

LESSONS ON PREDESTINATION #21
"Reprobation Exhibited in Scripture"
(Scriptures from NKJV)

NOTE: Much of the text herein is quoted directly or paraphrased from the book, *The Reformed Doctrine of Predestination* by Lorraine Boettner.

We meet again to continue the series of the lessons on Predestination, and this will be the 21th lesson in that series dealing with the doctrine of reprobation entitled "Reprobation Exhibited in Scripture." We covered last week that in relation to the doctrine of salvation, predestination has two components, like two sides of a coin - election and reprobation. Then we also went further that reprobation has two components or ingredients. They are preterition which means to pass over or pass by, and then condemnation to bring a person to judgment because of his sin. So that it is like two sides of a coin, heads and tails. There are those who hold to what is known as "single predestination" that being that they hold to the doctrine of election, but they do not hold to the doctrine of reprobation. That is terribly inconsistent. If you have an elect portion of mankind, then logically you must have a non-elect. You cannot have one without the other.

So, we recognize that the doctrine of reprobation is admittedly a most unpleasant doctrine to study. It is not taught for the purpose of gaining favor with men. You don't win friends and influence people if you teach on the doctrine of reprobation in the average Christian setting. But we teach it because it is found in the plain teaching of the Bible, and the logical counterpart of the doctrine of Election. We shall find that some Scripture passages do teach the doctrine with unmistakable clearness. These should be sufficient for any one who accepts the Bible as the word of God. Turn with me to Proverbs 16:4. All Christians acknowledge that God has created all things, and He has created them for His own glory. Does that include the reprobate? **"The Lord hath made all for Himself, even the wicked for the day of doom** (or the day of evil)." (Proverbs 16:4).

We read in I Peter 2:7-8 regarding Christ's relationship to the wicked, **"Therefore to you who believe, He is precious. But to those who are disobedient, the stone which the builders rejected has become the chief cornerstone and a stone of stumbling and a rock of offense. They stumble, being disobedient to the word, to which they also were appointed."** In this text, the wicked are appointed to destruction because of their disobedience to the word.

Also, look at Jude 4 - **"Certain men have crept in unnoticed, who long ago were marked out for this condemnation, ungodly men, who turn the grace of our God into lewdness and deny the only Lord God and our Lord Jesus Christ."** The expression in the New King James Translation says **"long ago."** In other translations it is "were written beforehand to this condemnation, or "ordained" beforehand to this condemnation. The ESV says "long ago." The original King James Version says "ordained to

this condemnation." And they were ordained before the foundation of the world to this condemnation. So we can't escape these verses. We have to look at them head on.

Look at Revelation 13:8 - This is speaking of the beast. **"All who dwell on the earth will worship him, whose names have not been written in the Book of Life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world."** That literally reads like this, "from the foundation of the world in the Book of the Lamb that was slain." So this text says there are some people whose names were left out of the Book of Life implying that there were other names within the book, and that these names were written before the foundation of the world and the decrees of God. So, I hate to mess up some of your old time music favorites, but the song we used to love to sing, *"There is a New Name Written Down In Heaven"* that is just not the case. That name wasn't written down when you repented and believed. It was already there in the electing decree of God, and you were brought to saving faith in Christ as evidence of that. That will probably cause some of my hearers to turn me off because they like that music so well. I can deal with the Bible, but I can't deal with some songs and traditions that are involved therein.

In Romans 9:21-23 which we have referred to numerous times in this study, here we find two classes of people, vessels of wrath and vessels of mercy.

