

Scriptures and Doctrine :: Ephesians 1: Thoughts on Predestination

Ephesians 1: Thoughts on Predestination - posted by Trekker, on: 2012/10/14 11:29

Reading in Eph. 1 on predestination. Many say that only those who are predestined will be saved, and this doctrine causes much grief to some and opposition to Calvinism. But is the predestination spoken of in Ephesians a CORPORATE predestination or an INDIVIDUAL predestination?

By corporate i would mean that God has predestined to inherit eternal life anyone/all who will believe, whomever they may be. By individual predestination it would mean that certain individuals have been personally selected and predestined by God to be saved. I don't think it can be both; one precludes the other.

If it is a corporate predestination then the argument against Calvinism on this ground is wiped out and much of Calvinism can be accepted by those who have heretofore rejected it based on this one very hot, disturbing issue. Many have wondered why John 3:16 says that "God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son that ****whosoever**** believes in him shall not perish" when Ephesians 1 teaches predestination. Could it be that the error is in misunderstanding the type of predestination? i.e. corporate vs. individual.

But maybe i am wrong. Does anyone have anything to suggest that it cannot be a corporate predestination which is alluded to in scripture rather than individual?

Re: Ephesians 1: Thoughts on Predestination - posted by Heydave (), on: 2012/10/14 12:26

Trekker,

I would agree with your view that the predestination spoken of in Ephesians is corporate in that it applies to all who are 'in Christ'.

A common theme and phrase in Ephesians is 'in Christ' or 'in Him'. Everything we have is because we are 'in Him'. Salvation is 'in Christ'. Not something given to us as though it were ours separately from Christ. 'He who has the Son has life. He who does not have the Son does not have life'.

That's all I'm going to contribute to this topic as I don't want to get onto debates about Calvinism or such like.

Re: Ephesians 1: Thoughts on Predestination - posted by InTheLight (), on: 2012/10/14 15:13

The first chapter of Ephesians is an astounding glimpse into the very heart of the Father before He ever created the world. It is a revelation of the purpose hidden in His Father-heart and therefore 'predestination' here relates to God's eternal purpose in creating mankind.

It is corporate, He marked out for Himself a vast family, and this purpose is now being realized through His only begotten Son.

WHO: "He" - God the Father (v.3)

WHAT: "chose us" - picked us out as sons for His family(v.4-5)

HOW: "in Him" - Christ, the eternal Son involved in all aspects (vv. 3,4,5,6,7,10)

WHEN: "before the foundation of the world" (v.4)

WHY: "for Himself" - as His own for His pleasure, glory, and satisfaction (v.5)

WHERE: "that we should be before Him" - in His immediate presence (v.4)

In Christ,

Ron

Re: - posted by Trekker, on: 2012/10/14 17:26

Wow, some great responses you guys, thanx. So i'm right then, it IS corporate... So then i don't understand why some people hold to the position that it is individual. Isn't that what traditional Calvinists believe also, that it is individual? And isn't that what creates the arguments between the Calvinists and non-Calvs? Yet if it IS corporate then that wipes all the debates and arguments and disagreements between the two camps; there should be no more problem, right? I confess though that i don't know too much about Calvinism (or rather i can't remember every one of the 5 points nor do i really care much i guess). I just think a lot of misunderstandings about a lot of doctrines come from not realizing that sometimes God is referring to people corporately vs. individually or vice versa. I hold that the same is true for the sermon on the mount, but there God is speaking in terms of individuals, not corporately. Some people think the sermon on the mount means we should not have a death penalty for heinous crimes and that we should not ever go to war. But God meant the sermon on the mount for individual (and church family) behavior, in my understanding, not for how the state/nation should necessarily conduct itself in matters of government. Cuz if the corporate/government were to follow the sermon on the mount in all things then no one would take any action against the lawless.

Re: Ephesians 1: Thoughts on Predestination - posted by twayneb (), on: 2012/10/15 13:43

I have never thought of it in terms of corporate vs. individual before. But that certainly fits with the perspective I get when I read it.

Obviously Paul is speaking as a believer to believers. In that context, Paul says something to the effect of, "Wow guys. Isn't it such a blessing from God that He determined before the foundation of the world to offer us the adoption of children through the sacrifice of His Son, and that he has given us such grace that we are now accepted by Him." To me, this passage has nothing to do with any kind of personal predestination, either for or against that doctrine. It is Paul stating the great blessing that God chose to offer salvation through His Son before the foundation of the world. Since Paul is a believer and is writing to believers, obviously he would use such language as "us" rather than to say something like, "those who believe", or, "whosoever".

Any time we stand on opposite sides of an issue and hurl our proof texts across the fence, there is, in my opinion, about a 99% chance that both of us are wrong somewhere because we do not have the full counsel of scripture. In this case, I think the verses do not speak at all to either Cal. or Arm. perspectives.

Just my take. I think the term "corporate" might be a good term in this case.

Re: - posted by TMK (), on: 2012/10/15 17:28

trekker wrote:

"So i'm right then, it IS corporate... So then i don't understand why some people hold to the position that it is individual."

Because calvinists have other proof texts than this one, like Paul's reference in Rom 9 to jacob and esau-- "Jacob I have loved, Esau I hated."

So, in other words, the debate doesn't end in how you interpret Eph. (I happen to agree that it is corporate election).

As others have stated, these discussions are ultimately unfruitful because both sides have their proof texts and belief systems and are simply difficult to sway either way, and I believe the moderators are wise in not letting them take root and grow into monstrosities.

Re: - posted by jimp, on: 2012/10/15 19:22

hi, most things stated about predestination are foolish. it is something that God does and only God and man knows little or nothing about it. argueing over this topic is like argueing over a door being an entrance or an exit.jimp

Re: - posted by PaulWest (), on: 2012/10/15 20:36

I'm shutting this thread down before it becomes a monster. This ancient mystery cannot be resolved without a tug-o-war of scripture to where the Gordian Knot of predestination remains in the middle and both sides pulling usually end up in the mud pit. I would spare us all from getting dirty.

Some topics are to be approached with wisdom and discretion and this is one of them. Our experience here is that the majority of people who get involved in these discussions are not mature enough to handle the subject matter without becoming emotionally involved. Thank you for understanding this dear brethren.

Brother Paul