

Can the Dead be Living?

An analysis of selected scriptures from Ephesians and Colossians, with cross-references to other books of the bible and selected commentaries, pertaining to predestination and the validity of the free will of man.

The question about predestination and the free will of man has been debated and argued for centuries. It is doubtless that this essay will provide any “new” material. However, it was felt that such an essay was necessary to more adequately express the conclusions and methods which were used to obtain those conclusions, regarding the “Dead to Sin” argument much used by Calvinists and the like, to which the author has come over the course of his studies.

This essay hopes to directly analyze one very specific proposition and conclusion of the whole predestination argument. What is meant by predestination? Simply the concept or theology of “absolute determinism,” that is to say, the idea of God supernaturally and providentially predetermining the whole of the lives of all of creation and every minute detail thereof, before the creation of the world we inhabit. This essay seeks to directly focus on the idea of “predestination of salvation”, or, the specific concept of God predetermining the salvation or damnation of every individual before “the foundation of the earth.” More specifically, this essay will handle only a small portion of this concept, which is the concept of “death through sin.”

For a more precise understanding of the “why” of this essay, the following will provide a brief narrative of the circumstances and situations leading up to the start of the creation of this essay. It is hoped that through this narrative a more specific understanding of the topic of this essay will be comprehended.

1: The Start of This Essay

1.1: Confederation of Reformed Evangelicals

The author’s family has a long history of unorthodox church attendance. It was always assumed during the childhood and most of the development period of the author that churches were a good, but ultimately specific habit. It was the general consensus that church—meaning the general habit of attending a service and sermon, in addition to Sunday School, in a set schedule every week—was something which could help and assist people with their lives, but that it was wholly unnecessary for salvation.

This resulted in quite a fluxuation of church attendance in the author’s childhood. At times church was a regular habit of the family which would be held sternly in place. At other times, church attendance was limited, under the logic that studying at home was much more essential.

In the more recent years, the author had not regularly attended a church service for some time. There were so few in the area providing the deep spiritual and theological level which the author enjoyed and by which the author was strengthened. However, it was felt that a church might be good to attend.

So, the hunt for a church began. Under some parallel circumstances, a “CRE” church was recommended to the author by numerous individuals. Since there was a start-up church in the vicinity, the author’s family decided to attend.

It was a large departure from the traditional methods of worship to which the author was accustomed. The structure and rigidity was refreshing. However, the theology was radically different than that which was held by the author at the time. If the author had decided to never attend there again, nothing would likely have come of it.

However, the author enjoyed the service well enough that a second and third visit began a habit. His family did not attend, finding the atomsphere and theology either too radical or too antithetical to their beliefs to be of any help. The author, though theologically different at the time, decided to continue attendance.

The main difference in theology was the belief in “predestination” by the CRE members, and the adement refusal to believe such on the part of the author. Debates were inevitable, and quite a few came of it. They were deep, but largely unorganised.

1.2: YMCA—for your brain

At about the same time, the author was being pressed by some of his online friends to create an interactive version of the personal website he currently maintained. The author decided to present a radical

change to the website and start the forum which is now called “YMCA—for your brain”. Being the philosopher which he is, the author immediately included a philosophy board. This board’s main thread was the “Predestination” thread. Most of the CRE members began posting to the thread, and it was very active for a time.

Large numbers of people began to discuss this topic online, and the author began to become very interested in more deeply and soundly understanding the truth of the matter. The author was moved by the arguments of some of the posters, and set about to discover what precisely could be found out through scriptural understanding alone.

1.3: Predestination

For the most part, various arguments were used with various success on either side. The specific topic was the predestination of salvation. Did God predestinate, before birth or the creation of earth, the salvation or damnation of every man ever to be created or that will be created? This assumed a few things:

- A) that God knew that man would sin and fall.
- B) that God specifically controls man’s actions and his path as well as the ultimate destination of his soul.
- C) that God has every action that will ever be, or that has been committed by any human soul, predetermined, predestined, or foreknown in a specific and explicit sense.

When specifically taking into consideration the salvation of man, one argument came up as the first and last argument always used. It was consistently and universally applied by anyone to whom the author talked who was an admitted Calvinist. It is an admittedly strong argument. The validity and truth of this argument could easily provide a strong foundation, or single-handedly cripple, the concept of predestination. (From now on, when the author refers to predestination, he refers to the concept of predestined salvation before the foundation of the earth in an explicit manner by God.)

1.4: Dead and Drowned

This argument is as follows:

Man is a dead being in his sinful nature, and in this death, he is completely incapable of any right action of his own will. Any action is impossible, since he is dead, and cannot take any individual or free action of his own accord. The analogy is that of a drowned man at the bottom of a lake. Such a man would be incapable of surfacing even if he so wanted to do so, because he is already dead, and any motor functions he may have possessed, they have ceased to function. Thus, in order for such a man to be saved, he must be brought back to life through external action and drawn up out of the water.

Such an action would in no way be related to him. The drowned man would not be able to do anything, that is, to grab, move, or reach for any form of assistance. He would need to be entirely moved and brought out of the lake, by external influences.

This concept is important for two reasons. It would provide adequate evidence in favor of predestination, and in ultimate and explicit foreknowledge. These two concepts are intricately connected. Disproving one ultimately disproves one or subjects it to severe suspicion.

As can be seen, this argument, and the verses called upon to prove it, are well used by the Calvinists and those who believe likewise. The author was most intrigued by the concept, and in the verses called out to prove them. This is the thread which finally prompted the author to create this essay:

1.4.1: The Thread

noorah (Aaron Hsu)

It has been my thought to study predestination recently. I thought I would put my preliminary findings up here. Of course, there are still so many things to work on, none of these findings are to me 100% conclusive either way.

First thing I ought to do is to define the two terms which I will use throughout. Predestination, which I take as one side, is the thought that God has foreordained certain individuals before the creation of the

world that are either doomed to the depths of hell, or destined for the lights of heaven. That is to say, he has chosen individual people by name and person who will live unto salvation and be saved by the grace of God, and those not saved, which shall inherit the fires of hell. This is the main term I shall focus on. I shall not focus on the drastic differences in those who believe in "free will," as it is too broad a topic to narrow into this topic. Instead, I will simply attempt to determine if Predestination as defined above, is true according to the rules of logic and the scriptures.

One axiom which I am assuming is that the Words of God as layed down are the infallible words of God. That there is no inconsistency, no error, and no misconstruction in its language. At the moment, I shall assume this to be true with the KJV; but in my next steps, I shall assume that the KJV is errant, and that only the greek and hebrew of the original, in their original meanings is inerrant.

Now, my first action shall be to logically deduce everything I can from the definition of Predestination as stated above. This will provide us with a more reasonable platform for understanding. If one of the deductions of the first supposition is incorrect, or false, then the entire supposition must also be false for if it were true, then all the deduced supposition must inherently be true. So, in order to disprove it [there is no hope, I believe, in so early a stage, to prove predestination], we need only find one of the suppositions which follow from it to be false, and the entire supposition is debunked.

Here are the main suppositions:

- M. God predestines the eternal destinies of all individuals.
 1. God has foreordained particular individuals for salvation.
 2. God has foreordained particular individuals for spiritual death.

The first supposition is our prime supposition, being the main statement. The second is the logical opposite when we consider the following assumed axiom:

- * There are only two ultimate destinies for the human soul. Either to salvation through Christ, or to condemnation and hell.

I assume the reader is smart enough to reason the presuppositions which follow this axiom, so I shall go no further in its discussion.

Deduction #1:

- A: God has foreordained particular individuals for salvation.
- B.a: God is more powerful than man.
- B.b: A being less powerful than another cannot deter the greater being from doing something.
- B.c: Man and God are beings.
- B.d: Ergo, No man can alter anything God has foreordained to occur.
- C: Ergo, No individual can alter the salvation of an individual.

Deduction #2:

- A: God has foreordained particular individuals for salvation.
- B: God does not do anything which is not his plan or will.
- C: Ergo, God wills that some individuals shall be saved.

Deduction #3:

- A: God has foreordained particular individuals for spiritual death.
- 2.B: God does not do anything which is not his will.
- C: Ergo, God wills that some individuals shall be condemned to spiritual death.

Deduction #4:

- A: Spiritual death and salvation are mutually exclusive.
- 2.C: God wills that some individuals shall be saved.