"Does not the potter have power over the clay from the same lump to make one vessel for honor and another for dishonor. 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 and that He might make known the riches of His glory on the vessels of mercy which He hath prepared beforehand for glory." It doesn't take much commenting on these scriptures. We have a class here out of one lump that God has taken and is preparing a class of people who are designed to glorify His grace and mercy. There is another class of people who are designed to glorify His wrath or His justice. So all mankind are going to glorify God one way or another. God will not be robbed of His glory. The function of the whole scheme of redemption in Christ is to reveal the harmony of all of the attributes of God. So that the moral universe comprised of angels and men might come to know who God is and what He is like. If He had not planned the salvation of some, no one would have known He was a God of mercy. And if He had not planned the destruction of others for their sins, then God would not have been known as a God of justice. So in order to make a display of these attributes God has divided mankind into these two classes, and then in order to show His patience and longsuffering with the reprobate, He deals with them a long period of time. He gives the many opportunities to hear the gospel and to come to Christ. If they never hear the gospel like the heathen, they still have God's natural revelation in the heavens declaring the creation, that there is a Creator. So God will wrong no one, but He will show mercy to some. He will be just with

all, and He will show mercy to some.

Paul declares that the "vessels of wrath" which by the Lord were "fitted unto destruction," were "endured with much long suffering" in order that He might "show His wrath, and make His power known;" and that He has determined to do this beforehand.

In Romans 1:28 concerning the heathen, it is said that **"God gave them up to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not fitting."** And in Romans 2:5, regarding the wicked it is said, **"after his hardness and impenitent heart treasures up for himself wrath in the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God."** Do you see the adjective there? Judgment is "righteous." On the day of judgment there will be no being in the moral universe comprised of angels and men that will be able to say when God assigns the wicked to their eternal punishment that He was unjust in doing so. God is a God of justice and He will carry that out.

With regard to those who are reprobate and are in the process of perishing, in II thessalonians 2:7-12, Paul says that God even sends deception to them that they might believe a lie. **"The mystery of lawlessness is already at work; only He who now restrains will do so until He is taken out of the way. And then the lawless one will be revealed, whom the Lord will consume with the breath of His mouth and destroy with the brightness of His coming. The coming of the lawless one is according to the working of Satan, with all power, signs, and lying wonders, and with all unrighteous deception among those who perish, because they did not receive the love of the truth, that they might be saved. And for this reason (that is, because they don't love truth) God will send them strong delusion, that they should believe the lie, that they all may be condemned who did not believe the truth but had pleasure in unrighteousness."** It is a serious thing to reject truth, and people think they can play loose with God's truth and they will have a whole lifetime of hoping, "one of these days, preacher, I am going to get around to being saved." You don't know that. The key of salvation is not in your pocket. It is in the hands of God. The key is the Lord Jesus Christ. "Harden not your heart." That is what goes on when individuals hear the word and they reject the word, they are in the hardening process. Romans 1 brings that out very clearly, that God is turning them over to a reprobate mind, even though they are being exposed to what Paul says is the "goodness" of God. Don't you know, he says, that the goodness of God leads you to repentance, but you are just treasuring up wrath for the day of wrath. God sends delusion - do we really believe that? When the gospel is preached and men reject the gospel, they are deceiving themselves into believing that somehow they are going to be alright. How deceptive that is! How sad that is! But that is the case that goes on and on and on.

In John 12:39-40, the Apostle John again makes reference to the doctrine of reprobation or "passing by." After describing that some of the people who were listening to Jesus, still refused to believe in spite of the fact that Jesus had done so many signs and miracles in their presence, John says these words: ***"That the word of Isaiah the prophet might be fulfilled, which he spoke: Lord, who has believed our report? And to whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed? Therefore they could not believe, because Isaiah said again: He has blinded their eyes and hardened their hearts,*** (who is the "He" in this text? It is God who is doing this!), ***lest they should see with their eyes, lest they should understand with their hearts and turn, so that I should heal them. These things Isaiah said when he saw His glory and spoke of Him."*** Here is a hardening process, and God is involved in this process.

In Matthew 25:41 we find Christ's words to the wicked in the final judgment. ***"Depart from Me, you cursed, into the everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels."*** That is the strongest possible wording of the decree of reprobation, and it is the same in principle whether it is said in time or in eternity. If it is alright for God to do in time with the wicked as He does at the final judgment, it is not wrong for Him to include it in his eternal plan before the foundation of the world. Whether God decrees it in eternity, or whether he executes it in time, it makes it right, because God says so.

