

PREVAILING LOVE

A STUDY ON DIVINE PREDESTINATION



Aim:

Enlarge and humble our hearts to stand in greater awe of God and rejoice more intently in His love.

Overview

INTRODUCTION
Agapēology

THE WILL: FREE OR FETTERED
Divine Sovereignty and Human
Responsibility

ELECTION
Chosen in and for Christ

REPROBATION
Unchosen: Clearing
Misconceptions and Clarifying
the Gospel

PREDESTINATION

- Measuring this Love
- Meditating on this Love
- Moving on this Love

CONCLUSION
Delighting in God's Prevailing
Love

Man's Will: Free or Fettered

An Introduction to **Voluntarism** and **Compatibilism**

The Apparent Problem

The Bible calls man to choose and says that God chooses

"I do not believe that [unconditional election] can be defended from Scripture. God has given each and every person an ability to choose life and death (Dt 30:19)."

Douglas Hamp

I call heaven and earth to witness against you today,
that I have set before you life and death,
blessing and curse. Therefore choose life,
that you and your offspring may live.

Deuteronomy 30:19

And if it is evil in your eyes to serve the LORD, choose this day whom you will serve, whether the gods your fathers served in the region beyond the River, or the gods of the Amorites in whose land you dwell. But as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD.

Joshua 24:15

O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the city that kills the prophets
and stones those who are sent to it! How often would I
have gathered your children together as a hen gathers her
brood under her wings, and you were not willing!

Matthew 23:37

For if I do this of my own will, I have a reward, but if not of my own will, I am still entrusted with a stewardship.

1 Corinthians 9:17

I preferred to do nothing without your consent in order that your goodness might not be by compulsion but of your own accord.

Shepherd the flock of God that is among you, exercising oversight, not under compulsion, but willingly, as God would have you; not for shameful gain, but eagerly

1 Peter 5:2

Categories of Decision Making

- Fatalism
- Indeterminism
- Autonomy (Self-Determinism)
- Theonomy (Compatibilism)

God's Sovereignty

The reality of God ruling over His creation, including the wills of His creatures

Look at the birds of the air: they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they?

Matthew 6:26

Our God is in the heavens; he does all that he pleases.

Psalm 115:3

In him we have obtained an inheritance, having been
predestined according to the purpose of him who works
all things according to the counsel of his will

Ephesians 1:11

At the end of the days I, Nebuchadnezzar, lifted my eyes to heaven, and my reason returned to me, and I blessed the Most High, and praised and honored him who lives forever, for his dominion is an everlasting dominion, and his kingdom endures from generation to generation; all the inhabitants of the earth are accounted as nothing, and he does according to his will among the host of heaven and among the inhabitants of the earth; and none can stay his hand or say to him, “What have you done?”

Daniel 4:34–35

Would you therefore wait till they were grown? Would you therefore refrain from marrying? No, my daughters, for it is exceedingly bitter to me for your sake that the hand of the LORD has gone out against me.

Ruth 1:13

She said to them, “Do not call me Naomi; call me Mara,
for the Almighty has dealt very bitterly with me.”

Ruth 1:20

Is a trumpet blown in a city, and the people are not afraid?
Does disaster come to a city,
unless the LORD has done it?

Amos 3:6

The heart of man plans his way,
but the LORD establishes his steps.

Proverbs 16:9

I know, O LORD, that the way of man is not in himself,
that it is not in man who walks to direct his steps.

Jeremiah 10:23

He turned their hearts to hate his people,
to deal craftily with his servants.

Psalms 105:25

for he does not afflict from his heart
or grieve the children of men.

Lamentations 3:33

Who has spoken and it came to pass,
unless the Lord has commanded it?

Lamentations 3:37

Voluntarism

The desires of man's heart are accountable to God

Voluntarism

- Man is morally responsible
- "ought" is not conditioned on "able"
- Guilt is attributed to **intentions** and **desires**
- We are accountable on the basis of our wanting, not on the basis of our ability or options

The LORD saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every **intention** of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.

Genesis 6:5

Effects of the Fall

God's Holiness meets Man's Sinfulness

Historic Views of the Fall

Pelagian:

- Man is spiritually **unaffected** (no corrupted nature)
- Adam is simply a bad example

Semi-Pelagian:

- Man is spiritually **wounded**, but not dead
- Adam's sin is a hereditary disease

Arminian:

- Man is spiritually **corrupted**, but neutralized by Christ's atonement
- Adam corrupted himself and all his posterity

Augustinian:

- Man is spiritually **dead**

Effects of the Fall

- **Corruption** – human nature is polluted by sin, being rendered spiritual dead and incapable of change, involving the whole person in extent and the whole human race in scope
- **Guilt** – personally inherited a sinful status before God
- **Punishment** – liable to the just consequences of sin

How can you speak good,
when you are evil?

Matthew 12:34

Man's Corruption

1. The Natural Mind is **Fallen** (Ps 94:11)
2. The Natural Mind is **Futile** (Eph 4:17)
3. The Natural Mind is **Deceitful** (Jer 17:9)
4. The Natural Mind is **Debased** (Rom 1:28)
5. The Natural Mind is **Darkened** (Eph 4:18)
6. The Natural Mind is **Hostile** (Col 1:21)
7. The Natural Mind is **Incurably Sick** (Jer 17:9)
8. The Natural Mind is **Dead** (Eph 2:1)

And you were dead in the trespasses and sins ² in which you once walked, following the course of this world, following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience-- ³ among whom we all once lived in the passions of our flesh, carrying out the desires of the body and the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, like the rest of mankind.