3.C: God wills that some individuals shall be condemned to spiritual death.

All individuals are either saved or condemned.

B: Ergo, God wills individuals to either condemnation or salvation, but not both, and no other ultimate end.

Now we can proceed with analysis of these deductions.

Rules Of Analysis

To disprove a deduction there must be either one false statement in the logic [if one statement is false, the whole argument is false], or there must be at least three verses in the Bible stating something to the contrary of the conclusion of the deduction. If any one of the suppositions within the deduction is proved false, then the deduction is false.

A deduction may also be disproved if the argument is invalid, that is, a fallacy.

Analysis of Deduction #1:

A: N/A, assumed true.
 B: No verses found, assumed true.
 C: True

Analysis of Deduction #2:

A: N/A. assumed true.
 B: No verses found, true.
 C: True.

Analysis of Deduction #3:

A: N/A, assumed true.
 2.B True, see above.
 C: Verses found —

Jn. 3:16—“For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him, should not perish but have everlasting life.”

1 Tim. 2:4—“Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth.”

2 Pet. 3:9—“The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance,”

Rev. 22:17—“And the Spirit and the bride say, Come, And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will let him take the water of life freely.”

Note: this last verse could be taken to mean those already saved. This is a stretch however.

Analysis of Deduction #4:

A: True.
 2.C: True.
 3.C: False.
 *: True.
 B: False, nominally. The statement could still be considered true though it would mean that one option was entirely impossible, effectively meaning that God only calls those to be saved.

Analysis of falsities:

Deduction #4 is a false argument only because deduction #3 is. So, if we can determine what is wrong with #3, we shall have our answer.

3.C was the statement found to be false. It is a conclusion. It relies on only two other statements. If 3.B is false, that means that God sometimes does do things which are not his will. However, I cannot think of a single instance in which God did do something of his own power that went against his will.

Rather, there is a proactive argument for the contrary taking what we learn from the verses.

Anti-deduction #5:

2.B: God does not do anything that is not his will to do.

A: God does not will that any should perish, or be condemned to death.

B: Ergo, God does not foreordain certain individuals for Spiritual Death.

Conclusions:

It seems that to say that God foreordains every individual to an eternal destination is false, for proposition #2 is false. However, this does not preclude the statement that some men God foreordains to salvation. This, of course, says nothing about condemnation however. It also does not apply to every person. We can verily say that:

A: Since God does not foreordain people to condemnation,

B: and since some people will be condemned to spiritual death,

C: ergo, God does not predestine the eternal destiny of every individual.

Of course, this says nothing about particular election, which is an issue for another analysis.

I now subpoena for all comments, notes, and attacks on the logic and validity of these arguments. Please, tear it apart, but do so logically, and with propriety.

PrincessMikki (Sarah Swetnam)

I posted this on my LJ awhile back. One of my favorite quotes on predestination...

“...All answers deceive. If ye put the question from within Time and are asking about possibilities, the answer is certain. The choice of ways is before you. Neither is closed. Any man may choose eternal death. Those who choose it will have it. But if ye are trying to see the final state of all things as it will be (for so ye must speak) when there are no more possibilities left but only the Real, then ye ask what cannot be answered to mortal ears. Time is the very lens through which ye see - small and clear, as men see through the wrong end of a telescope - something that would otherwise be too big for ye to see at all. That thing is Freedom: the gift whereby ye most resemble your Maker and are yourselves parts of eternal reality. But ye can see it only through the lens of Time, in a little clear picture, through the inverted telescope. It is a picture of moments following one another and yourself in each moment making some choice that might have been otherwise. Neither the temporal succession nor the phantom of what ye might have chosen and didn't is itself Freedom. They are a lens. The picture is a symbol: but it's truer than any philosophical theorem (or, perhaps, than any mystic's vision) that claims to go behind it. For every attempt to see the shape of eternity except through the lens of Time destroys your knowledge of Freedom. Witness the doctrine of Predestination which shows (truly enough) that eternal reality is not waiting for a future in which to be real; but at the price of removing Freedom which is the deeper truth of the two...Ye cannot know eternal reality by a definition. Time itself, and all acts and events that fill Time, are the definition, and it must be lived...How long could ye bear to look (without Time's lens) on the greatness of your own soul and the eternal reality of her choice?”

C.S. Lewis - The Great Divorce

noorah (Aaron Hsu)

Bravo Princess, you have officially ousted [whatever that means] me. And I thought I was hard to understand! Hehe, I'm going to be sitting here reading for some time before I fully understand what in the

world that quote is saying. Hehe. I suppose it's time for me to start pulling out the dictionary and such, I've sentences to diagram!

MissLizzy (Elizabeth Swetnam)

Bravo Princess, you have officially ousted [whatever that means] me.

I pretty much told her the same thing. LOL C.S. Lewis wrote some really good stuff - I mean, he was brilliant and all - but he can really set me back a few steps, wondering what in the world he's saying. All I can say about this quote is...um...I think I agree with it. I'm surprised you had a hard time understanding it though.

PrincessMikki (Sarah Swetnam)

Sorry I didnt mean to oust you. Maybe it helps to read it in the full contexteiter way, its one of those quotes you have to meditate on to really grasp. I think his point here can be best summarized by quoting him were he says:

“Witness the doctrine of Predestination which shows (truly enough) that eternal reality is not waiting for a future in which to be real; but at the price of removing Freedom which is the deeper truth of the two.”

I definitely believe in Predestination, finding it to be scriptural. But I think what he is saying here is very profound: we are IN time; God is infinite (outside of time). To take away our perspective within time (the “telescope” view), were trying to live outside of time, which takes away the “Freedom” he speaks of, which we could say is the ability to choose: “Ye can see it only through the lens of Time, in a little clear picture, through the inverted telescope. It is a picture of moments following one another and yourself in each moment making some choice that might have been otherwise.” Thats the lense. This might sound contradictory to the predestination view, but it really isnt : obviously, I can choose right now to delete everything I just wrote here. Thats the “within time” perspective. I believe that every decision we make is important, and that it all contributes to our sanctification: but I dont believe anything we do changes Gods plan, that He is sovereign, that He foreknew, foreordained, and elected...“That God works half, and man the other half, is false; that God works all, and man does all, is true.”—John Duncan

I'm sure a lot of Calvinists would disagree with may take on this subject, but really I think there's such a fine line between the Arminian and Calvinist view on this, half the time they're agreeing and don't even realize it because of the way it's being communicated. I've come to the point were I just say: live, do God's will, and let God be God...I don't think we were meant to fully understand the Infinite. Not that we shouldn't try, but sometimes it get's to the point were it's fruitless, and we lose ballance in our focus.

Hope that made some sense. I'll stop now.

noorah (Aaron Hsu)

Oh now[sic], we don't want you to stop (well, I can't speak for everyone)! I find your take on it quite interesting, and it's a neat way to look at things. I'm of the opinion that to get a solid opinion on this topic that would satisfy my cravings, I will have to read the whole bible through at least, in one or two months time maximum, and then to study the key verses in Hebrew and Greek. After that time, I may have come to some sort of a conclusion, but until then, I really say that there are so many extrapolations and unproven theories that I can't seem to make heads or tails of it all.

Oh, and yes, I did have a hard to figuring this one out, probably because I haven't had the need to visually diagram a sentence in my mind for some time. I think it threw me for a little loop. Hehe. Reading it over made more sense.

The part that gets me is not whether or not God predestines, as it is obvious that He predestines events, otherwise the details in the prophecies would not have been. What I question is the amount that He predestines. I have to wonder if He really does predestine every action to occur in its place and time down to the very thoughts that a person will think, or is he predestining his plan and putting it into action according the methods He provides for Himself, not necessarily forcing every exact thing to happen with robotic precision.

Of course, the idea of the lenses brings up another big thought in my mind. For me to believe in choice, I have to believe that that choice is proliferated throughout all beings and throughout all things. So for me

to believe that we really have choice, I, at least right now, have to believe that God Himself cannot explicitly know the outcome: that is, to see exactly what it will be as being outside of time. Of course, therein lies my troubles. If God knows the outcome explicitly, as though He were outside of time, it means that in essence there is no choice. For what choice is there but what God has foreseen? It brings to mind the following theoretical scenario: God comes down, tells you that on some exact day, and at some exact time, you will do such and such and say this word. Now, of course, if you really have choice in my understanding of the word, or Freedom if you will so call it, then it must be possible for you to not say that word at that time. But if God hath foreseen it, what then is His power of foresight if we can change it? So then, of course, we should not be able to change it, but then, if we must do that thing, and are predestined to it, then we must as a consequence not have a choice in the matter, and not have the freedom to choose right or left.