Turn to John 9:39 - Jesus Himself again declared on one occasion: ***"For judgment I have come into this world, that those who do not see may see, and that those who see may be made blind."*** How in the world do we explain that? Look back at the context of the previous text. Jesus is showing many signs and wonders. The people have ample evidence and proof of who He is. He is a unique being among all beings, and yet they refuse to believe. It is at that point that the hardening process of God begins to manifest itself. They who had natural revelation could see that there was a God and that they were religious. They had seen the supernatural workings of Jesus. They had eyes to see, but they refused to see. God took away that which they had, so what did they have? They had natural revelation. There was a warning statement that was used in my early years in church that comes from an Arminian setting, and some of you may have never heard of it. There was caution urged among the old-time country preachers by saying, "Be careful that you don't sin away your day of grace." Has anyone ever heard that saying? In essence, it was a warning that if you have heard the gospel, and if you are turning away from the gospel, it may be that God may never give you any more light. Instead He might start taking away the light you have already been given. That is through the hardening process of God. When people harden their hearts, then God hardens their hearts as we will continue to see in some other verses.

If you are hearing these words, you may be saying, "I just don't like what I am hearing. Why don't you just stay with Jesus and the simple gospel." Well, let's stay with the words of Jesus. Many signs and wonders had been done in various cities by the Lord Jesus Christ. Then we read in Matthew 11:25 - **"At that time Jesus answered and said, 'I thank You, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that You have hidden these things from the wise and prudent and have revealed them to babes.'"** Jesus is talking about the wise and the prudent, the scribes and pharisees, and all the people out here in these towns who had seen His miracles. This should have made them wise unto salvation, but God had hidden it from them and had revealed it to the unlikely - those who are infants, so to speak. This was not in the physical sense, but those who had little, if any, knowledge. What was Jesus' attitude toward this truth of God? He said **"it seemed good"** and He said "I thank you for this." That is pretty bold is it not? Jesus thanked the Father for the doctrine of reprobation. Then how is it that some who call themselves reformed and Calvinistic deny the doctrine? It is in the Scripture, and if it is in the Scripture, a Bible teacher has the responsibility to address it.

It is hard for us to realize that the adorable Saviour and Redeemer of mankind is to some, **"a stone of stumbling and a rock of offence;"** yet that is what the Scriptures declare Him to be. In Luke 2:34 we are told that even before He was born, it was said that He was **"destined for the fall and rising of many in Israel."** Those who were more likely candidates, the well-versed in Scripture, stumbled and fell over the Rock. But others like the woman at the well in Samaria, and the unlikely Zacchaeus up the tree, and one after another, arose through the ministry of Christ. But some were appointed to fall and some were appointed for the rising, or salvation.

In Jesus' intercessory prayer in the Garden of Gethsemane, He said, **"I pray for them,** (that is His disciples) **I pray not for the world, but for those whom Thou has given me."** (See John 17). Who is the world? What category of people? They are the reprobate, the unbeliever, the wicked. Jesus said, "I pray for these, the ones who you have given me, Father, out of the world. But I pray not for the world, I do not intercede for them." If you want to start a good religious discussion, just raise the question next Thanksgiving meal when you get ready to pray and say, "Do you know that Jesus doesn't pray for everybody?" That will get a good discussion started around the meal. This is what the text says.

Today Jesus is a High Priest on the throne of mercy, interceding for a special class of people - those who have been given to Him by the Father, who He had come to redeem by His blood, and to whom He will send forth the ministry of the Holy Spirit to apply the benefits of repentance, faith and perseverance. But He does not intercede for all men in the same way like that. This is hard doctrine, but yet Biblical doctrine.

