

PREVAILING LOVE

A STUDY ON DIVINE PREDESTINATION



God's Prevailing **Love**

- Agapeology
- Predestined **by** and **for** love
- Chosen **in** and **for** Christ
- The will worships
- God's will rules

Compatibilism

The Harmony of Divine Sovereignty and Human Responsibility

He **chose** us in him before the foundation of the world

Ephesians 1:4



I call heaven and earth to witness against you today, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and curse.

Therefore **choose** life
Deuteronomy 30:19



The heart of man plans his way, but the LORD establishes his steps.

Proverbs 16:9

LEFT TO **SELF**

Clearing Misconceptions about the **Flip Side of Election**

THE TWOFOLD DIFFICULTY

- 1. Theological** Problem
- 2. Logical** Problem

The **Theological** Problem

If non-election is an exact opposite of election:

- 1) **Fatalism** – does violence to man's moral culpability and personal responsibility (no need for compatibilism)
- 2) Makes God the author of **sin**
- 3) Makes divine **justice** a charade
- 4) Makes the **gospel** offer disingenuous

The **Logical** Problem

If God only predestines in love for salvation:

- 1) A non-election is an election by the rules of antithesis
- 2) To **not** elect one for life is to elect that one for death

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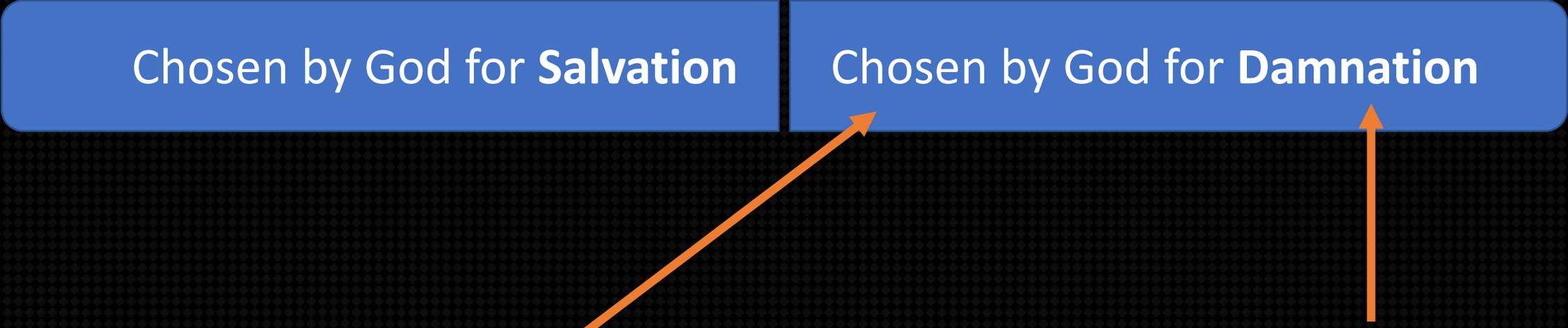
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Logical Analysis

Chosen by God for **Salvation**

Chosen by God for **Damnation**

Is “chosen” the efficient cause of “damnation”?



