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FOREORDINATION, the act of establishing beforehand by appointment or decree, predestination.

The Greek verb προσρίζω (*pro-orizō*), “determine before, ordain, predestinate,” occurs six times in the NT (Acts 4:28; Rom. 8:29, 30, I Cor. 2:7; Eph. 1:5, 11).

Another word related in thought is εὐδοκία (*eudokia*), “good pleasure.” The corresponding Hebrew word of the OT sometimes refers to man: his will, his self-will, his pleasure; more often it refers to God. Deuteronomy speaks of the good will of Him who dwelt in the burnin bush, and Psalm 40:8 says: “I delight to do they *will*.” In the NT *eudokia* twice refers to man's will; but seven times to God's (Luke 2:14; Mt. 11:25-26; Phil. 2:13; Eph. 1:5,9).

That God predetermines everything that happens is clear from Romans 8:28-30 and Ephesians 1:11. The former passage says that all things work together; and if anyone doubts that it is God who makes them work together, Ephesians 1:11 explicitly states that they have been foreordained by the decision of God, who works all things according to the advice of His own will. Such is the general principle: God predetermines everything and does whatever He pleases (Ps. 135:6; Dan. 4:35). This general principle can be exemplified through listing the particular things God does.

(1) The first is the salvation of some, as already indicated in Romans 8:28-30 and Ephesians 1:5, 11. This is also the meaning of I Peter 1:2. Isaiah 46:10 and Amos 3:2 show that God's foreknowledge is not an empirical discovery of something future. God knows the future because He determined it from eternity. Therefore when Peter says, “Elect according to the foreknowledge of God,” he is referring to a Divine choice.

Also Peter tells his readers that they are a chosen, peculiar people, i.e, a people of God's possession. God is pictured as having before the foundation of the world written certain names in the Lamb's book of life (Phil. 4:3, Rev. 3:5; 13:8; 17:8; 20:12, 15; 21:27; 22:19). The idea of God's choosing certain ones is enforced by the many verses that speak of the Father giving to His Son a certain group of people to redeem (Mt. 1:21; John 6:37, 39; 10:3, 27, 28; 17:2, 6, 7, 9, 11, 12, 24, II Tim. 2:19; Rev. 13:8; 21:27). The same idea is found in the OT (Ps. 22:30; Isa. 53:10). Concerning the prophets: Isaiah (49:1, 5) speaks of God's choosing him from birth, and Jeremiah (1:5) says that God ordained him before his birth to be a prophet. Paul in Galatians 1:15 echoes the same thought. These verses clearly speak of God's choosing men before the men chose God.

(2) But Acts 4:28 shows that God not only predestines salvation but that He predetermines evil actions also. As shocking as this ideas may be, it is expressed too clearly to deny. The most evil act in all history was the crucifixion of Christ. Yet in all this act Herod, Pontius Pilate, the Gentiles, and the

other people of Israel were gathered together to do what God had before determined was to be done. (Acts 2:23). Remember also in the OT Joseph's brothers sold him into slavery because they were evil; but it was God who foreordained their evil thoughts in order to save Jacob and his family from starvation (Gen. 50:20).

(3) A third item on the list of things that God foreordains is men's voluntary decisions. Whether men's choices are good or evil, God predestines them. The Scripture states that God hardened Pharaoh's heart (eleven times) and that He hardened the spirit of Sihon, king of Heshbon (Deut. 2:30). God sent Saul and evil spirit (I Sam. 16-19). God also sent a lying spirit to Ahab so as to accomplish his death (I Kings 22), and Ps. 105:25 says, "He turned their heart to hate his people."

Of course God also foreordains the decisions for good that men make. In Ex. 12:36 God made the Egyptians think well of the Israelites and caused them to decide to give them their jewelry. Prov. 16:1 states that the Lord controls what a man says. Prov. 21:1 asserts that God causes kings to think and decide whatever He wants them to. An explicit example is found in Ezra 7:6 (cf. Isa. 19:17; Jer. 13:13-14; Lam. 3:38).

(4) A fourth item is the general principle that God works all things together for good. God's preordination is displayed in the fulfillment of prophecy. The prophecies involve numbers of individuals and rather complicated circumstances. All those who were involved in the crucifixion, for example, were foreordained to be what they were: "But how then shall the scripture be fulfilled that *thus it must be*?" (Mt. 26: 54). All the details were "thus" because they had to be thus.

Nor is it only crucial events, like the crucifixion, that are predetermined, but also events of relatively minor importance. Jesus said to His disciples (Mark 14:13), "Go ye into the city, and there shall meet you a man bearing a pitcher of water." Suppose the man had decided not to go out that day, or not to carry a pitcher of water. But the man had to make these particular choices, for thus it must be. The choices were predetermined, for otherwise the prophecy would have been unsure and its fulfillment, if fulfilled, purely accidental, rather than a part of God's plan.

From this Biblical material it is legitimate to draw inferences about all history. Invasions from Asia swept over Europe in the 7th and 8th centuries; earlier the Gauls had moved to Galatia; Lithuanian peasant can understand simple Sanscrit. The Scripture says it was God who "hath determined the times before appointed and the bounds of their habitation" (Acts 17:26).

In summary it must be concluded that God controls the occurrence of external events also the internal decisions of man. Note that Romans 9 has not been cited; even without that overwhelming chapter foreordination (predetermination, predestination) is pervasively taught and exemplified throughout Scripture. The Shorter Catechism summarizes it simply: "He hath foreordained whatsoever

comes to pass.”

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