Now the matter of the use of parables. Before we get to Matthew 13, turn to Isaiah 6:8-10. Here are verses that are used over and over in the Scriptures. Isaiah has volunteered, having heard the voice of God and seeing the glory of God on His throne, God said, "Who will be my spokesman to go and speak to the people?" In verse 8, Isaiah says, **"Here am I! Send me."** Is this going to be an evangelistic ministry of conversion that Isaiah is about to be sent on? He is going to go preach a message, but look what the message is. In verse 9 and 10 the Lord said, **"Go, and tell this people: 'Keep on hearing, but do not understand; Keep on seeing, but do not perceive. Make the heart of this people dull, and their ears heavy, and shut their eyes; lest they see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and return and be healed.'"** Then Isaiah asked, **"'Lord, how long?' And He answered: 'Until the cities are laid waste and without inhabitant, the houses are without a man, the land is utterly desolate, the Lord has removed men far away, . . .'"** Then in verse 13: **"But yet a tenth will be in it, and will return and be for consuming. . ."**

Here is a prophet who has been given a message, and it is a message of hardening, not of redemption. It is a message to a people who have for years and years turned from the knowledge of the true God and embraced idolatry. So God is raising up a special spokesman and with all of the light and understanding which had been given to these people, now they are about to have that light and understanding taken away from them, and Isaiah is going to be the spokesman who is going to be the instrument to do it. His message was the glory of God. Look at chapter 6 and verse 1: **"I saw the Lord sitting on a throne, high and lifted up, . . .Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts; the whole earth is full of His glory!"**

Now lets go over to Matthew where this is used to answer the disciples' question of why Jesus speaks in parables. Jesus has just finished the parable of the sower and has already done many wonderful mighty works visible to the people. Now He begins His parabolic ministry. Look at Matthew 13:10-16: **"And the disciples came and said to Him, 'Why do You speak to them in parables?' He answered and said to them, 'Because it has been given to you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it has not been given. For whoever has, to him more will be given, and he will have abundance; but whoever does not have, even what he has will be taken away from him. Therefore I speak to them in parables, because seeing they do not see, and hearing they do not hear, nor do they understand. And in them the prophecy of Isaiah is fulfilled, which says: 'Hearing you will hear and shall not understand, and seeing you will see and not perceive; For the hearts of this people have grown dull. Their ears are hard of hearing, And their eyes they have closed, lest they should see with their eyes and hear with their ears, lest they should understand with their**

hearts and turn, so that I should heal them. But blessed are your eyes for they see, and your ears for they hear.'"

I have repeated this numerous times in touching on the use of parables. It is generally understood by the average teacher and person who listens, that Jesus used parables to make things clearer. But here Jesus is saying just the opposite, that it was to make things harder to understand, because He had already made things clear to a certain segment of hearers, and they had shut their eyes and closed their ears through His public ministry. Now He sends them this spirit of slumber that they should believe the lie of Satan, and the hardening process goes on. So, who is doing the hardening? That is a loaded question. Was it the hearers or God? It was both! It is the same as the hardening of Pharaoh. Pharaoh hardened his heart and God hardened his heart. Both of these things are working together in harmony together. We will discuss the situation with Pharaoh later.

When individuals mock the truth of the gospel and say, "Leave me alone!" Or "I don't want to hear any more of that stuff!" What do you think Jesus might do? He would leave them alone. One of the minor prophets, Hosea, describes one of the tribes of Israel by the name of Ephraim. He said in Hosea 4:17, ***"Ephraim is joined to idols, Let him alone."*** That is reprobation. But do you see it was because of sin and rejection of the truth. They don't love the truth lest they be saved so God then sends them delusion and leaves them alone. When God removes this protection from a person, Satan has full access to go about deceiving and being deceived.

At the close of the sermon on the mount, in Matthew 7:6, Jesus gives a warning, He said ***"give not that which is holy unto the dogs, neither cast your pearls before swine."*** I had a person ask me one time, "Well, Pastor, how do we know in our evangelism who is a dog and who is a pig?" Jesus said there are some here from whom we are to withhold the message. They are dogs and swine. What is the characteristic of a dog? It returns to its vomit. But nearly every dog I have been around barks, barks and barks. What is the characteristic of a pig? They grunt, grunt, grunt, and when you start taking the gospel and proclaiming the gospel to people, and they start barking and grunting, it is time to withdraw it. "Leave them alone." That is not the evangelism I was taught in Bible college. The Evangelism I was taught is that it is God's purpose to save somebody every time the gospel is preached. It is clearly expressed here that sometimes when the gospel is preached, it is for the hardening of a hearer rather than the salvation of a hearer. Paul says, some are perishing and some are being saved. ***"To the one we are the aroma of death leading to death, and to the other the aroma of life leading to life. And who is sufficient for these things?"*** (II Corinthians 2:16). That is quite a responsibility. When I preach the gospel, it is laid on my shoulders that some are going to repent and believe, and have

everlasting life, and some are going to reject and harden their hearts and go right on out into eternity without Christ. But their blood is not on my shoulders. The watchman has faithfully proclaimed the message.