Logical Analysis

Chosen by God for **Salvation**

Not chosen by God for Salvation

BETTER

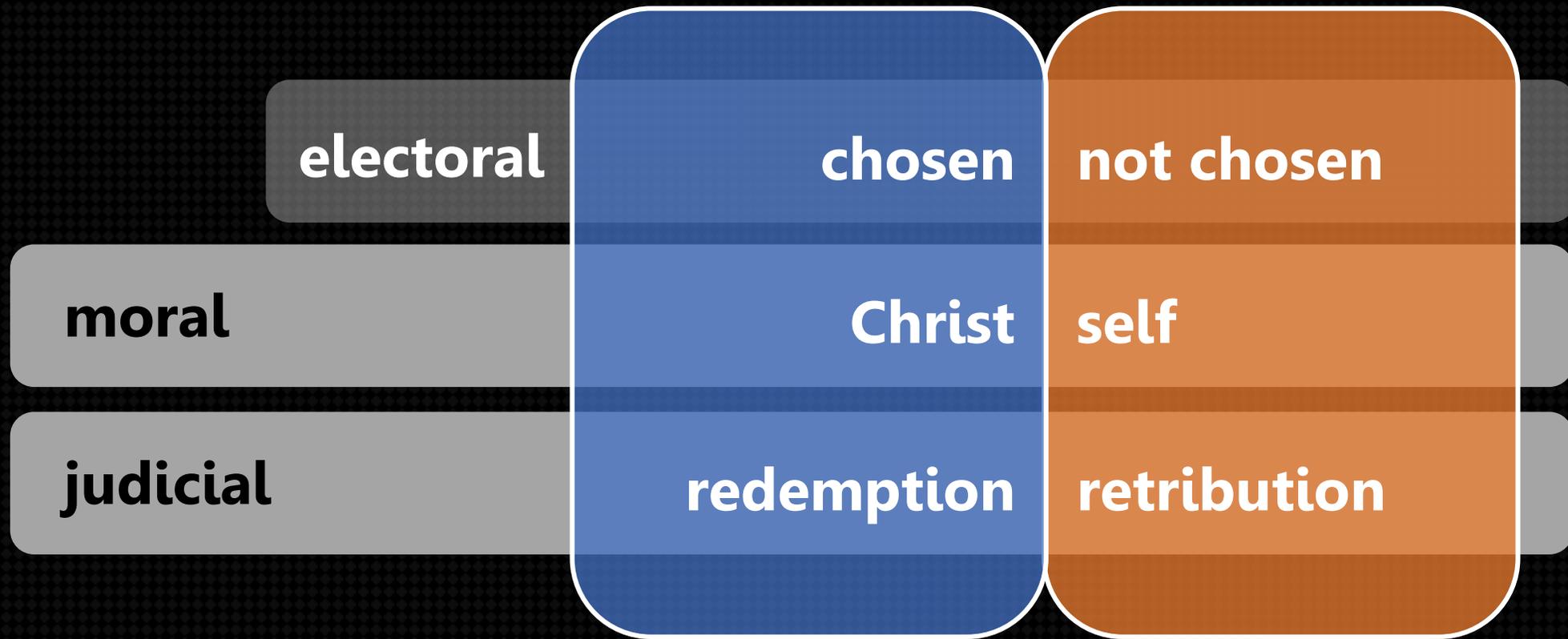
Logical Analysis

Chosen by God for **Salvation**

Left to **Self**

CONCLUSION

Logical Analysis

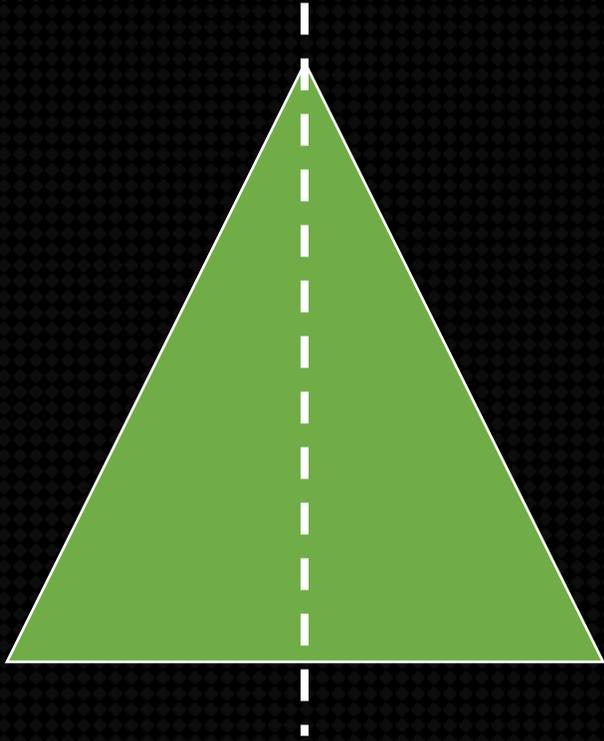


Logical Analysis

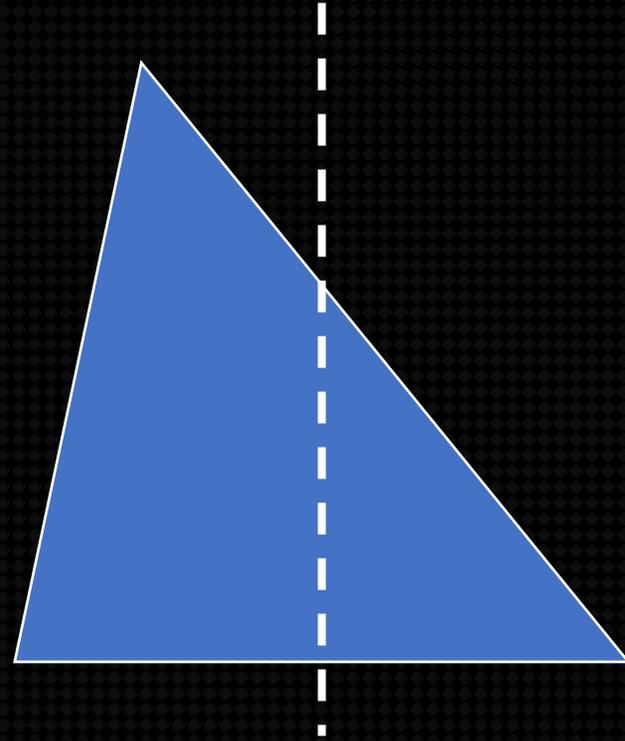
	Elect	Non-Elect
(A) Divine Initiative	Actively Chosen	Left to Self
(B) Human Merit	Actively Imputed	Left to Self
(C) Divine Reckoning	Actively Justified	Left to Self

Principle of Asymmetry

Symmetrical



Asymmetrical



For the **wages** of sin is death,
but the **free gift** of God is eternal life
in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Romans 6:23

Q

What about Jude 4?

Is this verse saying that people are predestined for judgment?

For certain people have crept in unnoticed who long ago were **designated for this condemnation**, ungodly people, who pervert the grace of our God into sensuality and deny our only Master and Lord, Jesus Christ.

Meaning of "Designated"

- *prographō* (*pro-* "before" + *graphō* "to write")
 - Never means "ordained"
 - Only used in NT to describe "written beforehand" (Ephesians 3:3; Romans 15:4)
 - Used temporally, not spatially
 - Modified by "long ago" (*palai*), which never refers to eternity

The Apostates

- Nowhere does Jude explicitly identify these ungodly men.
- It is teaching and conduct that is to be confronted; the possibility of the individual's repentance withstanding.
- To declare the just punishment for a crime does not make the criminal incorrigible; he is not sentenced until personally judged, and a man is not personally judged until death or Christ's return.

The Apostates

- It is not that the individuals are being kept, but that judgment for certain rebellion is being kept (v.13).
- This is in contrast to "those who are called" and "beloved in God" who are personally "kept for Jesus Christ."
- The text does not say that the apostates themselves are being kept for judgment but rather judgment is being kept for those who finally prove themselves to be without Christ.

“Woe to the world for temptations to sin! For it is necessary that temptations come, but woe to the one by whom the temptation comes!”

Matthew 18:7

Exegetical Details

(a) The word *prographō*, which is translated “designated” (ESV, HCSB, RSV), “marked out” (NASB, NKJV), “ordained” (KJV), in temporal contexts means “written beforehand” (used only in Ephesians 3:3; Romans 15:4). It is never used in Scripture for decrees, in any context.

how the mystery was made known to me by revelation,
as **I have written** briefly.

Ephesians 3:3

For whatever **was written** in former days was written for our instruction, that through endurance and through the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope.

Romans 15:4

Exegetical Details

(b) The context suggests that examples and types are the subject of what was written in time past and were written by various hands.