Mr. Lewis seems to provide a different explanation of it, as though Freedom were scoped, in the programming definition of the word. That's an interesting take on it. I'll have to look into it further.

I also find a stunning analogy of these topics portrayed in the Silmarillion. Not that this is how it really is, but imagine the same situation. Some people describe God's foreknowledge in the same way as Tolkien describes the knowledge of Illuvitar. Now, if you read the Silmarillion's first book, you see that all things work for his plan, which is laid out quite plainly in the 3 themes of the first song of Illuvitar. But Melkor attempts to change the song for his will, and instead Illuvitar rises up to create the second and third themes which take all that Melkor has sung, and weaves it ever together into his plan. Now, that whole song is played out in the creation and living of Ea, the world.

Do the Valar, the Maiar, and the Children of Illuvitar have a choice? If all things are set out according to the plan of Illuvitar, what choice do they have? Or, [semantics] is it that all the choices the Illuvitar make, for what end or for what purpose, are made and set to fit into the ultimate plan of Illuvitar? I guess I use this analogy because it's a bit easier for me to look at it from the well laid out ideas of Tolkien than the not really laid out much view which is shown in the Bible.

Oh! the confusion!!

Oh, here's another thought as well. If God does see time in it's infinite, then he must see those who will reject him. However, if as I have deduced from the first two posts in this thread, that God will not any to perish, and that He [essentially] does not do anything which is not his will, then it seems to me that He purposely does not do anything to affect the choice of man in these matters. However, if He predestines men like that, it seems that he would be changing the courses of time to fit the way He wants it to be, but he doesn't want any to perish, so then how does he predestine condemnation? And if he can see into the future and predestine, it seems to me that the will of men would mean nothing, and so would he predestine all to salvation, as would seem to go with the other verses of the Bible. This probably won't make any sense, but I don't see how predestination and time can ever go together, yet they are inseparable. If He does not will anyone to perish, and knows who will turn and who will not, and predestines, either he cannot change time, and so cannot change the minds of people, or he does not predestine. Ack! I just make no sense, because I guess this thought makes no sense. It just seems that I see an inherent contradiction there. Where's the Swetnam dad come to clear things up

By the way, I have noticed that no one has directly approached my argument in the first two posts? Are we scared. Or perhaps I don't make sense and need to clarify some things? Or perhaps no one took the time to read it [no!!, I don't believe that at all]? Someone's got to have some opinion on my reasoning at the top! I would like to see if it makes any sense at all.

PrincessMikki (Sarah Swetnam)

Oh gracious! Either you're thinking too hard, or that's just normal for you and it's overloading my brain. Actually, a good friend and I have been hashing this subject for years, trying to logically debate our way to an answer. And the outcome has been, for both of us, the conclusion that our finite little brains can't get this stuff. When you try to logically think through our subject of discussion, there is no end to the collisions and contradictions. Because logic has it's limits (- even if it's not always something we want to admit!! "Die, die, human pride!!"). I think sometimes we have to just trust God with the amount of knowledge He has given to us - just as we have to trust Him with other things we don't understand in our daily lives. Seeking and frying one's brain to the point of no return are very different things (and I realize what fries one and what fries another are all relative).

But yes, a talk with Mr. Swetnam is always a good plan. And I admit to not reading the original post that all of this stemmed from - unless skimming counts! And Lizzy told me what she thought...I'll read it later though. For now I think I'll go put my brain in the freezer for a couple hours. Of course cooling it down with some ice cream is a more appealing idea....

Hannah

You guys are exploding *my* brains! I think I need to go eat ice cream all day! Man, I don't think I should even start to try to understand all this or it would take me the rest of the day...(it takes me a while to understand things..even simple stuff...yes I'm slow) So I think when I have a whole day to do nothing I will sit on here and *try* to comprehend it all...and try to understand all you smart scholars.

noorah (Aaron Hsu)

I don't know about scholars, but I think that this issue is simply so deep routed into the very nature of the way we think about God that to think about it on a completely "intellectual" level without any bias is almost impossible. Then, of course, when one cannot think about something with entire neutrality, then one finds that there are all sorts of contradictions no matter where someone goes.

Now, as far as frying brains, I think that it's not good, though I do admit to my fair share. Although, I think the whole fasting thing is a pretty good way to handle it at times. Your brain no longer has food with which to fry itself, and so it opens up to the Lord!

PrincessMikki (Sarah Swetnam)

LOL - Hannah, you are so cute. Hey, ANY excuse to grab some ice cream is worth it. And you know I'm no scholar or genius (think tennis the other day...), so we must obviously conclude I'm looking for the same excuse.

Love you girly...and I'll try to track down that site I promised and send it to you (last time I checked the page wouldn't load). Anyway...I guess this is what private messaging is for, right? Oops.

noorah (Aaron Hsu)

You know, I find steak much better for these kinds of activities than Ice cream. Maybe that with a good bit of Chinese and some Tiromissu[sic]. Delicion[sic]!

MissLizzy (Elizabeth Swetnam)

I did read your posts at the top Aaron, but I don't know if I want to really tackle them. This stuff can go in circles forever without resolving anything, which is why I generally just tell a person to go read a book written by a person much better at explaining things than I. (BTW, you might benefit by reading the first couple chapters of this one: http://www.desiringgod.org/dg/id63_m.htm)

noorah (Aaron Hsu)

Oh, I understand that plenty, that's quite understandable. Hehe, I even expected that for the most part. I am going to be catching up on my reading quite a bit, but the C.S. Lewis quote has given me quite a bit to think about.

And yes, you're right, they can go in circles, because I think there's always some key that people just don't want to see, myself included.

PrincessMikki (Sarah Swetnam)

Finally read your original post. I only took this long to read it to prove I'm not getting addicted to this forum.

I followed your logic and agreed up until the final conclusion. So I'll just throw this out, briefly, to further confuse the topic of discussion (and get everyone mad at me for continuing it instead of putting an end to the ice cream, steak, etc.).

If God does not predestine the eternal destiny of every individual, this must mean a)He does not care about the souls of men, and/or b)He is not powerful enough to. Looking at scripture, I find the conclusion that he does not predestine/choose, itself, contradictory. "...and as many as were appointed to eternal life

believed (Acts 13:47-49), "In love He predestined us." (Eph.1...or 2? It's in one of those, trust me.). But if you're looking for logic, that's the best I can do.

Like Lizzy, though, I tend to just recommend books to people (or tell them to talk to my dad). - For many reasons, but an obvious one is I have the capacity/tendency to make no sense whatsoever.

Charles

Hello, Aaron, Miss Lizzy, PrincessMikki, and Hannah. I saw you discussing one of my favorite subjects, so I thought I'd jump in. I hope I don't fry anyone's brain.

I do believe that God fore-ordained His people to salvation. In my view, it's not God's intention to save everyone, only the Elect.

Romans 8:28-30—"And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose. For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren. Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified."

Ephesians 1:4-5—"According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love: Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will."

Romans 9:15-23—15 For he saith to Moses, I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion. 16 So then it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that sheweth mercy. 17 For the scripture saith unto Pharaoh, Even for this same purpose have I raised thee up, that I might shew my power in thee, and that my name might be declared throughout all the earth. 18 Therefore hath he mercy on whom he will have mercy, and whom he will he hardeneth. 19 Thou wilt say then unto me, Why doth he yet find fault? For who hath resisted his will? 20 Nay but, O man, who art thou that repliest against God? Shall the thing formed say to him that formed it, Why hast thou made me thus? 21 Hath not the potter power over the clay, of the same lump to make one vessel unto honour, and another unto dishonour? 22 What if God, willing to shew his wrath, and to make his power known, endured with much longsuffering the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction: 23 And that he might make known the riches of his glory on the vessels of mercy, which he had afore prepared unto glory,

Now for the verses that Aaron cited.

Jn. 3:16—"For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him, should not perish but have everlasting life."