Those who believe that Christ designed to give His saving truth to every person for the purpose of salvation, flatly contradict Jesus Christ Himself. To the non-elect, the Bible is a sealed book; and only to the true Christian is it "given" to see and understand the things that are found in the Bible. So important is this truth that the Holy Spirit has been pleased to repeat six times in the New Testament this passage in Isaiah. They are found in these New Testament scriptures six times as follows. Matthew 13:14-15; Mark 4:12; Luke 8:10; John 12:40; Acts 28:27; Romans 11:9-10. The New Testament writers by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit record the statement in Isaiah. Is that not impressive? Six times God this text in Isaiah was used by the New Testament Apostles in their evangelism. Paul tell us that through grace the "election" received salvation and that the rest were hardened. And that **"God gave them a spirit of stupor, eyes that they should not see and ears that they should not hear."** (Romans 11:8). Then in Romans 11:8-10 one of these statements, Paul goes further and quotes the words of David in reference to reprobation when he says,

***Let their table be made a snare and a trap,
And a stumbling-block, and a recompense unto them;
Let their eyes be darkened, that they may not see,
And bow down their backs always.*** (KJV).

Over and over again the doctrine of reprobation is asserted. So I repeat here some evangelical proclamations of the gospel were designed to harden and not to heal.

The same doctrine finds these expressions in numerous other parts of Scripture. Let me give you these for time sake. Deuteronomy 2:30, Moses explained to the children of Israel **"But Sihon king of Heshbon would not let you pass by him; for Jehovah thy God hardened his spirit, and made his heart obstinate, that He might deliver him into thy hand, as it is this day."** Here is a king that wouldn't let them pass through to get to the promised land, and God hardened his heart so that he might come against Israel and be defeated and die. In regard to the tribes existing in the land of Canaan who came against Joshua after Moses is gone, we read in Joshua 11:20, **"For it was of Jehovah to harden their hearts, to come against Israel in battle, that He might utterly destroy them, as Jehovah commanded Moses."** Remember Moses was going to go in and wipe out everybody. Why didn't the tribes that were in the land of Canaan just all flee? God hardened their hearts and they said, "This is our land and we are not going to let it go!" God hardened their hearts that they might fight and be destroyed by Israel's military.

I Samuel 2:25, "Hophni and Phinehas, the sons of Eli, when reprov'd for their wickedness,

they **"hearkened not unto the voice of their father, because Jehovah was minded to slay them."** These two wicked, terrible sons, committed fornication right at the door or the curtain of the tabernacle. Eli corrected them, and they hardened their hearts and wouldn't listen because God had determined to kill them. And though Pharaoh acted very arrogantly and wickedly toward the Israelites, Paul assigns no other reason than that he was one of the reprobates whose evil actions were to be overruled for good; **"For the Scripture says unto Pharaoh, for this very purpose did I raise you up, that I might show in you My power, and that My name might be published abroad in all the earth."** (Romans 9:17; also Exodus 9:16).