Exegetical Details

(c) The adverb *palai* ("long ago") is never used in Scripture for eternal decrees. It denotes an indefinite interval of time prior to the present but is never used to point to a pre-temporal action or decision.

Exegetical Details

(d) The reference of “this condemnation” points forward to examples and types of judgment that the ungodly of old experienced. The principle intended is clear: like rebellion brings like condemnation. The condemnation is attached to the character of conduct, not the person’s name.

Exegetical Details

(e) There is room for the ungodly to repent. There is no indication that these "certain people" are unforgivable as though repentance is being withheld from them. To the contrary, there is indication that at least some of these people can repent (vv. 22-23).

Exegetical Details

(f) The church is called to evangelize those contaminated by these ungodly influences, and this may very well include those mentioned in verse 4.

And have mercy on **those who doubt**; save **others** by snatching them out of the fire; to **others** show mercy with fear, hating even the garment stained by the flesh.

Jude 22–23

Q

What about 1 Peter 2:8?

Is this verse saying that people are predestined to disobey?

“A stone of stumbling, and a rock of offense.” They stumble because they disobey the word, **as they were destined to do.**

Exegetical Details

(a) The context demands that this verse is included here to comfort and encourage believers in the midst of rejection and hostility. To answer this demand with a supposed eternal decree of damnation on all who oppose is less than convincing. It is more reasonable to understand this text as pointing them to the sovereignty of God in their experiences. Even such hostility is not outside of God's sovereign appointment.

Exegetical Details

(b) In the surrounding context, believers are encouraged to holiness and faithfulness to proclaim the excellencies of Christ, even to those who are presently rejecting Him.

Exegetical Details

(c) The meaning of the word for 'destined' or 'appointed' (*tithēmi*) is to put, place, set, or lay.

- It is not semantically equivalent to 'predestined' or 'predetermined'—a clear asymmetry exists between these terms.
- It is not describing an eternal decree. It is something that typically happens in time.
- It serves most evidently as a demonstration of the sovereignty of God in present circumstances.

Exegetical Details

(d) People were appointed to the action of stumbling, not to a particular destination.

Exegetical Details

(e) This appointment was by God's sovereign placement of them in time and place to bring about His good purposes.

Exegetical Details

(f) The cause of their stumbling was their own disobedience, it was not caused by God.

Exegetical Details

(g) There is no indication that those in view are excluded from the hope of repentance and salvation.

This Jesus, delivered up according to the definite plan and foreknowledge of God, you crucified and killed by the hands of lawless men.

Acts 2:23

For truly in this city there were gathered together against your holy servant Jesus, whom you anointed, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, along with the Gentiles and the peoples of Israel, to do whatever your hand and your plan had predestined to take place.

Acts 4:27–28

Election of some to eternal life and the passing over of others is never viewed in the same way in Scripture. Election to salvation is viewed as a cause for rejoicing and praise to God, who is worthy of praise and receives all the credit for our salvation (note 1 Pet. 1:1–3; Eph. 1:3–6). God is viewed as actively choosing us for salvation, and doing so with delight. But 'reprobation' (the passing over of those who are not chosen, and justly leaving them in their rebellion) is viewed as something which brings God sorrow, not delight (note Ezek. 33:11, and cf. Paul's sorrow in Rom. 9:1–2), and in which the blame is always put on the men or angels who rebel, not on God (John 3:18–19; 5:40).

Wayne Grudem

Our response should not be one of confusion, apathy, or mere intellectuality. This is a matter of deepest import. But one that we cannot penetrate beyond trusting in the character of God and rejoicing in what He has revealed to us. We should respond as Leighton urges: "Wonder not that others refuse him, but believe the more for that, because you see the word to be true even in their not believing of it; it is fulfilled and verified by their very rejecting of it as false."

“The secret things belong to the LORD our God, but the things that are revealed belong to us and to our children forever, that we may do all the words of this law.”

Deuteronomy 29:29