

Third Stage: Predestined



Secure in God's Choice (Part 6)
by Derek Prince

It's good to be with you again at the beginning of a new week, sharing with you Keys to Successful Living which God has placed in my hand through many years of personal experience and Christian ministry. This week I'll be continuing with the theme which I commenced last week, "Secure in God's Choice," a theme which can bring you into a new place of security in God.

But first, let me say "Thank you" to those of you who have been writing to me. Before I finish this talk, we'll be giving you a mailing address to which you may write. It means a great deal to me to hear how this radio ministry of mine has been helping you and blessing you, so please take time to write, even if it's only a brief personal note.

Now, back to our theme, "Secure in God's Choice."

In my talks last week, I explained that God has a perfect plan for the life of every believer, a plan which commences in eternity, emerges into time, and then carries us on into eternity once again. In this plan there are seven successive stages, which I will briefly recapitulate:

First, God foreknew us.

Second, He chose us.

Third, He predestined us.

Fourth, He called us.

Fifth, He saved us.

Sixth, He justified us.

Seventh, He glorified us.

In my last two talks last week, I explained the first two stages. God foreknew, everything ultimately is based on God's total knowledge of everything and everybody from eternity. He foreknew us before we came into being. On the basis of His knowledge, He chose us. It's very important to emphasize that God's choice is not made at random, it's based on His knowledge. He knows us, He knows what He

can do with us, He knows how to bring us to the place that He's promised to bring us to. We can rest in God's total knowledge.

This week I'll be dealing with the remaining five stages of that process in order, commencing today with the third stage which is God predestined us. The noun formed from the verb "predestined" is "predestination." And that is a rather frightening word. It frightens people. They think of some tremendous theological issue and they tend to shy away from it. Actually, its meaning is pretty simple really. To be predestined means that God has arranged in advance the course that your life is to follow. Because it's so important, I'll say that again: God has arranged in advance the course that your life is to follow.

The New Testament lays great emphasis on this fact that God has predestined us. I'll quote briefly four successive examples from the New Testament. First of all, in Romans 8:29, it says:

> "For whom [God] foreknew, He also predestined to become conformed to the image of His Son..." (NAS)

And then again, in the next verse:

> "and whom He predestined, these He also called..." (NAS)

So Paul states there twice that God predestined those He called. Notice to what we are predestined, that's very important. A lot of people tend to talk about being predestined to heaven or to hell and that often offends people who listen to them. But what Paul says is we are predestined to become conformed to the image of God's Son, Jesus Christ. If somebody tells me he's predestined to heaven and I see no change is his life and no trace of godliness I can well question the truth of what he's saying. But if I see somebody who's becoming truly conformed in his life and character to the person and nature of Jesus Christ, I think there is only one explanation, He must have been predestined. It couldn't have come about any other way.

Then again in Ephesians 1:3-6, some very wonderful words of Paul. He says:

> "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, just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before Him. [Notice there Paul emphasizes also the fact that God chose us, which we have already touched on. Then he continues:] In love [God] predestined us to adoption as sons through Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the kind intention of His will, to the praise of the glory of His grace, which He freely bestowed on us in the Beloved [that's in the Lord Jesus Christ]." (NAS)

So God predestined us to be adopted as His children to Himself through Jesus Christ. And this was His kind intention from eternity. And then Paul says this is all designed to work out to the praise of the glory of His grace. Notice three objectives of predestination. First of all, we're predestined to be sons of God, to be adopted into His family, become part of His family. Secondly, it's all predestined to bring glory to God. You see, the ultimate purpose of everything in the universe is to glorify God. The essence of sin is the failure to glorify God. Paul says in Romans 3:23: "All have sinned." In what way? They have come short of the glory of God. So God's purpose in predestination is to retrieve His glory of which our sin had robbed Him. And He does this through His grace, not through our works. Not through our efforts, but through His grace, He brings us into His family in such a way that our lives bring glory to Him.

So notice the three objectives there. I'll just sum them up briefly. We're predestined to become sons.

It's predestined to be for God's glory.

And it's predestined to take place by His grace.

I'm sure those of us who are realistic about ourselves would have to acknowledge if it isn't by God's grace, it's never going to happen. And then one more passage in Ephesians 1:11-12:

> "In Him [that is, the Lord Jesus Christ] In Him also we have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to His purpose who works all things after the counsel of His will, to the end that we who were the first to hope in Christ should be to the praise of His glory." (NAS)

Notice again, we're predestined according to the purpose of God who works all things after the counsel of His will. That should set our hearts at rest. If God has decided to do it, He's going to get it done. And then it emphasizes again that it should be for the praise of God's glory. Always the ultimate purpose is God's glory. Let me give this a very simple, practical application. You are not an accident looking for somewhere to happen; you're part of an eternal plan, you're

destined to become a member of God's family, and it's all going to take place through His grace and for His glory.