Ephesians 2:1-3

Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity, and in sin did my
mother conceive me.

(cf. Gen 8:21; Ps 58:3)

Psalms 51:5

for all have sinned
and fall short of the glory of God

Romans 3:23

for there is no one who does not sin

1 Kings 8:46

They have all turned aside; together they have become corrupt; there is none who does good, not even one.

Psalm 14:3

Who can say,
"I have made my heart pure; I am clean from my sin"?

Proverbs 20:9

...

(For all peoples, both Jews and Gentiles)

Romans 1:18-3:20

The LORD saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every intention of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.

Genesis 6:5

for the intention of man's heart is evil from his youth.

Genesis 8:21

We have all become like one who is unclean, and all our righteous deeds are like a polluted garment. We all fade like a leaf, and our iniquities, like the wind, take us away.

Isaiah 64:6

To the pure, all things are pure, but to the defiled and unbelieving, nothing is pure; but both their minds and their consciences are defiled.

Titus 1:15

The natural person does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are folly to him, and he is not able to understand them because they are spiritually discerned.

1 Corinthians 2:14

For the mind that is set on the flesh is hostile to God, for it does not submit to God's law; indeed, it cannot.

Romans 8:7

Nature of Man

- *posse peccare* – **pre-Fall**
- *non posse non peccare* – **post-Fall**
- *posse non peccare* – **Regenerate**
- *non posse peccare* – **Glorified**

Compatibilism

The Harmony of Divine Sovereignty and Human Responsibility

Divine and Human Wills

		God	
		Free	Constrained
Man	Free	Compatibilism	Libertarian Free Will
	Constrained	Fatalism	Indeterminism

*He chose us in him before the
foundation of the world*
Ephesians 1:4



*I call heaven and earth to
witness against you today, that
I have set before you life and
death, blessing and curse.
Therefore choose life*
Deuteronomy 30:19

Both are true but both cannot fit into the other.



*The heart of man plans his way,
but the LORD establishes his steps.*
Proverbs 16:9

Fatalism

- Human choice is illusory
- Incompatible with human choice
- Man has no choice
- Hard-determinism

Libertarian Free Will

- Ability to do something or not
- Incompatible with determinism
- Man's choices override God's
- Indeterminism

*Voluntarism (Free Agency)

- Ability to do what you want
- Compatible with determinism
- Man's choices cooperate with God's
- Soft-determinism

Consecrate yourselves, therefore, and be holy,
for I am the LORD your God.

Leviticus 20:7

Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, so now, not only as in my presence but much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God who works in you, both to will and to work for his good pleasure.

Philippians 2:12–13

And the Lord said to Paul one night in a vision, “Do not be afraid, but go on speaking and do not be silent, for I am with you, and no one will attack you to harm you, for I have many in this city who are my people.”

Acts 18:9–10

Woe to Assyria, the rod of my anger; the staff in their hands is my fury! Against a godless nation I send him, and against the people of my wrath I command him, to take spoil and seize plunder, and to tread them down like the mire of the streets.

Isaiah 10:5–6

But he does not so intend, and his heart does not so think;
but it is in his heart to destroy, and to cut off nations not a
few;

Isaiah 10:7

When the Lord has finished all his work on Mount Zion
and on Jerusalem, he will punish the speech of the
arrogant heart of the king of Assyria and the boastful look
in his eyes.

Isaiah 10:12

For he says: “By the strength of my hand I have done it,
and by my wisdom, for I have understanding; I remove
the boundaries of peoples, and plunder their treasures; like
a bull I bring down those who sit on thrones.”

Isaiah 10:13

But Joseph said to them, “Do not fear, for am I in the place of God? As for you, you meant evil against me, but God meant it for good, to bring it about that many people should be kept alive, as they are today.”

Genesis 50:19–20

And now do not be distressed or angry with yourselves
because you sold me here,
for God sent me before you to preserve life.

Genesis 45:5

he had sent a man ahead of them,
Joseph, who was sold as a slave.

Psalms 105:17

And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose.

Romans 8:28

Biblical Principles Concerning Free Will

- 1) The Bible never declares man to be free in an absolute sense
 - The choices of man are not free from causality
 - "The heart of man plans his way, but the LORD establishes his steps" (Proverbs 16:9)
 - "He turned their hearts to hate his people, to deal craftily with his servants" (Psalm 105:25)
- 2) God is specifically sovereign (Ps 115:3; 135:6; Rom 8:28; Eph 1:11)
- 3) God is omniscient (knows future events)

Biblical Principles Concerning Free Will

- 4) God foreordains ends (predetermines certain outcomes)
- 5) People do not have libertarian free will in heaven
- 6) God does not have a libertarian free will

	Autonomy	Theonomy
Freedom of the Will	Libertarian free will	Free agency
God’s Sovereignty	General	Specific
God’s Foreknowledge	Function of timelessness	Function of foreordination
God’s Determinism	Rejects	Affirms
Man’s Determinism	Affirms	Rejects
Grace	Prevenient	Effectual
Accountability	Man’s ability	God’s righteousness
God’s sovereignty and man’s responsibility	Incompatible	Compatible

Response

- No human being may boast
- The redeemed may glory in God
- The redeemed may rest in the sovereign grace of God

The sum of salvation in Christ is this:
God's prevailing love.

Enlarge and humble our hearts to stand in greater awe of God and rejoice more intently in His love.