

LESSONS ON PREDESTINATION #24 "The Election of Angels"

INTRODUCTION: As I have acknowledged my indebtedness to Loraine Boettner in his classic work, *The Reformed Doctrine of Predestination*, I wish to give credit to my personal friend, Dr. Curt Daniel, for much of the material I will be presenting today. In spite of the twenty-five part series regarding Angels on CD's which I produced many years ago, Dr. Daniel's outline and material is more concisely arranged than mine so I will be enabled to present it in one lesson. Nevertheless, I will have to delete and/or replace some portions to accomplish my time limitation. There will also be some of my thoughts intermixed with his.

In the previous lessons dealing with election and reprobation, we have tried to clarify the Reformed or Calvinistic positive positions. Now we must face three "hard cases" which present themselves: they concern angels, infants, and the un-evangelized. We will first examine the issue of the election of angels.

A. THE WESTMINSTER CONFESSION

In (III: 3,4) it states, "By the decree of God, for the manifestation of His glory, some men and angels are predestined unto everlasting life, and others foreordained to everlasting death. These angels and men, thus predestined and foreordained are particularly and unchangeably designed; and their number is so certain and definite, that it cannot be either increased or diminished."

The Larger Catechism (Question 19) adds further details: "God by His providence permitted some of the angels, wilfully and irrevocably, to fall into sin and damnation, limiting and ordering that, and all their sins, to His own glory; and established the rest in holiness and happiness: employing them all, at His pleasure, in the administrations of His power, mercy, and justice."

B. THE ELECT ANGELS

1. Very little is explicitly stated in Scripture concerning the election of angels. In fact only one verse specifically and explicitly mentions it. That one verse alone would be sufficient to prove the doctrine. Nevertheless we can legitimately deduct more about the subject from other contexts.

2. The one verse is I Timothy 5:21 and in the NKJV it says, "***I charge you before God and the Lord Jesus Christ and the elect (chosen) angels that you observe these things without prejudice, doing nothing with partiality.***" (NOTE: the word "elect" can also be translated "chosen.")

3. The phrase "elect angels" means that some angels were elected. Angels is in the plural so there are many such angels. All of the angels in heaven are elect. And just as some humans are elected to be holy (Ephesians 1:4), so the elect angels are called "holy angels." (Mark 8:38; Luke 9:26).

4. It is evident at once that we can see a difference between elect angels and men. All elect men fell into sin, but none of the elect angels have ever sinned. In contrast to the election of fallen men, there is no evidence that God ever elected some of the fallen angels. Since salvation is the product of election (II Thessalonians 2:13) and none of the fallen angels will ever be saved (Matthew 25:41) it follows that none of the fallen angels were elected. So the elect angels then never fell. So then election was in a decree to keep them from falling and not a decree to save them from sin. The decree then has two stages: (1) preservation from the Fall; (2) predestination to happiness and glory.

5. There are two views as to why these elect angels did not sin. First, it is suggested that all the angels were created equal and placed in a state of probation in their sinless state, similar to Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden. God placed them under a covenant with the condition that, if obeyed, they would pass the test and then be made impeccable (unable to sin). Cf. The impeccability of Christ. Upon passing the test, they would be confirmed in holiness and thus guaranteed never to fall. The ones who passed the test were the elect angels. The very test and their passing it had been foreordained by God. This is my view.

6. The second view is that the elect angels were always impeccable. The others were not created impeccable, and they all fell into sin. This view holds that the angels were created on an unequal basis. This does not mean that God created some of them sinful. Rather, it means that God created the elect angels impeccable (unable to sin) and the non-elect angels sinless but peccable (able to sin). Theologians agree that the election of these angels occurred in eternity before the creation occurred. There are some similarities between the election of angels and men:

- (1) Their number is definite and certain;
- (2) Not all were elected;
- (3) Their election is past and certain;
- (4) They are predestined to eternal glory and happiness.

C. THE REPROBATE ANGELS

1. There is another important parallel between men and angels, that being, the election of some implies rejection of others. Calvin saw this and observed "Paul calls the angels who stood in their uprightness 'elect'" (I Timothy 5:21). If their steadfastness was

grounded in God's good pleasure, the rebellion of the others proves they were forsaken. No other cause of this fact can be adduced but reprobation, which is hidden in God's secret plan." Thus, some angels are reprobate angels.

2. Just as the election of the holy angels was in two stages, so was the reprobation of the fallen angels: (1) Negatively, they were foreordained to fall into sin by passing them by and withholding the power to sustain them in their upright or sinless condition. (2) Positively, they were left in their sin and predestined to suffer the consequences. The consequences follow the historic order in this manner:

- (a) They were cast out of their holy estate in heaven.
- (b) Some were cast down on the realm of earth and others were reserved in chains in Hades or Hell.
- (c) They will all be cast into the lake of fire at the final judgment.

3. The reprobate angels are eternally doomed. None will ever be saved. God did not have to keep them from falling, and He does not have to save any of them. As He has chosen to leave all the unfallen or elect angels in their holiness, so He has chosen to leave all the fallen or reprobate angels in their sins. Unlike sinful or fallen men, who are elect, there is no mixture of sin in unfallen or elect angels. In this respect, the fallen angels are like the fallen reprobate men; - they are left in their sin to suffer the consequences.

