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Predestination in Thessalonians Timothy and Peter.

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Although I believe my aim is pure and God's will perfect this document is still the product of a human man, as to such I neither claim perfect knowledge or perfect understanding.

Predestination in Thessalonians, Timothy and Peter.

Topics.

- Predestination in (1 Thessalonians 1).
- Predestination in (2 Timothy 1).
- Predestination in (1 Peter 1).
- Predestination in (Ephesians 1).

1 THESSALONIANS CHAPTER ONE

- **1 Thessalonians 1:1-4:** Paul, Silvanus, and Timothy, to the church of the Thessalonians in God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ: Grace to you and peace. ²We give thanks to God always for all of you, constantly mentioning you in our prayers, ³remembering before our God and Father your work of faith and labour of love and steadfastness of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ. ⁴For we know, brothers loved by God that he has chosen you.

Paul Silvanus and Timothy give thanks to God for the Thessalonians works of faith and their Labour of love. Before we enter into this study concerning Paul's words, "God has chosen you" (v4) it might be helpful for some to firstly mention that good works (labours of love) cannot save a person, but they do outwardly manifest a brother and sister's inward faith and love for the Lord Jesus Christ. The words, "God has chosen you" (v4) does not mean that God chose them before the foundation of the world or that He predestined some to be saved and others to be condemned.

What it does mean is that God predestined that whoever from their own free will choose to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ God will choose to be His adopted sons and daughters.

- **1 Thessalonians 1:5-6:** for our gospel did not come to you in word only, but also in power and in the Holy Spirit and with full conviction; just as you know what kind of men we proved to be among you for your sake. ⁶You also became imitators of us and of the Lord, having received the word in much tribulation with the joy of the Holy Spirit.

The power of the Holy Spirit in this context does not refer to miracles, but to the power of the Holy Spirit through the word of God to convict a person of sin. These Thessalonian brothers and sisters received the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ that leads to salvation that Paul was proclaiming and then God accepts them because of their faith in His Son. It is in this sense that Paul says, "God has chosen you" (v4). God before the beginning of time predestined that whoever surrenders their heart, mind and life to Christ and trust in him for their salvation God would accept into his family and save to eternal life.

- **1 Thessalonians 1:7-8:** so that you became an example to all the believers in Macedonia and in Achaia. ⁸For the word of the Lord has sounded forth from you, not only in Macedonia and Achaia, but also in every place your faith toward God has gone forth so that we have no need to say anything.

The Thessalonian brothers and sisters after being saved not only proclaimed their faith to others in the sounding area they were also a good testimony to Christ by their good-works and labours of love so much so that Paul, Silvanus and Timothy did not need to proclaim the Gospel in the region these faithful believers lived in. This is why Paul and those with him constantly gave thanks to God for them (v2) because they did not bury their light, but let it shine toward others both in their witnessing and in their behaviour and actions of compassion and kindness toward others.

- **1 Thessalonians 1:9-10:** For they themselves report about us what kind of a reception we had with you, and how you turned to God from idols to serve a living and true God,¹⁰ and to wait for His Son from heaven, whom He raised from the dead, that is Jesus, who delivers us from the wrath to come.

Here is the greatest testimony a brother and sister in Christ can have, those who lived in the region of the Thessalonians were fully aware that the Thessalonian brothers and sisters faith had totally turned their lives around, they not only knew that they had forsaken all their past religious beliefs to embrace Christ and his heavenly Father the true God, but also knew they believed a glorious day would come when the Lord Jesus Christ will return in glory.

The Gospel they proclaimed embraced:

- Forsaking idols and any false religious teaching concerning pagan gods and accepting by faith the Lord Jesus Christ.
- Faithfully serving the living and true God.
- Waiting for God's Son the Lord Jesus Christ to return from heaven.
- Believing God raised Jesus from the dead.
- Having faith that Jesus will deliver us from the wrath to come.

God has predestined from before time began that whoever from their own free choice chooses to believe these truths God will save to eternal life.

2 TIMOTHY CHAPTER ONE

- **2 Timothy 1:8-10:** Therefore do not be ashamed of the testimony about our Lord, nor of me his prisoner, but share in suffering for the gospel by the power of God⁹ who saved us and called us to a holy calling, not because of our works but because of his own purpose and grace which he gave us in Christ Jesus before the ages began¹⁰ and which now has been manifested through the appearing of our Saviour Christ Jesus, who abolished death and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel.

