

WHAT ARE ELECTION AND PREDESTINATION? by Richard D. Phillips

TO THE READER: A good learning technique is to answer the following questions BEFORE reading the booklet. After reading, you can refine your answers based on your reading. Then, when your group gathers, each can discuss his or her view and you can either affirm or modify what you wrote.

1. How would you explain to someone the meaning of these two terms?

Election –

Predestination –

2. According to Ephesians 1:4, our election took place before the foundation of the world. But when before? (6-8)
3. Why did God elect anyone?
4. Can we choose to not believe the doctrine of election? (9-11)
5. How should the doctrine of election make you *feel* about yourself? (11-12)
6. What is God's purpose in electing us? (12-14)
7. What confidence, or what sense of security, can we gain from the doctrine of doctrine of election? (14-17)

8. Before reading this booklet, define what you believe the word *predestination* means. (19-20) Keep in mind what we already know about God – He is love. How does His love fit with what you think predestination means?
9. When did God begin to *foreknow* or *predetermine* anything? (20-22)
10. Do you, as a human being, have “free will?” (23-25)
11. How can we believe in a sovereign God and also believe man has the ability to make a choice? (23-15)
Read Deuteronomy 29:29 to the group. This verse teaches us God is sovereign and man does have the responsibility to choose. Packer calls this an antinomy¹ – “a seeming contradiction resolvable only in the mind of God”. How do we reconcile sovereignty and free will? Packer says: “You never have to reconcile friends.”
12. What would happen to all mankind if God had not elected and predestined? (26-27)

After going through these questions, read the text and fill in the answers in preparation for class, noting other questions you might have. [By the way, if you do have any other questions about what you read, write them down here so you remember them at class time.]

APPLICATION

In Romans 1:18-21 we read:

For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men...For what can be known about God is plain to them...For although they knew God, they did not honor him as God or give thanks to him. [ESV]

If you or I were writing this, we would probably have finished this by saying, *they did not honor him as God or obey him*. It is *thanks* God desires from us. So then, if you are not in the habit of always giving thanks to God for each and everything He has done for us and given to us, then make a plan now to live a life of thankfulness. It makes such a difference.

For Further Study

Election and Free Will, Robert Peterson. P&R Publishing, 2007.
The Reformed Doctrine of Predestination, Loraine Boettner. P&R Publishing.

Find this and more at www.pcabookstore.com.

¹ J. I. Packer, *Evangelism and the Sovereignty of God*, IVP, 1962, chapter 2.