So in all of the reprobate there is a blindness and a stubborn hardness of heart; and when they, like Pharaoh, are said to have been hardened of God, we may be sure that they were already in themselves worthy of being delivered over to Satan. The hearts of the wicked are never hardened by the direct influence of God. God does not infuse evil into the hearts of the wicked, but He simply permits some men to follow out the evil impulses that are already in their hearts, so that as a result of their own choices, they become more and more hardened and stubborn. You take a disobedient child that is hard-headed, and you tell them not to do something. What do they do? Do they say, "I'm sorry, Mom; I'm sorry, Dad?" No, they set themselves against what you say. If you really want to make them mad, what should you do? Just keep on telling them to either do something or not do something. They will harden and harden their minds and hearts against what you say. So how did God harden Pharaoh's heart? He gave him warning, after warning, after warning "Let my people go!" Pharaoh said, "Who are you to tell me what to do?" There was plague after plague and warning after warning given to Pharaoh, and there was a process of hardening and hardening. God was showing much long suffering. If I had been God, I probably would have "zapped" him right there the first time. But He raised Pharaoh up to give demonstration to all the kingdoms in the world at that time, to show His power over Pharaoh and Egypt which was the top of the world. Finally, Pharaoh's army perishes in the Red Sea. Don't you think that the news of that went out to the surrounding nations about Israel's God.

So in the scripture, there is one description of Pharaoh's hardening his own heart and another description about God hardening his heart. One is given from the Divine viewpoint and the other is given from the human viewpoint. God is ultimately responsible for the hardening of the heart in that He permits it to occur, and the inspired writer of Scripture, in graphic language, simply says that God does it. However, never are we to understand that God is the immediate and efficient cause of it. No more than if I try to correct one of my sons, and they harden their heart against that, and I just keep on telling them, "You'd better stop it! You are going to get a whipping!" I am not the one that is infusing

stubbornness into my child, but I am the one who is making him more and more hardened against his Dad, because every time I give that command, it just increases the hardening of his heart. So when I was a child, that is why some have said, "Be careful that you don't sin away your day of grace, because there may be a time in which God no longer allows you to hear the gospel." Today is the day of salvation. So although this doctrine is harsh, it is nevertheless Scriptural. It is plainly taught in Scripture and the only reason I can determine that others will not accept it, is either due to pure ignorance, they don't even know it is in the Bible, or unreasonable prejudice against the teachings that are there. One author says this,

Happily would it be for the Church of Christ and for the world, if Christian ministers and Christian people could be contented to be disciples (that is, Learners). If conscious of their limited faculties, their ignorance of divine things, and their proneness to err through depravity and their prejudice, they could be induced to sit at the feet of Jesus and learn of Him. The Church has been corrupted and cursed in almost every age by the undue confidence of men in their reasoning powers. They have undertaken to pronounce upon the reasonableness or unreasonableness of doctrines infinitely above their reason, which are necessarily matters of pure revelation. In their presumption they have sought to comprehend 'the deep things of God,' and have interpreted the Scriptures, not according to their obvious meaning, but according to the decisions of their finite reason. (Rice, *God Sovereign and Man Free*, pp. 3,4).

Again, he mentions the Book of Revelation, but he is not talking about the last book of the Bible, he is talking about special revelation. He goes on to say:

No one ever studied the works of Nature or the Book of Revelation without finding himself encompassed on every side by difficulties he could not solve. The philosopher is obliged to be satisfied with facts; and the theologian must content himself with God's declarations. (Ibid.)

Do you know that Science has never yet figured out how a bumble bee can fly? Some Scientists may be so troubled because they can't figure that one out. There are things, not only in nature, we cannot explain, there are things in the Bible that we cannot comprehend. Reprobation would not be comprehensible unless we find it in the Bible. Do you believe in the doctrine of the Trinity, that God is three persons in one? Explain that to me. Why do you believe it? Is it not because it is in the Bible? How many of you believe in the doctrine of predestination? Explain it to us. I am trying to do so. But no one would have ever embraced it if it were not in the Scriptures. Now if someone says, I don't understand the Trinity, I just trust it because it is in the Bible, why then do they object to the doctrine of predestination if it is in the Bible? The doctrine of reprobation is beyond in the mystery of God. Why does God save one, and pass by another? We don't know, but we know that He does that.

Many of those who insist that when people come to study the doctrine of the Trinity, they

should put aside all preconceived notions and should not rely simply upon the unaided human reason to decide what can or cannot be true of God, and who insist that the Scriptures should be accepted here as the unquestioned and authoritative guide, are not willing to follow those rules in the study of the doctrine of Predestination.