



August 31, 2008

## ***Predestination 5: A Harmonious Framework***

Two apparently contradictory ideas have been presented over the past few weeks. Are there those who are destined and chosen by God to be saved while others are lost, or, do we have the freewill to exercise our own personal choice in the matter and decide our eternal fate? If we understand predestination in the way that God would have us to, we might view it as a framework, much like the structure of a building. This framework supports a greater structure that allows activities to be conducted. Salvation is much the same way. We are told that God created the provision for salvation before the world began (**Titus 1.2, Eph 1.3-5**). This is the framework that provides for redemption. That framework served to connect those under the Patriarchal and Mosaic law with the blood of Christ through the offering of sacrifices (**Heb 9.15**) and now connects us with the blood of Christ through baptism which stands as a figure, commanded by God, that signals an acceptance of the Lord's conditions (**1 Pet 3.21**). Just as a building is intended for a specific purpose, so is the spiritual framework that provides salvation through obedience. A medical building is constructed in such a way as to accommodate the needs of medical equipment. A garage is built to accommodate and support working on vehicles in an efficient manner. Christ's sacrifice is the provision for salvation that is available to all of mankind. Is everyone destined to need medical attention or a mechanic and require the services of doctors or a mechanic? Yes, we will. Are we destined to or controlled in such a way as to see a particular doctor or mechanic against our will? No. We understand that we have a choice in the matter. In spiritual things God has created the framework under which we can be saved. He has warned us that only by meeting the conditions that he has set forth in his word will we achieve that. Is this being controlled and forced to accept God's will? No. We still have the ability to exercise our own choice. Adam and Eve demonstrated that in **Genesis 3** when they disregarded God's restriction of not eating of the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

The consequences for their actions were detailed in advance and the result was that sin and death were introduced into the world (**Rom 5.12-14**). Satan knows that we have the ability to make our minds up about what we believe and how we practice that. It is the Devil's intention to deceive or weaken us so that we will disobey the Lord and be lost just as he is. Now the other question is concerning what God knows about each of us. Does God have knowledge of what each and every one of us will do in this life before we are born? Certainly God has the ability to know these things and has shown through the narrative of the scriptures that he has used certain individuals such as Pharaoh during the time of the Egyptian bondage, to bring about the things that he has intended knowing their character. An example of this is Abraham prior to the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah. "***For I know him, that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the LORD, to do justice and judgment; that the LORD may bring upon Abraham that which he hath spoken of him.***" (**Gen 18.19**). God knew the character of Abraham. Throughout the scriptures we see individuals who allowed their character to be compromised and turned away from God. King Saul is an example of this. If we allow that to happen we have a decision to make. Will we continue in a path away from God or will we turn and repent. Christ was sent into the world during the fullness of times, when conditions and the character of certain individuals were such that the sacrifice of Christ would be made as God had intended (**Gal 4.4**). We find in the scriptures that we were unable to offer an acceptable sacrifice to God to bring about salvation. Because of that, a better sacrifice was necessary. How does God then call us? He does so through his word and the preaching of the gospel (**Rom 10.14**). Perhaps the confusion comes about when we try to explain why and how God has done things. God has provided the framework, by his grace, and gives us the ability to decide whether to follow him or not. Deficits in our character can be corrected by adherence to God's word. Ultimately we will answer for the decisions we have made (**2 Cor 5.10**). TLC