But who will believe in Him?

Romans 3:10-11(KJV)—"As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one: There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God."

John 6:37—"All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out."

John 6:44—"No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him."

Acts 13:48—"and as many as were ordained to eternal life believed."

Ephesians 2:1-10 (This is one of my favorite passages regarding salvation. Notice how it attributes the regeneration process to God 100%.)

1 And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins; 2 Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience: 3 Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others. 4 But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, 5 Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;) 6 And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus: 7 That in the ages to come he might shew the exceeding riches

of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus. 8 For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: 9 Not of works, lest any man should boast. 10 For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.

Notice the metaphor of God quickening us from the dead. A corpse can't raise itself from the dead, or, for that matter, choose to remain dead if a Higher Power intervenes.

Now for the next one.

1 Tim. 2:4—"Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth."

In the Bible, "all" sometimes means "all sorts of" rather than "all without exception". For example, 1 Timothy 6:10 in the KJV says "the love of money is the root of all evil". While the love of money is certainly the cause of many, many evil acts, it can hardly be said that it is the root of every evil act imaginable (adultery, for instance, usually has nothing to do with money.) The NASB renders it "the love of money is a root of all sorts of evil". The Greek word *pas* translated "all" in both places is 3956 in Strong's Concordance, which gives two definitions:

1. individually 1. each, every, any, all, the whole, everyone, all things, everything 2. collectively
1. some of all types

So while we can't definitively prove from 1 Tim. 2:4 alone which meaning is intended, I believe the second ("all sorts of men") is more consistent with the rest of the Bible. You're free to disagree, of course.

2 Pet. 3:9—"The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance,"

In context, this is explaining why Christ is delaying His return, and a comparison is drawn to Noah's Flood (verses 5 and 6.) The problem with the free-will interpretation (that God is just waiting and hoping that people will repent) is that using this logic, Christ could never return, since more and more unsaved people are living and dying all the time. And thus the longer He tarries, the more people go to Hell. So perhaps there is another explanation. The verse says that God is "longsuffering toward us", so it would seem that the "any" and "all" refer to "us" collectively. So who is "us", in this context? 2 Peter 1:1 says that this epistle is being written "to them that have obtained like precious faith with us through the righteousness of God and our Saviour Jesus Christ". In the above analogy of Noah's Flood, God did not send the waters until everyone He planned to preserve was safely inside the ark. I believe "us" refers to the Elect, including those not yet saved. Christ will only return when He has regenerated each and every one of His chosen people, however many millenia that takes. It may seem as though I'm spinning the verse to fit my preconceived beliefs, but I don't think the logic of the free-will interpretation holds up.

On to the last one (whew!)

Rev. 22:17—"And the Spirit and the bride say, Come, And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will let him take the water of life freely."

Again, who will come? Revelation 2:7 "He that hath an ear, let him hear...." But who has ears to hear? Certainly not a corpse (recall the metaphor in Ephesians 2, among other passages.)

May Our Sovereign Lord Bless You,
Charles

MissLizzy (Elizabeth Swetnam)

Brovo Charles! Thank you for taking the time to expound on those verses, I'm in full agreement with what you shared. You essentially what I would have if I had taken the time to respond, though I'm sure you compiled it a lot better than I would have.

Charles

Brovo Charles! Thank you for taking the time to expound on those verses, I'm in full agreement with what you shared. You essentially what I would have if I had taken the time to respond, though I'm sure you compiled it a lot better than I would have.

It's always nice when someone agrees with me. It took a while to finish. I saved it in Wordpad and then discovered that I had to split it into two posts, since it was too long for one. That wasn't much trouble, though.

noorah (Aaron Hsu)

Oh, I love it Charles. While I do find your logic interesting and intriguing, I have to disagree with you on the idea that it is consistent with the rest of scriptures. I am doing more research into this and in doing so, I have been given a great book.

Like the rest of you, I find recommending good books to read a great way to not reinvent the wheel. This book I have not read all the way through, but it already looks to be a great read, for any side. The book is call "God of the possible." It's not a big book, and I think I will finish reading it soon, and give you my full analysis.

PrincessMikki, my main argument against yours is that it is far easier to control every thing a person does than to enact a plan and bring it to fruition using free agents. Thus, the thought that God does not control fully the ideas of men but instead offers them some freedom does not in fact limit his power, as he could, if he wished to, force all to His will; rather, it shows his power in being able to give freedom and maintain His plan.

My main understanding at this moment is that the Bible seems to support a "partially predestined" view rather than "fully predestined." If we were fully predestined, then we would have no choice, and the verses which talk about God changing his mind, being persuaded, and regretting events, would have to be stretched and interpreted in very non-literal ways in order to make them work. On the other hand, if God does give us freedom, then those verses coincide perfectly with the verses about God foreknowing certain events.

The point is that none of these verses explicitly say that God knows all things, or that he let's all things go to the freedom of others. In fact, to me, neither of those make any sense, in order to provide a choice, there must be something known, or predestined, but if you predestined everything, what use would it be to say things to us as though He were persuading us?

In response to Charles' interpretations of those verses, I would say that the same could be said for Romans 8 and the other verses of foreknowing. They also could be said to point only to those who are already elect. Paul [for example] never states that the thing which is fordestined is salvation. So while I think that you could interpret those verses as "all sorts" or as only those who are elected, I think it makes much more sense to apply a literal translation to all the verses, as we have no reason to believe otherwise.

I think another issue in this whole subject is that people sometimes think one is limiting God if we say that He does not control everything. A key is that we are not saying that God could not, if He wanted to, control everything, but rather, I think that the issue is what kind of things God chooses to foreordain, and what things God chooses to leave open to the wills of others. Of course, he controlls which is which, and he is still soveriegn, but you do not have to control everything to be sovereign; on the contrary, I think it is a great God who is willing to give the choice to some others and still fulfill his plans.

Another thing to add, is that the word Foreknow is used in the same book in a different way than some people take it in Romans 8. If my memory serves me, the actual meaning of this word is much closer to "love" or to know rather than what we think of as foreknowledge. I don't have all the information in front of me, but I'll post again when I do. Again, I also mention that Charles' logic goes both ways, who is He talking about? I would say that in many of these verses, the subject of "us" could very well be the already saved.

When I have more information and more exact quotes, I'll post again.

MissLizzy (Elizabeth Swetnam)

When I saw that you were reading "God of the Possible" it sounded vaguely familiar and I was automatically leery - then the lights went on and I realized that it was by Greg Boyd, one of the well knowns in the heretical "Open Theist" arena. I have a friend who is a stanch open theist and who is having me read

a book on open theism now called “The God who Risks”...the stuff can be very logically persuasive, but it’s just not scriptural.

There is a guy who does reviews on a lot of the open theist books on Amazon.com, his name is James Scott. He makes good points and knows scripture...you should read some of what he and others have to say about the book : http://www.amazon.com/exec/obidos/tg/detail/-/080106290X/ref=cm_rev_next/002-7654013-1897650?v=glance&s=books&vi=customer-reviews&show=-submittime&start-at=11

A really good book against open theism and that discusses free will, predestination and such in a biblical way, is “Beyond the Bounds” by John Piper and others: http://www.desiringgod.org/store/index.cgi?cmd=view_item&parent=&id=344

You should check out more on the [desiringgod.com](http://www.desiringgod.com) site too. Piper is one of the best when it comes to logically and scripturally explaining God’s sovereignty over man and in the world. God has used his ministry to change a lot of my thinking...

noorah (Aaron Hsu)

Thank you very much for your recommendations. I’ll just have to add those to my already growing books on this subject. I think I’m going to have to take up Photoreading again to get it all in. :-D

In reponse to Boyd being more logical and less scriptural, I have to say that from what I have read, and what I have seen, the “Open Theist” view seems a lot closer to a consistent and complete scriptural view than does its opponent. I have read quite a few verses which really seem to make sense only in light of a God that allows for free agency, especially since I believe it is quite scriptural to say that God is honest and forthright, not “tricky.”

