



The Foreordination of Governing Authorities

Mark 3:13-19

TO: **LEGISLATORS**FROM: **RALPH DROLLINGER**DATE: **MAY 10, 2010**

I am looking forward to our first in-person
MEMBERS WEEKLY BIBLE STUDY
FAMILY ROOM OF THE CAPITOL
STARTING JUNE 8.

For thinking and scheduling purposes please have your staff note the following: The dinner buffet will start after the last vote of your first-votes-back (either on Monday or Tuesday nights). The Bible study will begin punctually 15 minutes after the close of the last vote.
Member's spouses always welcome.

We arrive this week at a very important text in our ongoing study of the gospel of Mark. (These weekly written notes will become the basis for our in-person Members Bible Study mentioned above). In this passage Jesus summons—appoints—His disciples relative to the institution of the Church. The unavoidable application when teaching the Scriptures to lawmakers is the similar idea of God appointing you as a governing authority per Romans 13:1. The profundity of these passages is all important in order to please Him. Lest that concept come across as a burdensome load, my prayer is that you will see the tremendous blessings this study will yield in the life of one called to lead in government. Read on my friend! And thanks too for the emails of encouragement. Always feel free to email regarding things I can pray for, questions about the study, whatever... (ralph@capmin.org)

INTRODUCTION

Verses 14 and 15 of this week's passage underscore an unmistakable and unavoidable emphasis regarding the foreordination of Christ's followers. In order to do justice in exposition, heralding the authorial intent of the passage, foreordination need be emphasized. (By the way, this is a superb virtue of teaching the Bible verse-by-verse, in contrast to a topical approach; the discipline of verse-by-verse exegesis forces one to study the "whole counsel of God" [cf. Acts 20:25-27] sooner or later). As much as I'd like to avoid this subject (given the spirited debate that often arises over this topic) I nonetheless think it is a great time to develop (in subjugation to the topic in the title) the concept of scriptural antinomies. But first let's look at the passage and then

subsequently allow me to discuss foreordination in concert with the free will of man.

THE PASSAGE: MARK 3:13-19

And He went up to the mountain and summoned those whom He Himself wanted, and they came to Him. 14 And He appointed twelve, that they might be with Him, and that He might send them out to preach, 15 and to have authority to cast out the demons. 16 And He appointed the twelve: Simon (to whom He gave the name Peter), 17 and James, the son of Zebedee, and John the brother of James (to them He gave the name Boanerges, which means, "Sons of Thunder "); 18 and Andrew, and Philip, and Bartholomew, and Matthew, and Thomas, and James the son of Alphaeus, and Thaddaeus, and Simon the Zealot; 19 and Judas Iscariot, who also betrayed Him.

Notice the following words in verses 14 and 15 and the Greek behind them:

- **Summoned** *proskaleo* "to call for"
- **Wanted** *thelo* "desired, intended, purposed"
- **Appointed** *poieo* "to make"

These are significant words that Jesus uses in calling forth His disciples. The twelve He chose here have no particular merit. Recorded by Mark is a profound and, to the finite mind of man¹, a stymying (to use a term from the golf world²) account of God's sovereign election. God's election was evidenced in His choosing of Israel to be His called-out people (cf. Is. 45:4; Am. 3:2); they had no particular merit (Dt. 7:7; 9:4-6). God also elected angels to be forever His (1 Ti. 5:21). The Greek word often appearing in these and the following passages is *eklektos* from which we derive our English equivalent "to elect." To elect means "to pick out, select or choose." "To favor." In the following passages notice the amplification of this oft-repeated biblical doctrine: His choice of believers apart from personal merit.

I. THE FOREORDINATION OF BELIEVERS IN SALVATION

The following passages are the building blocks among many others that could be additionally cited to construct a theology of predestination relative to salvation as taught throughout the



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whole of Scripture. I will take the liberty to add the Greek roots that appear in the passages in order to create a deeper understanding via my ensuing insights.

A. Jeremiah 1:5: “Before I formed you in the womb I knew *yada* you, And before you were born I consecrated *qudash* you.”

The prophet Jeremiah was **known** *yada* by God in his mother’s womb (this is a rightly-so favorite, Pro-Life passage that scripturally authenticates life in the womb). Before he was born God had **consecrated** *qudash* him for His purposes. *Qudash* means “to be set apart and made holy.”

B. Matthew 24:24, 31: “For false Christs and false prophets will arise and will show great signs and wonders, so as to mislead, if possible, even the elect *eklektos* ...and He will send forth His angels with a great trumpet and they will gather together His elect *eklektos* from the four winds, from one end of the sky to the other.”