4. There is, however, one temporary difference between reprobate men and angels. No man now on earth can know for certain that he is reprobate, because he may yet be brought to faith by God's sovereign grace. But all the reprobate angels presently know they are reprobate. In this sense, they are now like all reprobate men will be in eternity when they meet the awesome doom to which they were predestined. In Revelation 12:12 we read that after Satan was cast out of heaven down to earth that, **"For the devil has come down to you, having great wrath, because he knows that he has a short time."** Satan knows that his time is short, but not how short. Only Christ knows the time of His return to judge Satan and his angels. (Cf. Matthew 24:36).

What then does the time "short" mean? It means that it is short in that it is not endless. His present time to deceive will end when Christ returns and casts him into the lake of fire. Thus he knows that he will never be saved, and that he is a reprobate. The rest of the reprobate angels also know they are reprobate. In Matthew 8:29, some demons cried out to Jesus, **"Have you come here to torment us before the time?"** The time is the final judgment. They know there will come a time when they will certainly be judged with Satan. They do not know when, but they know it is certain. They also know they are reprobate.

5. Let's expand the topic further. All the unfallen angels know they are elect, and they know that all of the rest of the unfallen angels are elect. But the elect angels also know that all the rest of the fallen angels are reprobate. And again, all the reprobate angels know that all the unfallen angels are elect.

6. A following comment can be made at this time. Loraine Boettner wrote, "If it was consistent with God's infinite goodness and justice to pass by the whole body of fallen angels and to leave them to suffer the consequences of their sin, then certainly it was consistent with His goodness and justice to pass by some of the fallen race of men and to leave them in their sin." (While I have heard many in the Pelagian and Semi-Pelagian (Arminian) camps complain that the Calvinist doctrine of the reprobation of men is unfair, I have never encountered a single one who would charge God with unfairness in reprobating the demons or fallen angels!

7. Another point to consider is that the elect angels were chosen out of an unfallen mass. Those who hold to the Supralapsarian theory of the order of God's decrees use this to support their position that the same scene fits both men and angels. Thus in the order of decrees God elected some men out of an unfallen lump and reprobated others out of the same unfallen lump. It is then stated that if it was not unfair for the angels, then why is it considered unfair or unjust for men? Inasmuch as we have not considered the subject of the order of God's decrees, the Supra and Infra order of the decrees must be tabled until that lesson is discussed.

8. I will at this time give what I believe to be the order of the decrees involving the election and reprobation of angels.

- (1) Decree to create the angels
- (2) Decree to preserve some angels in holiness and not to preserve the others.
- (3) Decree to predestine to glory the unfallen angels and to predestine to punishment the fallen angels

D. THE ELECT ANGELS AND CHRIST.

1. Another consideration needs to be mentioned in passing. Because the elect angels never fell, they do not have need of a Savior from sin. Therefore they were not elected "in Christ" as men are (cf. Ephesians 1:4). Louis Berkhof sums up the Calvinist view here by saying, "The angels were not elected or predestined in Christ as Mediator, but in Him as Head, that is, to stand in a ministerial relation to Him."

2. This can be concluded from such texts as Colossians 1:16, 2:10; Ephesians 1:21-23; Hebrews 2:14-16; I Peter 3:22.

E. THE DESTINIES OF THE ELECT AND REPROBATE ANGELS.

1. First consideration: In Matthew 25:41 and several verses in Revelation, we are informed that all the fallen angels will one day be cast into the lake of fire. Thus, they are reprobated to the same end as reprobate men. They will glorify the justice of God by their tormenting punishments.

2. In Philippians 2:9-11 we are told of Christ's reward for His redemptive work. ***"Therefore God also has highly exalted Him and given Him the name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those in heaven, and of those on earth, and of those under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father."*** Here we are told that every moral being in God's creative order will bow the knee in submission to the Lordship of Jesus Christ and give glory to God. This includes reprobate men as well as reprobate angels who will do so unwillingly, along with elect men and angels who will do so willingly.

3. Second consideration: The relationship between the elect angels and elect men. How each group views the other.

a. First: elect men will meet elect angels. We will glorify God for the election of these angels, and thank Him for using them as ministering spirits while we were here on earth. (Hebrews 2:14).

b. Second: elect angels will be amazed at the glory which God bestows on elect fallen men. At the present time they are curious and interested in the redemption of fallen men. (I Peter 1:12).

c. Here in time they rejoice to the glory of God as they witness the conversions of elect men. (Luke 15:10).

d. How much more will they rejoice in glory when all elect men are finally glorified. Yes, they shall sing a different song than the redeemed of mankind, but their song is dedicated to Christ on the order of "Behold how He loved His chosen bride!" Ephesians 3:10 also indicates they will glorify God through the revelation of God's wise plan in saving fallen men. Since they are our servants here and now, they will be predestined to be our servants forever in eternity.

4. Third consideration: The elect angels will glorify God as they witness both the reprobate men and angels being cast into eternal torment to which they were foreordained for their sin.

5. Fourth consideration: Elect men will also glorify God as we view the condemnation of reprobate men and angels (Revelation 19-22). We will even help judge them. cf. I Corinthians 6:2,3 - ***"Do you not know that the saints will judge the world? And if the world will be judged by you, are you unworthy to judge the smallest matters? Do you not know that we shall judge angels? How much more, things that pertain to this life?"*** And since the fallen angels are the worse sinners in the universe, with Satan as their head, they will suffer worse in the lake of fire. Why, because of the great amount of light they had given them in their unfallen state; which light exposed them to such a greater clarity of the being of God than any human was ever given. cf. Isaiah 6:1-3. To whom much is given, much shall be required.