

Evening Worship / March 12 2023
"Arguing for Predestination!" Romans 9:14-29

Debate is not hate! "Thou shall not argue!" Is not a Biblical command!

In our politically correct world, preaching against sin is considered hate, and in some places a hate crime!

*Even in churches certain doctrines, or even "doctrine" as a concept are hated and sometimes even people who might agree with the "doctrine" may advise, "but don't preach on it!"
"Definitely don't argue about it."*

The doctrines of predestination and election have been argued about for years. Paul here is arguing, and I have had my own arguments on this subject ... Once, while in seminary, enduring the worst flu of my life, my roommate and several of his friends woke me up at 3 AM, while I was sickest, to question me, "Did God predestine this???"

Recently, I have heard the phrase "cage stage Calvinist" used for a young person who starts to realize that the Bible teaches "predestination" and he or she wants to share this belief!

If his writings were not actually in the Bible, and considered, "God's Word", they might have called the Apostle Paul, "cage stage" because he was not afraid of debate! Consider his argument here –

I. Is God unjust? He is not, He has the right as Creator to do as He wills!

¹⁴What shall we say then? Is there unrighteousness with God? Certainly not! Romans 9:14 (NKJV)

1. This is one of the main arguments of the free-willers, "God cannot make the decision of who would be saved, that is not fair!" They say, "We have to make that decision!"

How does Paul answer this?

¹⁵For He says to Moses, "I will have mercy on whomever I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whomever I will have compassion." ¹⁶So then it is not of him who wills, nor of him who runs, but of God who shows mercy. ¹⁷For the Scripture says to the Pharaoh, "For this very purpose I have raised you up, that I may show My power in you, and that My name may be declared in all the earth." ¹⁸Therefore He has mercy on whom He wills, and whom He wills He hardens. Romans 9:15–18 (NKJV)

Paul, anticipates that some will cry foul about this ...

¹⁹You will say to me then, "Why does He still find fault? For who has resisted His will?" Romans 9:19 (NKJV)

Now, if free will were the answer, Paul in answer to his own question could simply say, 'but we do resist His will, He gives us a free choice' but he does NOT say this, what does he say?

A. Paul's first answer is not God did give you a free will, but rather; 'Who are YOU?'

²⁰ But indeed, O man, who are you to reply against God? Will the thing formed say to him who formed it, "Why have you made me like this?" Romans 9:20–21 (NKJV)

Who are we, as mere men or women, puny creatures? Who are we to question the CREATOR!

B. Paul's second argument, does not the CREATOR have a right to do with His creation, as He pleases?

²¹ Does not the potter have power over the clay, from the same lump to make one vessel for honor and another for dishonor? Romans 9:20–21 (NKJV)

C. Part of the argument for God having the right, to do as He wills with human beings was already given in the example of Pharaoh –

¹⁷ For the Scripture says to the Pharaoh, "For this very purpose I have raised you up, that I may show My power in you, and that My name may be declared in all the earth."

- *God gave Pharaoh great power, despite his sin!*

- *Yet, after God raised Pharaoh up, with great plagues, He gradually cut Pharaoh down!*

Note, free will is NOT MENTIONED at all in this passage!

2. Did Pharaoh have a will? Yes!

A. Was Pharaoh's will free from sin? Jesus says –

³⁴ Jesus answered them, "Most assuredly, I say to you, whoever commits sin is a slave of sin. John 8:34 (NKJV)

Yes, Pharaoh enslaved the Israelites, but according to Jesus, Pharaoh too, was a slave, a slave of sin!

B. God hardened Pharaoh's heart / but Pharaoh did not fight against this hardening, no Pharaoh's sin enslaved heart agreed with God's hardening –

³² But Pharaoh hardened his heart at this time also; neither would he let the people go. Exodus 8:32 (NKJV)

C. Was Pharaoh's will free from God's sovereign power to rule and control him? No, of course NOT consider ... Pharaoh had to have Moses pray for him, for Egypt -

⁸ Then Pharaoh called for Moses and Aaron, and said, "Entreat the LORD that He may take away the frogs from me and from my people; and I will let the people go, that they may sacrifice to the LORD." Exodus 8:8 (NKJV)

²⁸ So Pharaoh said, "I will let you go, that you may sacrifice to the LORD your God in the wilderness; only you shall not go very far away. Intercede for me." ²⁹ Then Moses said, "Indeed I am going out from you, and I will entreat the LORD, that the swarms of flies may depart tomorrow from Pharaoh, from his servants, and from his people. But let Pharaoh not deal deceitfully anymore in not letting the people go to sacrifice to the LORD." ³⁰ So Moses went out from Pharaoh and entreated the LORD. ³¹ And the LORD did according to the word of Moses; He removed the swarms of flies from Pharaoh, from his servants, and from his people. Not one remained. ³² But Pharaoh hardened his heart at this time also; neither would he let the people go. Exodus 8:28–32 (NKJV)

If Pharaoh's will were free from God's power, he would not have had to humbly beg Moses, to Entreat the LORD ... EXODUS 8:8 OR Intercede – Exodus 8:29 to have the LORD remove flies! In fact, if Pharaoh's will were free from God's will to rule and control him, even to punish him, he could have used his so-called free will, and marched, flew into Heaven and told God, 'stop these vexing plagues or I will bop YOU on the head' ... but NOTE, no such thing happened.