C. John 15:16: “You did not choose me but I chose *eklego* you and appointed *tithemi* you that you should go and bear fruit...”

Lest the disciples gain spiritual pride from their privileged position with the Messiah, Jesus sets the record straight as to who **chose** whom. **Chose** *eklego* is derived of *ek* meaning “from out of” and *lego* meaning “to say.” In other words Jesus is saying “I am the one who is to say you are coming from out of.” **Appointed** *tithemi* means “destined, and assigned.”

D. Romans 8:29-33: “For whom He foreknew, He also predestined to become conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the first-born among many brethren; 30 and whom He predestined, these He also called; and whom He called, these He also justified; and whom He justified, these He also glorified. 31 What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who is against us? 32 He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how will He not also with Him freely give us all things? 33 Who will bring a charge against God's elect? God is the one who justifies;”

This passage represents several week’s of life-impacting study (sometime we will tackle it in a future study). It contains a Himalayan amount of doctrine. Suffice to say here **predestined** *proorizo* comes from *pro* “before” and *horizo*, (we

derive our English word horizon) literally meaning “to mark off boundaries or determine.” *Proorizo* is also often translated as **foreordination**. Such occurred in eternity past per 2 Timothy 1:9: “Who has saved us, and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace which was granted us in Christ Jesus from all eternity...”

E. Ephesians 3:1-6: Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ, 4 just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before Him. In love 5 He predestined us to adoption as sons through Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the kind intention of His will, 6 to the praise of the glory of His grace, which He freely bestowed on us in the Beloved.

This is another pregnant passage that is hard to touch without the responsibility of having to deliver the whole enchilada. Nonetheless the passage overtly serves to make the point of this portion of the study.

F. Colossians 3:12: “And so, as those who have been chosen of God, holy and beloved, put on a heart of compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience;”

G. Titus 1:1: “Paul, a bond-servant of God, and an apostle of Jesus Christ, for the faith of those chosen of God and the knowledge of the truth which is according to godliness,”

H. 1 Peter 1:2: “According to the foreknowledge of God the Father, by the sanctifying work of the Spirit, that you may obey Jesus Christ and be sprinkled with His blood: May grace and peace be yours in fullest measure.”

The word **foreknowledge** from the root *proginosko* means “to know beforehand.”

God in His sovereignty before eternity chose whom He would predestine for salvation.³ These and many other passages are the exegetical building blocks for the soteriological doctrine of foreordination. These passages serve to reveal that the imprimatur of the believer’s salvation is God’s grace and not human will or personal merit⁴. In God’s revealed economy of the aforementioned, He receives all the glory for one’s salvation, versus the supposed “ingenious reasonability” of the



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convert (cf. Eph. 2:8&9).⁵ At the same time foreordination does not eclipse the responsibility of man to choose Christ...

MEN ARE TREATED AS RESPONSIBLE IN SCRIPTURE, BEING CAPABLE OF THE WILL AND POWER TO CHOOSE.

More on the free will of man later.

II. THE FOREORDINATION OF GOVERNING AUTHORITIES

Now please allow me to pivot in terms of the applicability of this passage to the capitol audience: Notice the following parallel passage in terms of the foreordination of institutional leadership. Similar to Jesus calling His disciples for the institution of the Church, Romans 13:1 evidences God's calling of leaders for the State⁶:

Every person is to be in subjection to governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and those which exist are established by God.

The following English words with Greek insights are important to understanding proper understanding and applicability:

- **Governing** *huperecho* "to hold above, to rise above, and to be superior."
- **Authority** *exousia* "power to act."
- **Established** *tasso* "to draw up in order, arrange, appointed, designated, determined, set."

God has foreordained, that is to say "established, arranged, appointed, designated, determined, set up" human government and those who are in office.⁷

THOSE APPOINTED TO GOVERNMENT ARE HIS FOREORDAINED MEDIATED AUTHORITY FOR THE PURPOSE OF "REWARDING THOSE WHO DO GOOD AND PUNISHING THOSE WHO DO EVIL" (1 PETER 2: 13-14).

This is the purpose for government, for which He called authorities, imbuing them with power to act on His behalf. Colossians 1:16 adds, "For by Him all things were created, both in the heavens and on earth, visible and invisible,

whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things have been created by Him and for Him."

In an ultimate sense, Legislators are elected by God and He utilizes (in a democracy) the populous to achieve His purposes in calling one into office.