MissLizzy (Elizabeth Swetnam)

Iy yi yi...please don’t turn open theist on me, okay? Please, please? I already have a “heretical older brother”, if you don’t mind I’d really rather not have a younger one too. LOL

But seriously, the #1 problem with open theism is that the more you head down that road, the less you rely on scripture as the inspired, inerrant Word of God - because you see God as less and less sovereign and in control. Instead His power becomes limited to personal persuasion - He can only work through people, and then only if they choose to listen to Him. Scripture becomes increasingly subjective to your own personal outlook or feelings on a subject, and the Creator begins to serve the created.

For example, my open theist friend will often refer to God as “she” because he feels that God has more of a feminine, loving, nurturing “personality”, and that the only reason why they referred to God as a “He” in the Old Testament was because of the importance of patriarchy and the social order at that time. Many open theists deny the Trinity and anything else in the Bible that isn’t easily and logically understood. I haven’t read a Boyd book personally (just quotes) but “The God of the Possible” is on my list “to read” - if I ever get around to finishing “The God Who Risks” that is. This doctrine is becoming increasingly popular so I suppose I do need the study...

That’s another thing to consider - this doctrine is relatively new in the sense that it is only now becoming widely accepted, it has never been accepted in accord with scripture by the church at large in the past. You can find the “Calvinistic” view going far back into the early documents of the church. Armenian theology was brought forward and declared heretical by the Synod of Dordt in 1619 after holding months and months worth of meetings. It was at this point that the five points of “Calvinism” were assembled as a refutation of the Armenian belief. (you can find those points here if you haven’t already read them: <http://reformed.org/calvinism/>)

I’m sure you have been loaded down with references by now...yet think that I could give you so many more! I’ll hold myself back though, I wouldn’t want you to become overwhelmed. Besides that I think much of this is an issue that God must first work out in the heart and then be understood in the mind - to be able to simply take God at his Word without trying to make things fit into a box of logic is somewhat of a step of faith. I’ll be praying that God will give you that faith and bring you to the right conclusions.

noorah (Aaron Hsu)

Well, I was afraid that was what your image of Open Theists are. I can’t say I have really ever heard of the term until I read that book. I don’t think I am going to call myself an open theist either, even if I eventually believe some of their theology.

In response to the path you just mentioned, I find that to be heretical in a most disgusting way. You are right to be worried if you see people in that situation. So far, the only thing that I have seen which would put me into the open theist arena is that currently [though this is what I am studying right now] I cannot believe that God predestines salvation. I in no way believe that God is any less sovereign. I don't think that God is less in control either.

In my thinking, as erred as it is, I see it as God being able to do anything he wants. If he wanted to destine the future to something, by Him, it's going to happen. I think that he does this in MANY instances. The Bible is chock full of God providentially making things happen, not just influencing. However, I think that there is also a strong evidence in the Bible that God also leaves part of the future open on purpose, not that he is "incapable" of controlling it, but rather, that he places parameters upon situations, and then the people, who have been given free agency, must choose within the parameters God provides. I see this as much more sovereign than robotically controlling everything. I am the robotic control kind, and I find that when people control everything like that, it is so much easier, if you were to have the ability to control everything down to the second, and not give anyone else a chance to choose anything, but then NOT do it, and instead allow a choice, and yet still have complete control and fulfill your plan ever more gracefully; that to me would be infinitely more awful, awesome, and amazing.

Now, I would tell you that the whole reason I think these things is only because of Scriptures that I have read, personally, I think it makes more sense for God to control everything, after all, that's what I would do.

I also in know way believe that the scriptures are subjective. I find it amazing that even some calvanist or near calvanists have made scripture so. I think that the misinterpretation of scripture is a very large problem in the church today. I also in know way think that God serves us. He is also not limited to only acting through us; there are numerous examples of God bringing things about and doing things without humans, and meaning to do it that way, I mean, come on, HE CREATED US! It's not like he needed our help for that. I do believe however, that God listens to our prayers, as I have seen godly men throughout the Bible convince God to change His mind. However, God was simply listening to them, and deciding whether or not He would do something. He changed His mind, not us.

And for now, I just got a call from my brother, so I have to go pick him up. I'll have to finish this later.

MereFraz (Meredith Frazier)

...I have read quite a few verses which really seem to make sense only in light of a God that allows for free agency, especially since I believe it is quite scriptural to say that God is honest and forthright, not "tricky."

Could you show us those verses?

noorah (Aaron Hsu)

Well, I'll give a few that come to light right off the top of my head:

The whole story of Job; Abraham, Isaac, and the sacrifice; Pharoah and the Exodus of Egypt; Sodom and Gamora, Lot; Jonah; Adam and Eve; and I am getting glimpses of others, but I couldn't tell you exactly what they were.

Now, I realize that these which I just mentioned deal mostly with those already under God's Covenant, but, this is just to point out what I find to be rather incomprehensible should free agency not be in existance.

Charles

I just found a Calvinist/Arminian Test. I came out as a Calvinist (of course!), which the test likes.

noorah (Aaron Hsu)

lol, can you guess what I scored?? Hah! That test is so horribly flawed, what could I answer!?

Actually, they said I was a Calvanist! How could they!?! That's just wrong...those sneaks!

Hmm, or, maybe that shows how close to a calvanist I really am?

begins to ponder the meaning and dynamics of life

MissLizzy (Elizabeth Swetnam)

LOL! Yes Aaron, you'd better watch yourself, you will become an admitted Calvinist yet.

I got Calvinist too, of course.

noorah (Aaron Hsu)

If someone will show me where Calvinism fits in with my beliefs, well, then I just might at that!
shudders On second thought...

MissLizzy (Elizabeth Swetnam)

So getting “Calvinist” on the test wasn’t enough to show you where Calvinism lines up with your beliefs?
Whats so bad about being an admitted Calvinist anyway?

And BTW, I’m sure my dad would love to talk this out with you more if you have questions.

noorah (Aaron Hsu)

Oh, I am quite sure he would. I actually do believe most of what the Calvaists believe, I just do not believe in the universal predestination of souls before the conception thereof. I do believe in predestination in other respects though.

Of course, after finishing the “Frazier” reading, I just might have a change of mind.

MissLizzy (Elizabeth Swetnam)

Have you read the Sovereignty of God yet?

And are you saying you only believe in partial predestination? I’m not quite sure I know what you mean...

noorah (Aaron Hsu)

I have not read it yet, but it is on the list, and everyday the time grows closer.

What I believe is that God is in complete control. Nothing happens without His say-so. I also believe that he predestines certain events to happen, if He so chooses. So, in other words, no, you cannot save yourself; no, you are incapable of making a “right” decision on your own, as you are sinful on your own, and when sin crowds your life, God is never in your sight, and if God is not in your site, any decision you make will be a wrong one. I believe that God is the only one who can direct the soul towards Him.

I do not believe, however, that God predestines the final outcome of a man’s journey, i.e.—either salvation or damnation. I believe He has a plan for their life, and has a direction for it. I believe he can predestine them if He so choses, just as He hardened Pharoah’s heart. He’s in complete control, if He says something is going to happen, by Him, it’s going to happen! I do believe however, that he predestinates choice. In other words, especially regarding our direction to either follow Him or not, I believe God provides us with choice. These choices are made on His terms and on His timetable. But when God offers us the choice, he genuinely offers it to us. Thus, I believe, at the moment, that He purposely provides “variables” for man.

One way to look at it is a four dimensional (up right back and time) clay lump. That clay is the entire compass of humans. The end result will be a crowning glory of a statue honoring God. God is the sculpture. God is in control of the clay. The clay cannot “change God” or his plan. New people are entered into the lump very particularly. God does not just throw random clay pieces in, each one is purposed for a specific thing. When God molds this clay, at times, he “let’s it spin” on its own, so that it shapes the way he wants. And say that there is a part He doesn’t want because it does not “fit the purpose”. He cuts it out. Through the “spinning” parts of the clay may go bad, or out of whack. God cuts those off, but the clay was “moving” on its own. It “decided” to go bad in as much as God gave it the capacity.

Those bad lumps may yet be incorporated back into the sculpture. A piece of clay never moves without God saying so. In the end, there is a pile of the “bad” and the final sculpture. God’s vision and plans are fulfilled, and though He desires that all the clay should be used, for His purpose, it is not all used,as it will not “fit”. It would have to be a tack on marring the sculpture. He cannot and will not allow this.

This illustration is the most consistent idea that I have come up with in reading through the Scriptures. It seems to fit most well with the scriptures both sides seem to bring out in favor of their position.

