

SOTERIOLOGY

Predestination in the Orthodox Perspective

Introduction:

- What is predestination?
- Some events that seems controversial or Unfair?
 - The story of Pharaoh and the people of Israel. (Ex9:7 & Rm 9:17)
 - “ But the heart of Pharaoh was hardened...”
 - The story of Esau and Jacob (Mal 1:2,3 & Rm 9:13)
 - “I have loved Jacob, but I have hated Esau”
 - St Paul’s letter to the Romans. (Rm 8:28-30)

Controversy?

- **Rom 8: 28-30**: “And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose. For whom He foreknew, He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the Firstborn among many brethren. Moreover who He predestined, these He also called; whom He called, these He also justified; and whom He justified, these He also glorified.”
- ??????

St Paul 's Controversial verses: ROMANS 9:13-14

- “ As it is written, Jacob I have loved, but Esau I have hated.” (Rom9:13) ????
- “What shall we say then? Is there unrighteousness with God? Certainly not!” (Rm 9:14)

To make it worse...

- **15** For He says to Moses, "I will have mercy on whomever I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whomever I will have compassion." **16** So then *it is* not of him who wills, nor of him who runs, but of God who shows mercy. **17** For the Scripture says to the Pharaoh, "For this very purpose I have raised you up, that I may show My power in you, and that My name may be declared in all the earth."
- **18** Therefore He has mercy on whom He wills, and whom He wills He hardens.
- Not Fair????

The potter and the clay...

Even more difficult to understand...

- **19** You will say to me then, “Why does He still find fault? For who has resisted His will?”
20 But indeed, O man, who are you to reply against God? Will the thing formed say to him who formed *it*, “Why have you made me like this?”
- **21** Does not the potter have power over the clay, from the same lump to make one vessel for honor and another for dishonor?

The potter and the clay...

- What about the nature of the clay?
- As a potter, God foreknows that the bad clay will end up making a bad pot, while the good clay will make a good pot.
- This doesn't stop God from trying to make a good pot out of all clay, but he knows what the end result will be from the beginning.

The Grace of God:

St. Augustine and predestination

- Grace is a gift not a reward.
- If grace was a reward, then humans could earn their salvation through good works, (which is not true).
- The gift giver (God) has the right to choose to whom He can give this gift and to whom He will not give a gift.?!?

St. Augustine (cont...)

- All humanity is contaminated by sin.
- The grace of God was offered to humans to release them from the bondage of sin.
- Grace was only given to certain people, but not to others

Predestination explained...

3 Important Concepts:

1. The Universal Saving will of God = God wants all of us to be saved.
2. The human free will = We can choose if we want to be saved.
3. God's Foreknowledge = God knows the future like the present and the past.

Jesus explains through a parable...

The parable of the wedding feast.

Mt 22:1-14

The Universal saving Will of God

- Ez 33:14-16
- Jer 18:7-10
- The story of Nineveh : Jn 3:10
- “God our Savior, who desires all men to be saved.” (1 Tim 2:4)
- “God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life.” (Jn 3:16)
- “Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature.” (Mk 16:15)

The human free will

- “If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and dine with him...” (Rev 3:20)
- “The kingdom of heaven is like a certain king who arranged a marriage for his son and sent out his servants to call those who were invited to the wedding; and they were not willing to come.” (Mt 22:2-3)
- “I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing; therefore choose life.” (Deut 30:19)
- “If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself.” (Mt 16:27)

The human free will

- “How often I wanted to gather your children together... but you were not willing!” (Mt 23:37)
- “You are not willing to come to Me that you may have life.” (Jn 5:40)
- “He came to His own, and His own did not receive Him.” (Jn 1:11)

God's Foreknowledge

- God, through His divine foreknowledge and recognition of what would take place in the future, knows who would do the things that please Him in righteousness and goodness using their free will.
- God also knows who would choose to do evil and disobey Him misusing the gift of free will.
- God's foreknowledge does not interfere with our given free will.
- The divine universal saving will of God is different from His foreknowledge in case of those who perish: God wants them to be saved but He knows that they will take the wrong decisions.

St. Paul and predestination

- “All things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to his purpose ... for whom He foreknew, He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son” (Rom 8:28-30).
- St Paul said: “ those who loved God” and not those whom God loved.
- It depends on them (free will) not on God.
- Grace is offered to everyone, but it needs acceptance.

Explanation

- Remember (when you read the Bible)!
 - THE DANGER OF THE SINGLE VERSE!
 - The Context of the writings.
- God's Foreknowledge: "*For whom He foreknew, He also predestined*"(Rm 8: 28)

CONCLUSION

- Although Grace is only given to certain people, it is offered to everyone.
- Only those who accept the gift of God will receive the grace of salvation.
- We believe that God's predestination for salvation is not due to His will (for God wants all to be saved) but rather due to His divine foreknowledge.

Can you explain?

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“I have loved Jacob, but I have hated Esau”
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Homework

“For the scripture says to the Pharaoh, *“For this purpose I have raised you up, that I may show My power in you, and that my name be declared in all the earth.”* (Rom 9:17)

- Is God being Fair in His treatment to Pharaoh? Explain as you understood from the lesson.

PROJECT for Soteriology

What was the striving of the thief that made him gain Salvation?

Explain your answers in one page summary.
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