

Predestination: God's Choice to . . . ?

Belgic Confession – Article 16

Ephesians 1:3-14

1. Some Objections

- A. attacks on the character of God
- B. attacks on the concept of human freedom
- C. God is unfair!

2. The Explanation

A. back to the beginning . . .

- Genesis 1:13 – God's good creation – seven-fold declaration: “It is very good.”
- Genesis 2:16-17 – many freedoms, one prohibition: “¹⁶You are free to eat from any tree in the garden, ¹⁷but you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good & evil, for in the day you eat of it, you shall surely die.”
- Romans 5:12 – a rebellion with catastrophic consequences: “Sin entered the world through one man [Adam], and death through sin, and in this way death spread to all men, because all sinned.”
- BC16 – “all Adam's descendants having thus fallen into perdition and ruin by the sin of the first man.”
- there are no _____ people, only _____

B. Responding to Objections

- CD1.1 – *God's Right to Condemn All People*
“Since all people have sinned in Adam and have come under the sentence of the curse and eternal death, *God would have done no one an injustice if it had been His will to leave the entire human race in sin and under the curse, and to condemn them on account of their sin.* As the apostle says: 'The whole world is liable to the condemnation of God' (Rom.3:19). 'All have sinned and are deprived of the glory of God' (3:23). And 'the wages of sin is death' (6:23).”
- God's goodness – Psalm 92:15; Psalm 119:68; 1 John 1:5
- Man's sinfulness – CD1.5 – “The cause or blame for unbelief, as well as for all other sins, is not at all in God, but in man.”
- the language of the confessions regarding those destined for damnation
 - BC16 – “*leaves* [them] in their ruin and fall into which they have plunged themselves”
 - CD1.6 – “He *leaves* in their wickedness and hardness of heart those who have *not been chosen*.”
 - CD1.15 – “some have *not been chosen* or have *been passed by* in God's eternal election.... [God chose] to *leave* them in the common misery into which, by their own fault, they have plunged themselves.”
- the language of the confessions & Scripture regarding those destined for salvation
 - BC16 – “He is merciful since He delivers and preserves from this perdition those whom He in His eternal & unchangeable counsel, has *elected* and *chosen* in Jesus Christ our Lord by His pure goodness.”
 - Romans 11:5-6 – a remnant chosen “according to the *election of grace*”
 - Ephesians 1:4-5 – “³Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ, ⁴just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love, ⁵having predestined us to adoption as sons by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will, ⁶to the praise of the glory of His grace, by which He made us accepted in the Beloved.”
- the amazing thing is not that _____ people go _____ but that _____ people go to _____
- regarding human freedom
 - Romans 9:20 – “Who are you, O man, to talk back to God?”
 - unregenerate man will always find a way to blame God

3. The Intention

A. not speculation (see diagram)

B. but consolation & humble thankfulness

- Romans 10:9ff – “If you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus & believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. For with the heart one believes unto righteousness and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.... Whoever calls on name of the Lord shall be saved.”
- Hymns of Praise: “And can it be that I should gain an interest in the Savior's blood? ...
Amazing love! How can it be?”