

Parson to Person

ROMANS 1 (PART 3)

“Paul, a bondservant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle, separated to the gospel of God which He promised before through His prophets in the Holy Scriptures, concerning His Son Jesus Christ our Lord, who was born of the seed of David according to the flesh, and declared to be the Son of God with power according to the Spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead.

Through Him we have received grace and apostleship for obedience to the faith among all nations for His name, among whom you also are the called of Jesus Christ; to all who are in Rome, beloved of God, called to be saints: grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ” (Romans 1:1–7 NKJV).

There are great numbers of people who embrace the continuing conversation over predestination and foreknowledge. The debate gives focus to God’s sovereign plan for the ages, His interactions with man, and how He intended/intends to call man, save man, use man, and mark off in advance the eternal destination of man. Many believers divide over these topics, and frankly, a careful student of the Scriptures could make great strides in building a case for opposing sides of the subject.

We must remember that God has a complete and detailed foreknowledge of all things. This includes mankind and encompasses what each man will do, be, and become. God knows all man will learn, how he will respond to that information, his worldview, the influences of his environment, and in particular – the Gospel. God knows in advance who will trust Him for salvation and who won’t. He knows in advance where every man and woman will spend eternity.

This being said, we must also remember that God does not act randomly with or toward His creation. He has predetermined His purposes and plans for creation and will accomplish all He intends to do. This fact alone troubles many and develops a fatalistic view of the salvific purposes and plans of God. It leads many to believe that ministry and evangelism is therefore mute and unnecessary. Far be it from the truth!

Although God has foreknowledge, His foreknowledge is a pre-knowing of what was, what is, and what will be. It is not a speculative fore-knowing of all that might be, all that could be, or all that may have been. It is a foreknowledge of what is actual and true, occurring in time, before time began. Therefore, what occurs in time must still occur—as foreknown—not because it is foreknown, but because it is.

This fact does not suggest that God does not or will not intervene in the affairs of man. God’s interactions with man, in time, are known to Him from all eternity past. Therefore, His interactive work may still cause man to look to Him, respond to Him, or allow Him to use men for His purposes.

On the other hand, these facts do not tell us that God intentionally or irrefusably damns some men or women to hell. The above recognition of God’s sovereignty is easily supported by Scripture, but the Bible contains no teaching or indication that God has withheld the hope of salvation to any man. Sadly, this by-product is what some will suggest.

Many naturally hold to the view that an equal and opposite response to the sovereignty of God described above requires an equal and opposite reaction. However, this is not the case. (God is not subject to Newton’s Third Law.)

We know that John 3:16 is true. We all know that *“whosoever”* means any, all, whoever. Moreover, God *“desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth”* (1 Timothy 2:4). Human logic is superseded by the Sovereign work and plans of God.

God called Paul (the man formerly known as Saul) to be an apostle to the Gentiles for this very reason. And, in that calling, he sovereignly pre-ordained it from eternity past, based upon His great foreknowledge, even before Paul had taken his first breath. Paul wrote about this in his letter to the Galatians. He said that, *“it pleased God, who separated [him] from [his] mother’s womb and called [him] through His grace, [in order to] to reveal His Son in [him], that [he] might preach Him among the Gentiles...”* (Galatians 1:15–16a NKJV). And, why? Because God wanted to use Paul to share the Good News with all mankind and therefore chose him (among others) to do it. This Divine intervention did not prevent others from hearing and/or believing. It was for that very reason—that others might believe.

Keeping it simple we might simply say, *“Paul, [was called to be] a bondservant of Jesus Christ, [and was therefore] called [by God] to be an apostle. [Therefore he was] separated [chosen, selected, elected] to the gospel of God [in order to be sent to the Gentiles with the message of hope in Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of sins as predicted by the prophets in the holy Scriptures.]*

What a glorious God! What a wonderful work He did, does and will do.

I trust we will all grow to appreciate His wonderful work among the children of men.

I love you all, Pastor Paul