In certain circles of Christianity there is a mindset that the only way to entice the lost to hear the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ is to have brothers and sisters in Christ who are either famous or have been enormously successful speak at their meeting they feel they must present champions to the world to win the lost. But the following words of Paul to Timothy "Do not be ashamed of the testimony concerning Christ, nor concerning Paul who is in prison because of his faith" (v8) show that this was not the mindset of Paul. The words, "Do not be ashamed" means do not be embarrassed, humiliated, reluctant or unwilling to testifying to the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ. Paul is saying this to Timothy because some brothers and sisters in Christ are suffering persecutions, hardships and troubles because of their faith and because Jesus was crucified as a common criminal. Christianity is not about being successful or a champion in this world, but about being delivered from the guilt and condemnation of sin, being delivered from death to eternal life and living by faith with God's love in the heart and allowing this love to flow out toward others in compassion, kindness, mercy, grace and forgiveness etc.

The words, "Who saved us and called us" (v9) does not mean God predestined some to be saved to eternal life and others to be condemned. The words "Called us" in the context of these verses refer to good works, it is doing-good and treating other with kindness, compassion and respect that those in Christ are called to. These verses show that "Before the ages began" (v9) God predestined that the Lord Jesus Christ would be the centre of His eternal plan of salvation and the Saviour of the world. This is why the faithful in the Old Testament can be saved even though they lived prior to the death and resurrection of Christ. God's sovereign plan

that eternal salvation would be in the Lord Jesus Christ did not begin at Calvary, but before the world began. Faithful believers of the Old Testament looked by faith toward the promised seed of the woman spoken of in Genesis 3:15; the prophet and deliverer Moses said was to come like him; the promised seed of Abraham; the promised seed of David; and toward the Messiah the Christ that the prophets said was to come and the Old Testament Scriptures so majestically speak of. Every brother and sister who is saved (whether before or after Christ's death and resurrection) is saved by God's eternal plan that He purposed and planned in His eternal mind and His eternal foreknowledge before the ages began.

NOTICE: no-one is saved by self-effort, good works or by adhering to ceremonial rites, holy days or keeping religious customs and traditions, but by faith in Christ and God's grace. This grace that God lavishes on all who are saved comes through faith in Christ. The words, "God's own purpose has been manifested through the appearing of our Saviour Christ Jesus" (v9) means the eternal plan for mankind's salvation that God purposed in His divine mind before the ages began is now revealed in brilliant light with the appearing of His Son the Lord Jesus Christ. Here is the glory of the Christian faith Jesus through his death and resurrection has conquered the power of death and by believing the Gospel that he taught sinners are not only saved to eternal life in everlasting glory, but will also receive an immortal and indestructible body that will never taste pain again or see death.

THESE VERSES SHOW THAT GOD IN HIS ETERNAL MIND AND ETERNAL FOREKNOWLEDGE PREDESTINED FROM THE BEGINNING OF TIME THE FOLLOWING THREE THINGS.

- His Son the Lord Jesus Christ would be the Saviour of the world.
- Whoever chooses from their free will to believe in Christ, God will accept and save to eternal life.
- Mankind's salvation would be in the Lord Jesus Christ.

3

Predestination does not mean that God has selected some humans for eternal salvation and some for destruction, but refers to God's plan concerning eternal salvation in Christ. God in His eternal mind and eternal foreknowledge predestined before the world began that whoever chooses to accept God's Son God will choose and adopt as his sons and daughters. When those in Christ understand these truths it is perfectly correct, right and proper for them to say, "They have been chosen in Christ from the foundation of the world" (v9). God's eternal plan of salvation in Christ Jesus was granted to us from all eternity. Mankind tries to find their own ways of saving themselves, but there is nothing a person can plan, do or purpose that will save them to everlasting life other than believe in God's Son and faithfully follow him.

1 PETER CHAPTER ONE

- **1 Peter 1:1-2:** Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, To those who are elect exiles of the dispersion in Pontus, Galatia, Cap-padocia, Asia, and Bithynia, (KJV adds who are chosen) ²according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, in the sanctification of the Spirit, for obedience to Jesus Christ and for sprinkling with his blood: May grace and peace be multiplied to you.

