence, and since He is the most important being in existence it is only right that He should care about Himself and His glory more than anything.
- Moreover, God is triune! It is loving for God to put God first because He is three persons in one being. When God seeks His own glory, it is each member of the Trinity loving the other

3. God predestines everything that ever happens (Proverbs 16:33; Ephesians 1:11)

- For everything that ever happens, God either caused it to happen, or knew that it would happen yet decided beforehand that He would not prevent it from happening even though He could. In this way, no matter what happens ever, God has pre-decided that it would happen.
 - I would also argue, that in this way, God does not force anyone to sin, but still pre-decides what will happen and what won't happen
- The facts that God is all-knowing and all-powerful, necessitate the idea that He has predestined everything
- God has chosen what He will allow to happen and what He won't allow to happen, so whatever does happen ever, God chose it. And He knew before He created the world what He would choose

4. No one can come to God on their own (John 6:44, 63-65; Matthew 16:17)

- No one can see Jesus for who He really is without the Holy Spirit revealing it to them
 - No one will naturally see Him as worth trusting for salvation
 - No one will see Him as worth submitting to (1 Corinthians 12:3)

5. God has elected those whom He will save (Eph. 1:4-5; 2 Thess. 2:1; 1 Peter 1:1-2)

- God knew we would never come to Him unless He intervened by a work of the Holy Spirit, and He pre-decided even before He created the world, that He would indeed intervene on our behalf and cause us to become willing to trust Him and submit to Him.
- He pre-decided that He would do a work in our hearts to make us willing to accept the gospel, even though we otherwise wouldn't be

6. God does not elect anyone based on merit (Romans 9:10-13)

- It is purely because of His grace, and it is for His glory

7. God preserves those whom He elects (Matthew 24:23-24; John 6:39; 1 John 5:18)

Avoiding Misunderstandings

God still has strong and genuine desire for intimacy with us

- Even though God's greatest desire is for His glory, He has intense desire for intimacy with His children. His desire for His glory is reason for Him to desire intimacy with us.
 - God wants us to know Him (He enjoys us glorifying Him) (John 17:24)
 - God wants to know us intimately (experientially) because He enjoys His own glory in us

Even though God saves us is for His glory, His love for us is still very genuine

- 1. God died for us out of desire for His glory and out of desire for our wellbeing
 - God can do good to us for the sake of His glory and still genuinely for our sake (2 Kings 19:34)
 - Even though in Ephesians 1, Paul says God saved us for His glory, in chapter two, Paul says that He saved us because of His love for us. And they are both true. (Ephesians 1:11-12, 2:4-5)
 - This is necessary because if God were to die for His people and it not in any way be out of love, then God wouldn't even consider it glorious (1 Corinthians 13:1; 2 Corinthians 9:7)
- 2. God's love for His people is different than His love for not-His-people (John 17:23)
 - God's the Father loves His chosen adopted children even as He loves Christ!
- 3. God, out of His desire for His glory, has bound His heart to us (Deuteronomy 10:15)
 - God made a choice. He committed Himself to desiring the wellbeing of His people with a passionate and intense heartfelt desire.