A reason that I am hesitant to read many theological books is that they often attempt to use “man’s ways” to convince a person of what they believe is right. Man proving to man that something is inherently right is flawed. That’s why I tend to think only that the Scriptures are the way to go. I whole-heartedly

believe that no additional materials are needed to understand scriptures and God other than His communication through His spirit, and His word through the Scriptures. The addition of other books often clouds the issue.

MereFraz (Meredith Frazier)

The “clay” issue seems to be contradictory in the sence you are speaking in. If God is in complete control over what he is making why , would you say, does He have to “throw” any of it out? If you look at it in the light of the covenant however, I think the picture is pretty accurate, in the sence that God does cut some men from the vine.....When you said God lets it all “spin” do you mean He ‘sovereignly chooses to let every thing out of His control’ That’s what it sounds like to me; let me know if I am misunderstanding this.

I have another qustion for you Aaron..In the Bible it says we are DEAD in our sin. We are the picture of a dead man, say drowned to death and floating in a lake. The only way we can come alive is by God pulling us out of the water and breathing life into us. -Do you agree?

noorah (Aaron Hsu)

In the example of the clay, I am saying that God “takes out” the pieces which do not fit his plan for the overall sculpture. The analogy being that if we are not “fit for the kingdom of God” then we are thrown out. He could, if he wanted to do so, incorporate all of the clay, but he does not do so, for reasons that the sculpture, which he has already envisioned, would have to be changed. The sculpture is set, and that clay which is not part of the “living sculpture” is not wasted, but used in other places. God requires that this clay be put there. This is an oversimplification and not entirely precise, but I hope you understand the idea I am trying to convey here.

In other words, God wants the clay to come together and form to his end result in his method and his way. Sure, he *could* incorporate all of it, but that would require him changing the way he wishes to run the world, something I doubt he is going to do.

And I knew the “spinning” issue was really going to hit a core somewhere. I suppose I should have explained that more adequately. What I am saying by the spinning is the “controlled” spin of a potter. This Potter does not let things spin out of control, like some human potters do, but he does spin the pot. He let’s it form “naturally” according to rules he has instated through the creation of the universe. It’s not like there is some “unknown” which he does not control. He controls the way of the spinning and the how, but he “leaves it up to the rules” to let the clay end up where it will fit with his plan. He is the one who created the “physics” of this world in which the pot is spinning. [You have to think very abstractly at this point, where the clay represents the entire body of humanity, and the dimensions of this “universe” are four, all malleable and controllable by the creator, with a “fifth” dimension which could be considered “god’s time”. That doesn’t fit accurately with what we know, but you can’t imagine something that abstract accurately without blowing your brains out. The physics of this universe are the rules for the interactions of the psuedo-spiritual universe here in which the clay is being formed.]

God created the clay, he created the spin, he knows how he wants and is spinning it, he knows the rules by which the clay will spin and form, he also designed the “end” which it will become. The only “apparent” variable is the allowance of the clay to move through the motions without “direct intervention” with the Potter’s Hand. But God is in no less control of this situation than a potter/programmer who has designed a “virtual reality” potting environment where he can control the entire form. Since this programmer designed the world in which the pot will spin, he knows how the pot is going to spin, and how the clay will form. Still he is not directly “making” or “choosing” which clay goes where.

I know that this imag is flawed, severely, and can never express all the minutia of this difficult problem, and even now there are serious flaws with this analogy, but if you just do not go “overly deep” I think you can see what I am saying.

Now, as to the other question, this is simply too big to pass up. I hear this **all** the time from Reformed christians. I have not had the time to study it, but that only proves that I have been lax in the seeking of the truth. I am going to make a fuller study of it tonight, and make an essay on it. You shall have to await that essay in response, because I feel there is much weight to these verses.

2: Purpose

2.1: To Inform

The first purpose of this essay is to inform the reader. The author strongly believes that this particular issue has been so clouded by bias and incomplete information that any student of the subject will readily find proof for any number of ideas, but that all the proofs will lack fundamental thoroughness, as well as basic unbiased presuppositions.

The author has found that the majority of opinions regarding predestination are largely founded on any number of presuppositions which are either unproven or unfounded. It is the earnest hope of the author that this essay will be devoid of these presuppositions, or, if such presuppositions must accompany any logic, that these presuppositions will be readily and honestly admitted, with any proof or lack thereof frankly and openly discussed.

Though it is far too much for this essay to hope to even be slightly comprehensive with regards to even this slight and small scope of predestination which is the topic of this essay, the author firmly believes that the essay will present at least a fundamental primer to some of the concepts and scriptures which are so important to this discussion.

This essay will attempt to provide as many facts in as clear and uncensored an approach as can be had.

2.2: To Analyze

Merely presenting the facts however, may not provide people with information about where to start with their reasoning. Thus, this essay hopes to analyze the data, and extract as much useful information as possible from the facts gathered. Presumably, this will provide the reader with more information and more understanding of what is being said.

Of course, no analysis can claim completeness in the most pure sense of the word. It is only the intention of this essay to try to make a significant effort in obtaining useful data regarding the facts.

2.3: To Deduce/Induce

The author realizes however that to be completely clear, logic and reason must be applied to the facts to assist in the interpretation and understanding of scriptures and facts. Thus, the second object of this essay will be to analyze the information found regarding this issue, and come to logical conclusions.

There are two methods which will be employed when analyzing. The first is the explicit deductive method, in which a direct and affirmative conclusion can easily and firmly be grasped, because the reasoner travels from a set amount of finite universal axioms, whether they be theoretical or proven, and deduces set, specific conclusions. The other method used is inductive reasoning. This is the matter of coming to universal conclusions based on specific propositions. No inductive conclusion can ever be 100% accurate, because no one may say that they have gathered all specific examples of a situation, which is necessary for 100% accuracy. However, inductive reasoning can provide powerful and persuasive evidence in favor of conclusions, and is essential in complete reasoning.

Here also, it is the intention of this essay to be as complete as possible, though this cannot be guaranteed. The essay will hope to separate the analysis from facts, facts from opinions, and opinions from analysis. Hopefully, this will make the essay that much more clear, and ensure that proper and unambiguous information is presented to the reader.

2.4: To Apply

No conclusion is useful unless it is applicable in the real world. This essay hopes to present a finite, limited example of application of the conclusions found in this essay to the real world. This will hopefully make the ramifications of the conclusions herein more concrete to readers who may not be fully comfortable with abstract thought.

Through logical extension, this essay will bring the conclusions herein to their logical and ultimate end, wherein may be found the real-life impact such conclusions would have upon one's theology, philosophy, and actions everyday in the real world.

This essay will not attempt to be exhaustive in such attempts, however, as such attempts are far from the limited scope of this essay.

3: Method

3.1: Content and Facts

The first section of the essay will contain nothing but unadulterated, pure quotations of the scriptures read and referenced in the essay. This is to allow the reader to first view the scriptures in a clear manner before they are actually intertwined with opinions and logic. This will hopefully allow the reader to gain insight before even reading the logic of the page, and hopefully more sharply distinguish truth from fiction.

3.2: Who Said What

The second section of the essay will contain the large amount of already present commentaries and opinions of other well-known people as a precursor to the author's actual analysis. This will provide a sample of the logic and reasoning of the current entities of philosophers and theologians. Notable names will include Zodhiates and Dake.

This section will most likely contain little to no scriptures in it, to help keep opinion and scripture separated at first. Then in the following section, the initial merging of the two will take place.

3.3: Analysis, book by book

This is the section that the author will voice his actual research, in a book by book format. Hopefully, some manner of cohesive and linear flow can be maintained, but such flow is merely cosmetic, and the chances of such a flow being maintained are low. Additionally, this section will present the opinions of the author, and such opinions will not necessarily be clearly marked. This is to help with the flow of the main brunt of the essay. It is intended that the reader will already have a good grasp of the facts and external opinions to be able to adequately distinguish within the essay, and that the more natural flow of this section will facilitate a cleaner reading and more thoughtful musings on the part of the reader.

In this section, the reader should gain a full understanding of the content provided, and will be able to draw the final conclusions of the essay, as well as understand some of the details about what may or may not be clear in the previous sections.