III. THE FREE WILL OF MAN

Here are several passages indicating the need for humans to choose to accept Christ as Savior and Lord:

A. John 1:12: "But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name."

B. John 3:16: "For God so loved the world, that he gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life."

C. Romans 10:9-11: "That if you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved; for with the heart a person believes, resulting in righteousness, and with the mouth he confesses, resulting in salvation, for the Scripture says, 'Whoever believes in Him will not be disappointed.'"

In Scripture, the sovereignty of God does not eliminate the responsibility of, or the free will of, man. These two truths are seemingly, when taken to their extreme, contradictory to one another in the finite mind of man. There is however a plausible solution to consider...

IV. ANTINOMOUS TRUTHS

There exists a plausible explanation regarding the seeming dichotomy between the sovereignty of God and the free will of man. The two are best explained as antinomous truths. An antinomy is "opposition of one law or rule to another law or rule." In the infinite mind of God there are no antinomies; but to the finite mind of man, there are. Further, we live with antinomies every day. For instance, light exists in theory as both particulate matter and in wavelength format. Taken to their extreme these theories on light seemingly contradict one another. Mankind however remains convinced that light exists even though he does not totally understand it.⁸ Another way to view antinomies is via contemplation of the infinite and



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omniscient nature of the author of Scripture. If someone with those attributions wrote the Bible it stands to reason that the finite mind of man would at times bump up against his ceiling. Further, had man penned Scripture antinomies would have been removed; antinomies serve to authenticate His origination. Consider the following passages from God's Word in this regard:

Isaiah 55:8 "For My thoughts are not your thoughts, Neither are your ways My ways," declares the LORD."

Deuteronomy 29:29 "The secret things belong to the LORD our God, but the things revealed belong to us and to our sons forever, that we may observe all the words of this law."

I Corinthians 13:12 "For now we see in a mirror dimly, but then face to face; now I know in part, but then I shall know fully just as I also have been fully known."

To expand on this idea, it would follow that antinomies exist throughout the major doctrines of Scripture, and they do. For instance, In Theology Proper, how does one satisfactorily explain the Trinity? In Christology, how does one satisfactorily explain the hypostatic union, wherein Jesus is 100% God incarnate and 100% tempted as man? In Eschatology, how does one reconcile that the world is passing away, and yet the believer is told that "faith without works is dead"? And yet one manages to live daily with these and other theological tensions. At certain points in Scripture the sincerest and godliest of believers cannot comprehend the infinite nature of His mind.

So it is with the foreordination of governing authorities: One must work hard to be elected to public office, but ultimately God receives all the glory for appointing one to office. Such is the tension of living with antinomies.

APPLICATION

It is this biblical understanding of foreordination, borne from careful study of Scripture that provides one with confidence and solace during tenor in office. It is the doctrine of foreordination that provides strength during times of personal weakness. It is the doctrine of foreordination that spells the sentence "You did not choose Me, but I chose you." It is the doctrine of foreordination that buoys in times of doubt, fear and feelings of inadequacy. It is the doctrine of foreordination

that informs the inner man that effective, God-glorifying service does not stem from personal merit, aptitude, opportunity, personal qualifications, strength of personality or might, but rather the all-sufficient grace of God through the indwelling Holy Spirit. It is the doctrine of foreordination solely based on the sovereignty of God and His choosing a wretch like me that provides the ultimate basis for valor to serve Him and our country in such a time as this.

If God is for us, who is against us? (Rom. 8:31)

¹ Cf. 1 Cor. 13:12; Deut. 29:29

² Stymie: "To block or thwart. A situation in golf in which an opponent's ball obstructs the line of play of one's own ball on the putting green." (M&W).

³ The biblical theology of foreordination, explicit and unavoidable in Scripture, does not thwart evangelism since the foreordained are unknown to man (not to God) prior to salvation. Even though God predestines individuals for salvation He calls believers to be obedient and share in the task per 2 Cor. 5:20.

⁴ Sometimes scriptural truths seem hard to comprehend. This then becomes a test as to the ultimate source for truth in one's heart: Is it rationality or revelation? When God's revelation trumps personal "rationality" with whom does one side?

⁵ The noetic effect of the Fall in Genesis 3 makes reasoning oneself to faith in Christ impossible; such intervention into the fallen mind of man is a work of grace by the Spirit of God.

⁶ See also 1 Peter 2:14, specifically the phrase "as sent by Him."

⁷ Cf. Romans 13:1-8. Three times diakonia is used to signify governing individuals in the state as servants of God. Note especially verse 6.

⁸ This illustration is borrowed from *Evangelism and the Sovereignty of God* by J.I. Packer, Intervarsity Press.