Pharaoh may have desired such power, such a free will ... he had a will, he tried to resist God, but he could NOT! He did not! His will was not FREE to resist God, nor is such "freedom" necessary for God to be just!

In fact, God predicted the entire thing –

6 Then the LORD said to Moses, "Now you shall see what I will do to Pharaoh. For with a strong hand he will let them go, and with a strong hand he will drive them out of his land." Exodus 6:1 (NKJV)

³ And I will harden Pharaoh's heart, and multiply My signs and My wonders in the land of Egypt. Exodus 7:3 (NKJV)

II. Second argument: God does these things for His own "glory" that is His right priority, not our salvation from Hell!

²² What if God, wanting to show His wrath and to make His power known, endured with much longsuffering the vessels of wrath prepared for destruction, ²³ and that He might make known the riches of His glory on the vessels of mercy, which He had prepared beforehand for glory, ²⁴ even us whom He called, not of the Jews only, but also of the Gentiles? Romans 9:22–24 (NKJV)

1. We were created for God's glory; we are redeemed to glorify God –

³¹ Therefore, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God. 1 Corinthians 10:31 (NKJV)

A. If we understand Romans 8:28-29 correctly, salvation is restoration to God's image, Christ's image, salvation means being restored to being a God-glorifying creature!

B. One of the stupidest things too many people believe is God is some how WRONG to seek His own glory!

- It is wrong for us to seek our own glory because we are mere creatures!*
- It is not wrong for God to seek His own glory because He is truly God, He is truly glorious, His being "glorified" is the ultimate "GOOD." Not only for God but for His creatures.*

2. God's wrath against sin is part of His "glory" it is a display of His absolute righteousness! Those who are the vessels of wrath prepared for destruction

A. Were shown God's patience, His longsuffering endured with much longsuffering, in fact He is patiently enduring their sinfulness even now, like Pharaoh they often persecute God's people, even when they do not persecute us. Are they honoring God?

B. God is not WRONG to punish them! His punishing them shows His righteousness! They're NOT glorifying of God makes them worthy of destruction!

- *Free-willers typically don't agree with this, they say God's ultimate goal or duty is to save everyone from hell, punish no one, but He cannot save everyone because He gave us "free will" and won't revoke that!*

Question if God does not revoke "free-will" why do people die or stay in Hell?

III. Third argument: Fulfilled Prophecy shows us God's sovereign plan is being fulfilled -

²⁵ As He says also in Hosea: "I will call them My people, who were not My people, And her beloved, who was not beloved."²⁶ "And it shall come to pass in the place where it was said to them, 'You are not My people,' There they shall be called sons of the living God."²⁷ Isaiah also cries out concerning Israel: "Though the number of the children of Israel be as the sand of the sea, The remnant will be saved. ²⁸ For He will finish the work and cut it short in righteousness, Because the LORD will make a short work upon the earth."²⁹ And as Isaiah said before: "Unless the LORD of Sabaoth had left us a seed, We would have become like Sodom, And we would have been made like Gomorrah." Romans 9:25–29 (NKJV)

1. *The Hosea prophecy is a prophecy about extending grace to the gentiles – Romans 9:25-26 (NKJV)*

Paul quotes Hosea, because He wants to show that salvation to the Gentiles, and the Roman church surely included a lot of gentiles, was part of God's plan all along –

2. *He quotes Isaiah concerning a "remnant" a small number of people, of Israelites ... Meaning even in Isaiah's day not every "Jewish" person was saved!*

Fulfilled prophecy is always an argument for God's sovereignty, and is an important thing to remember when we consider the question, "How shall we live?"

²⁸ And do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. But rather fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell. ²⁹ Are not two sparrows sold for a copper coin? And not one of them falls to the ground apart from your Father's will. ³⁰ But the very hairs of your head are all numbered. ³¹ Do not fear therefore; you are of more value than many sparrows. Matthew 10:28–31 (NKJV)

3. *Those who fear, trust, and believe that God is sovereign, in control, live as if that is the case -*

In Daniel 3, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego, feared God more than Nebuchadnezzar's fire and He (God) was sovereign over the flames for them!

In Daniel 6, Daniel fears and trusts God's sovereignty and continues to pray, even risking the lions' mouths, but God is King over those we call king of the beasts.

God's is sovereign in regard to saving souls, that's why we preach, according to God's Word, it is why we pray, without ceasing, it is why we trust and obey and do what God wants us to, ¹³ for it is God who works in you both to will and to do for His good pleasure. Philippians 2:13 (NKJV)

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