The phrase, to those who are elect and chosen according to the foreknowledge of God (v2) means they are chosen according the plan of salvation that God purposed and planned in His foreknowledge before the world began. Those who are chosen refer to those who have been saved by faith in the death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ. God has chosen them because they have chosen from their own free will to believe

in God's Son the Lord Jesus Christ. God in His eternal foreknowledge planned and purposed that whoever believes the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ would be saved to eternal life. God predestined that whoever chooses from their free will to believe in the Gospel would become the chosen of God. They are chosen according to the foreknowledge of God meaning according to God's predestined plan of salvation in Christ. God chooses everyone who believes the Gospel of salvation in Christ that God had planned and purposed in His eternal mind from the beginning of the ages. Peter in effect is saying that God in His foreknowledge set up an eternal plan of salvation in Christ so that whoever from their-own free will chooses to believe in Jesus and faithfully follows him would be chosen by God.

CHRIST WAS FOREKNOWN BEFORE THE FOUNDATION OF THE WORLD

- **1 Peter 1:20:** Christ was foreknown before the foundation of the world but was made manifest in the last times for your sake.

Some have mistakenly taken the words, "Christ was foreknown before the foundation of the world" (v20) to mean that Jesus was with God before the foundation of the world, but this is reading into the verse more than what Peter is saying. Peter does not say Jesus existed but that he was foreknown before the foundation of the world meaning Jesus was the central focus of God's eternal plan that He purposed in His eternal and divine mind before the world began. It is in this sense that Peter says Jesus was foreknown. An architect long before a building is constructed plans the entire structure in his mind, he sees every detail of it in vivid clarity long before the builders begin to construct it and long before the workers even set foot on the site where it is to be built.

An excited expectant mother plans in her mind her baby's room long before the baby is born, she not only sees in her mind the design and colours of that room, but also the lighting, furniture and clothing long before the child is born. In the same manner God planned and purposed in his timeless mind that Christ would be the central focus of His sovereign plan for mankind's eternal salvation long before Jesus came into the world.

4

WORDS OF COMFORT AND ENCOURAGEMENT

Since the teaching that Jesus not only pre-existed, but is also God has such a strong hold on much of traditional Christianity the following will encourage and comfort faithful brothers and sisters in Christ who maybe in some doubt and unsure of what to believe concerning the Father and the Son. The Bible very clearly shows that even if Jesus was God no one has to know this to be saved to eternal life since there is not one verse in the entire Bible that states:

- We must believe that Jesus is God to be saved.

Nor is there one verse from Genesis to Revelations that says:

- Whoever believes that Jesus is God the Son will be saved.

In total contrast to this silence there are literally multitudes of Scriptures throughout the pages of the New Testament that very clearly proclaim:

- We must believe that Jesus is the Son of God to be saved.

And that say:

- Whoever believes that Jesus is the Son of God will be saved.

Surely if it was important to believe that Jesus was actually God to be saved to eternal life Jesus, the apostles and Paul would have told us at least once in all their teaching concerning salvation, but all we hear from Paul, the apostles and Jesus himself is them saying that we must believe that Jesus is the Son of God to be saved to eternal life. Jesus himself said, "This is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent" (John 17:3). For further information see the title:

- Trinity (The Doctrine of the Trinity).
- In, Various Topics (ON WEBSITE MENU).

CONCLUSION

Predestined has the following two stages, firstly, God predestined Christ to be the centre of His eternal plan of salvation and secondly God predestined that those who from their own free will who choose to accept Christ and believe his words He will accept into His Kingdom and they will be saved and receive a predestined inheritance.

FOOTNOTE

We must always keep in mind when we are speaking of God's sovereignty, God's timeless mind, predestination and God's foreknowledge that it is with a fallen and finite mind that is limited to time (as we understand it) that we are attempting to understand God's eternal wisdom and God's eternal knowledge which is far higher than our limited fallen mortal mind can comprehend therefore we should never be dogmatic and absolute in our understandings and explanations concerning God's eternal sovereignty, but always allow for certain amount of mystery.

As the founder of Bible House of Grace, I would like to thank the many Christian scholars, commentators and theologians who have gone before me, and the many today, who have freely made available their works to enhance the knowledge of the Bible to all people worldwide. It is only with the help of these faithful writers that much of Bible House of Grace exists as it does today.