3.4: Summary

In the final section of the essay, there will lie the application of the conclusions drawn in the previous, analysis section, and there will also be the summary to assist the reader in grasping more completely the many details of the analysis of this essay. This will repeat and simplify those thoughts expressed in the previous section.

4: The Scriptures

4.1: Colossians

4.1.1: 2:5–23 KJV

For though I be absent in the flesh, yet am I with you in the spirit, joying and beholding your order, and the steadfastness of your faith in Christ. As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him: Rooted and built up in him, and stablished in the faith, as ye have been taught, abounding therein with thanksgiving.

Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ. For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily. And ye are complete in him, which is the head of all principality and power: In whom also ye are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ: Buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with him through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead. And you, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath he quickened together with him, having forgiven you all trespasses; blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way nailing it to his cross; And having spoiled principalities and powers, he made a shew of them openly, triumphing over them in it. Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holyday, or of the new moon, or of the sabbath days: Which are a shadow of things to come; but the body is of Christ.

Let no man beguile you of your reward in a voluntary humility and worshipping of angels, intruding into those things which he hath not seen, vainly puffed up by his fleshly mind. And not holding the Head,

from which all the body by joints and bands having nourishment ministered, and knit together, increaseth with the increase of God.

Wherefore if ye be dead with Christ from the rudments of the world, why, as though living in the world, are ye subject to ordinances, (Touch not; taste not; handle not; Which all are to perish with the using;) after the commandments and doctrines of men? Which things have indeed a shew of wisdom in will worship, and humility, and neglecting of the body; not in any honour to the satisfying of the flesh.

4.1.2: Version differences on v.12

KJV

Buried with him in baptism,

Rhm

...in your immersion

Knox

you, by baptism, have been united with his burial

KJV

wherein also ye are risen with him through the faith fo the operation of God,

ASV

wherein you were also raised with him through faith in the working of God

Con

wherein also you were made partakers of His resurrection, through the faith wrought in you by God.;

Phi

...—and all this because you have faith in the tremendous power of God

TCNT

...through your faith in the omnipotence of God

KJV

who hath raised him from the dead,

Rhm

...from among the dead

4.1.3: Version differences on v.13

KJV

And you, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh,

ASV

...through your trespasses...

Rhm

...by your offences...

Gspd

..through your misdeeds...

Con

and you also, when you were dead in the transgressions and uncircumcisions of your flesh

TCNT

And to you, who once were dead, by reason of your sins and your uncircumcised nature

KJV

hath he quickened together with him, having forgiven you all trespasses;

Con

God raised to share His life. For He forgave us all our transgressions

TCNT

—to you God gave Life in giving life to Christ! He pardoned all our sins!

4.1.4: v.12 Greek

συνταφέντες αὐτῷ, ἐν τῷ, βαπτισμῷ, ἐν ᾧ καὶ συνηέρθητε διὰ τῆς πίστεως τῆς ἐνεργείας τοῦ θεοῦ τοῦ ἐγείραντος αὐτὸν ἐκ νεκρῶν

4.1.5: v.20 Greek

Εἰ ἀπεθάνετε σὺν Χριστῷ, ἀπὸ τῶν στοιχείων τοῦ κόσμου, τί ὡς ζῶντες ἐν κόσμῳ δογματίζεσθε;

4.1.6: Version Differences in v.20

KJV

Wherefore if ye be dead with Christ from the rudiments of the world,

ASV

If ye died...

Rhm

If ye have died together with Christ from the first principles of the world

Con

If, then, when you died with Christ, you put away the childish lessons of outward things

TCNT

Since, with Christ, you became dead to the puerile teaching of this world

Wey

If you have died with Christ and have escaped from the world's rudimentary notions

Gspd

If you have died with Christ to material ways of looking at things

Knox

If, by dying with Christ, you have parted company with worldly principles

KJV

why, as though living in the world, are ye subject to ordinances,

ASV

why, as though living in the world, do ye subject yourselves to ordinances

Con

...submit yourselves to decrees

Mof

...submit to rules and regulations

NEB

Then why behave as though you were still living the life of the world? Why let people dictate to you:

TCNT

why do you submit, as though your life were still that of the world, to such ordinances as

4.2: Ephesians

4.2.1: 1:1–2:22

Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, to the saints which are at Ephesus, and to the faithful in Christ Jesus: Grace be to you, and peace, from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ.

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ: According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love: Having predestinated us unto adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will, To the praise of the glory of his grace wherein he hath made us accepted in th beloved. In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins according to the riches of his grace; Wherein he hath abounded toward us in all wisdom and prudence; Having made known unto us the mystery of his will, according to the good pleasure which he hath purposed in himself: That in the dispensation of the fulness of times he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; even in him: In whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will: That we should be to the praise of his glory, who first trusted in Christ.

In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise. Which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory.

Wherefore I also, after I heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus, and love unto all the saints, Cease not to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers; that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him: The eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints, And what is the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of his might power, Which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places, Far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come: And hath put all things under his feat, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church. Which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all.

And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins; Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience; Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others. But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;) And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus: That in the ages to come he might shew the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus.

For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast. For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath afore ordained that we should walk in them.

Wherefore remember, that ye being in time past Gentiles in the flesh, who are called Uncircumcision by that which is called the Circumcision in the flesh made by hands; That at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope,

and without God in the world: But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ.

For he is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us; Having abolished in his flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances; for to make in himself of twain one new man, so making peace; And that he might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby: And came and preached peace to you which were afar off, and to them that were nigh. For through him we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father. Now therefor ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellowcitizens with the saints, and of the household of God; And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone; In whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord: In whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit.

4.2.2: Greek

1:5

προορίσας ἡμᾶς εἰς νόθεσίαν διὰ Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ εἰς αὐτόν, κατὰ τὴν εὐδοκίαν τοῦ θελήματος αὐτοῦ,

2:1

Καὶ ἡμᾶς ὄντας νεκροὺς τοῖς παραπτώμασιν καὶ ταῖς ἁμαρτίαις ὑμῶν,

2:5

καὶ ὄντας ἡμᾶς νεκροὺς τοῖς παραπτώμασιν συνεζωοποίησεν τῷ Χριστῷ, — χάριτί ἐστε σεσωσμένοι—

2:11

Διὸ μνημονεύετε ὅτι ποτὲ ὑμεῖς τὰ ἔθνη ἐν σαρκί, οἱ λεγόμενοι ἀκροβυστία ὑπὸ τῆς λεγομένης περιτομῆς ἐν σαρκὶ χειροποιήτων,

4.3: Other Verses

4.3.1: John 3:15–20

That whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life. For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. For god sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world: but that the world through him might be saved. He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God. And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil, For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reprovved.

4.3.2: Revelations 22:17

And the Spirit ad the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely.

4.3.3: 1 Timothy 2:4

Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth.

4.3.4: 2 Peter 3:9

The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any shoul dperish, but that all should come to repentance.

5: The opinions

In this section shall now be written the opinions of various other authors on the subject about which this author is to speak. The first sections will regard the general logic in a generic form, and then shall bring in two commentators and their opinions.

5.1: The Dead cannot Rise

In the specific argument being here analyzed, the main supposition is that the human race, as a whole is dead. The verse the author most often sees quoted to prove such a proposition is Colossians 2:13: “*And you, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath he quickened together with him, having forgiven you all trespasses.*” The logic follows that if, as is the common conception, the dead cannot rise from their graves, thus, a man, steeped in sin, cannot therefore rise to anything but sin. Man would thus be eternally bound into sin, incapable of removing himself from it, without the assistance, nay, the full and complete action of God saving him.

5.2: The Dead Cannot Make Decisions

This analogy is further taken to represent the way in which the dead must interact with those who are not dead. It is often described thus, that a corpse would have neither the choice in being chosen to rise from the grave, neither would he have a choice to not rise from the grave after having been chosen. What is being said here is that the corpse has no decision making faculties whatsoever, and thus has no active or inactive part in the process of “quicken together” with those who are not dead.

5.3: Zodhiates

The following are the notes of Dr. Spiros Zodhiates on Ephesians 1:4,5, from the “Hebrew-Greek Key Study Bible”:

There are two verbs in this passage that introduce to us the much debated subject of God’s election. One is in v. 4, “He chose us.” In Greek it is the aorist of *eklegōmai* (1586) which means “to select or choose out of.” From this verb, we have the noun *eklogō* (1588), “chosen out.” The verb *exelexato* is in the aorist which means that at one particular time in the past, God chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love. It is in the middle voice which means this was His own decision.