Now God's predestination even provides for our mistakes. Praise God it does. He anticipates them and has ways prepared to deliver us from them by His grace. I want to give you the example of the prophet Jonah. God called the prophet Jonah from the mountains of Galilee to go east to Nineveh to warn that city of impending destruction. Now Jonah was an Israelite; Nineveh was the capital of Israel's enemy Assyria; Jonah didn't want to see God spare Nineveh. So, instead of going east to Nineveh, he refused his call, turned west and went westward. And if you study Jonah's pathway after that, every step he took after refusing the call of God was a step down. He went down from the mountains to the foothills, from the foothills to the plain, from the plain to the port, from the port to the harbor, from the harbor to the ship, and from the ship into the sea. Let that be a warning to each and every one of us not to refuse the call of God on our life. But God had His plan all worked out. In chapter 1, verse 4 of Jonah it says:

> "And the LORD hurled a great wind on the sea and there was a great storm on the sea so that the ship was about to break up." (NAS)

God stopped Jonah's course by a storm and ultimately the sailors threw Jonah overboard but it says in verse 17 of that chapter:

> "And the LORD appointed a great fish to swallow Jonah, and Jonah was in the stomach of the fish three days and three nights." (NAS)

So God had the fish prepared. Believe me, if that fish had had to swim fifty miles, Jonah would have been dead by the time the fish got there. But the fish was there waiting for Jonah because God had appointed that fish. That's predestination. And so, Jonah, after being three days and three nights in the belly of the fish changed his mind, went back to Nineveh and preached what God told him to preach. The city repented, but Jonah got very angry because he didn't want to see his enemies spared and he went out and sat and looked over the city. It was boiling hot, it was what they call in Israel a sirocco, a terrible hot wind that makes everything hot. But to protect Jonah from the sun it says "the LORD… appointed a plant and it grew up over Jonah to be a shade over his head…" Well, Jonah was very happy for the plant but he still wasn't glad that God had spared Nineveh, so, to teach Jonah a lesson, God caused the plant, which was giving him shade, to wither. How did He cause the plant to wither? By appointing a worm. It says "God appointed a worm when dawn came the next day, and it attacked the plant and it withered."

I want you to notice the word "appointed" there. God appointed a storm, He appointed a fish, He appointed a plant and He appointed a worm to eat the plant. All of that was prearranged. God knew what Jonah was going to do the first time He called Him. He didn't approve of what he did, but because Jonah was predestined, ultimately God got His way. And that's a word of encouragement to you and me. Not that we should be disobedient, but that we should know that even if we make mistakes, even if we do take a wrong course, God's predestination has taken that into account in advance. He'll have the storm, He'll have the fish, He'll have the plant, the worm, whatever is needed to bring us back into line with His way.

Well, our time is up for today. I'll be back with you again tomorrow at this same time. Tomorrow I'll be exploring the fourth stage in God's plan, how He calls us.

My special offer this week is a book of recipes. Does that surprise you? Well, it's a book of recipes for success, proven recipes that have worked in my own life and in countless other lives. The title of the book is If You Want God's Best. All the recipes in it are practical and down-to-earth and they work. The title again: If You Want God's Best.

Also, my complete series of talks this week on "Secure in God's Choice, Part 2" is available in a single, carefully-edited cassette. Stay tuned for details.

Radio Program

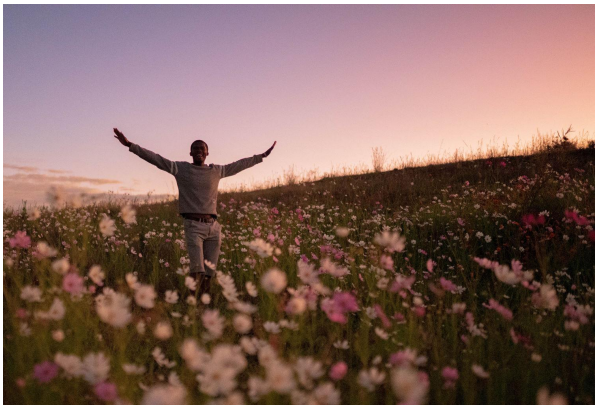
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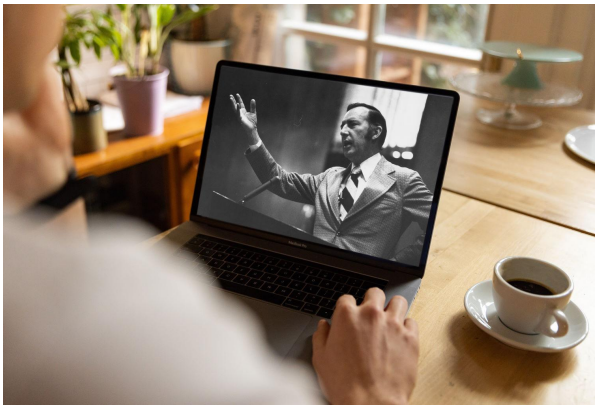
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