The second verb that addresses itself to the subject of God’s election of the believer is in v. 5, *proorisas*, from *proorizō* (4309) made up of the preposition *pro* (4253), “before,” and *horizō* (3724), “to determine.” The compound verb means to determine or decree beforehand or to predestinate. This is the same verb used in Rom. 8:29 and translated “predestined.” See Mt. 24:22,31:[sic] Lk. 18:7; Acts 4:28; Rom. 8:29,33; 9:11; Eph. 3:11; II Tim. 2:10; Js. 2:5; I Pet. 1:2,20.

In the Bible there is set forth on the one hand the sovereignty of God, and on the other, man’s free choice and hence responsibility.

Peter, in speaking of Christ on the day of Pentecost, said, “This *Man*, delivered up by the predetermined plan and foreknowledge of God, you nailed to a cross by the hands of godless men and put *Him* to death” (Acts 2:23). Here in one verse we have the two principles brought together: the sovereign purpose of God in the delivering up of Christ so that men might be blessed, and human choice and responsibility in crucifying the “Prince of Life” on the other.

The perplexing question which arises is “Can a man know that he is one of the elect?”

A careful reading of the Epistle to the Romans will throw much light on the subject. There is not a word about election until we are more than halfway through the eighth chapter. The reason is clear because, until we know we are children of God and free from condemnation (Rom. 8:1–17), we are neither in the right position nor condition to receive the truth.

In the early chapters of Romans, we have described man’s ruined condition and his standing before God as a guilty sinner. Then follows the sinner’s justification by faith without works through the finished work of Christ, the way in which the believer is freed from the mastery of sin and delivered from the law. The result is that there is “no condemnation,” the spirit bearing witness that “we are children of God” (Rom. 8:16).

It is then, and not until then, that the believer learns that he has been predestinated and is one of the elect. Then it is stated that, as believers, “we know that God causes all things to 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 become* conformed to the image of His Son, that he might be the first-born among many brethren; and whom He predestined, these He also called;

and whom He called, these He also justified; and whom He justified, these He also glorified” (Rom 8:28–30).

The person who may find himself described in the third chapter of Romans is a sinner under condemnation who stands in need of justification by faith in Christ as his Saviour, “for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God” (Rom. 3:23). He does not know, nor is it any concern of his, whether he is one of the elect or not. No one who desires the peace of God is refused it. If one, however, finds himself described in the eighth chapter of Romans and is already a believer, he knows that he is an elect child of God and that he has been predestinated unto salvation.

The important point is that no one who is saved can say that he is saved because of his own choice of God. His salvation is in response to God’s choice of him. And, on the other hand, no one who is lost can say that he is lost because God willed him to be lost.

A very helpful illustration may be derived from family life: A stranger is denied a share in the little familiarities and secrets of a family. no one in the family is willing to take him into the delightful confidence of its innermost secrets. In the same manner, the unregenerate are excluded from the sweet, inner experiences and knowledge of the secrets of God which He entrusts to the members of His household. Ps. 25:14 declares that “the secret of the Lord is for those who fear Him, and He will make them know His covenant.” Truly, therefore, the doctrine of election is a family secret, and only the children of God know it and have the capacity of grasping or understanding the deep things of God. I Cor. 2:14 states, “But a natural man does not accept the things of the Spirit of God; for they are foolishness to him, and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually appraised.”

Christ died for all. It does not mean only some, and while this truth is clearly revealed, nowhere does it say that His sacrifice was a substitute for all. I Jn. 2:2 states, “And he himself is the propitiation for our sins; (i.e., believers) and not for ours only, but also for those of the whole world.” It is to be noted that the expression “the sins of” in the translation is not in the Greek text. Therefore, the Gospel is preached to all, and over and over again God says that whosoever believeth in Him (that means anybody) shall receive everlasting life (Jn. 3:16; Acts 10:43; 13:38,39). The Gospel invitation is for all, and therefore all who hear are responsible and without excuse. Thus, if one perishes in his sin, he will be lost, because he himself chose to be condemned (Tit 3:10,11) and not because God willed it so.

5.4: Dake

These notes are taken out of the *Dake’s Annotated Reference Bible*.

5.4.1: Eph 1:5—predestinated

Here God has predestined all children of God to be adopted into His family, but who comes a child of God is left up to each individual (Jn. 3:15–20; Rev. 22:17. Cp. 1 Tim. 2:4; 2 Pet. 3:9).

5.4.2: Eph 1:4—God’s Choice

This is what God chose before the overthrow of Lucifer’s world—that all of the new race of Adam who accept Jesus Christ should be holy and without blame before Him in Love. It is this plan that is chosen for all believers, not the individual conformity of any one person to that plan. The final choice is left up to the individual and not to God. All are called and chosen to become holy before God in love if they want to accept this plan and choice of God, but only those who meet the conditions will be so blessed (Jn. 3:16–20; Mk. 16:15–16; 1 Tim. 2:4; 2Pet. 3:9; Rev. 22:17). This is the true meaning of election and predestination wherever found in Scripture (v 5; Rom. 8:29, note), that is, the plan is predestined and foreknown, not the individual conformity to the plan.

5.4.3: Rom. 8:29

For whom he did foreknow,...

Gr. *proginosko*, to know beforehand. Trans. *knew before* (2 Pet. 3:17); *foreknew* (Rom. 11:1); and *know* (Acts 26:5). See Gr. *prognosis* under **God’s Foreknowledge**, p. 471 (Acts 2:23; 1 Pet. 1:2).

...predestinate to be...

Gr. *proorizo*, foreordain. Trans. *determine before* (Acts 4:28); *ordain* (1 Cor. 2:7); and *predestinate* (Rom. 8:29–30; Eph. 1:5, 11). It is God's *plan* that He has foreknown and predestinated, and not the individual conformity of free wills to the plan. He has called all men and all are free to accept or reject the call (Jn. 3:16; 1 Tim. 2:4; 2 Pet. 3:9; Rev. 22:17). All who do accept, He has foreknown and predestinated to be conformed to the image of His Son that His Son might be the first-born among many brethren (v 29). Those who reject the plan, He has foreknown and predestinated to be consigned to eternal hell as an everlasting monument of His wrath on rebels (Isa. 66:22–24; Rev. 14:9–11; Mt. 25;[sic]41, 46). *This is the sum* of foreknowledge and predestination.

...conformed to the image of His Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren.

Gr. *summorphos*. Only here and in Phil. 3:21 where the resurrected body will be made like His glorious body. This is what God has foreknown and predestinated for all who conform to the gospel.

Moreover whom he did predestine,...

God has foreordained, determined, and predestinated that all men be called to salvation, but that only the ones who accept become genuine *called ones* to be justified and glorified. None are glorified, but those who, according to His purpose, meet the terms of the gospel. Who they will be is left up to the individual (Jn. 3:16; 1 Tim. 2:4; 2 Pet. 3:9; Rev. 22:17; Mk. 16:16; Acts 2:38; 3:19). All things depend upon meeting the conditions of the gospel (Rom. 8:1–13, 28).

5.4.4: Colossians 2:13

This verse is the same in doctrine as Eph. 2:1, 5, 11, proving that this baptism is not the one in water by a minister. It is God here that quickens or resurrects from death in trespasses and sins (v 13), No minister can do this by water.

5.4.5: Colossians 2:14**Blotting out...**

Gr. *exaleipho*, to smear out. Trans. *blot out* (v 14; Acts 3:19; Rev. 3:5) and *wipe away* (Rev. 7:17; 21:4),[sic] The allusion here is to erasing ink from a parchment by a fluid as the muriatic acid, or erasing oriental inks of burnt ivory, cork, and gum water by a wet sponge. No trace of the writing can be seen afterward.

...the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was...

Gr. *cheirographon*, something written by hand; written decree. Only here. It refers to the complete law of Moses, not only the ceremonial part of the law, but to the commandments also and every detail of the old contract.

...contrary to us,...

The whole law of Moses was *against us* and *contrary to us* and had to be taken out of the way or redemption could never have been experienced. The law made no provision for redemption. It only cursed and killed all men because all broke the laws and could not possibly keep it (