

## TOPIC X

### PREDESTINATION AND PREDETERMINATION

#### **Part IV.**

There are several words that are theologically "charged." This means that Calvin sees them as applying to only those predestined to eternal life by God from before the creation of the world.

They are the "elect" or "election", the "called" or "chosen" and "faith."

Regarding the matter of only the elect being "called" to God, we have the following:

First, "To call" is the Greek (ka-leh-oh), or (ka-loun-tohs). The following examples are to show that the word is not as theologically charged as Calvin and some would have it.

The verb is used in the following senses:

1. *To give someone a name*, with ὄνομα "name". Example,

a. Matthew 1:21, "She will bear a Son; and you shall call His name Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins." Also: Mat. 1:22, Mat. 1:25; Luke 1:13, Luke 1:31.

b. Without the word "ὄνομα" Luke 1:59-60, "And it happened that on the eighth day they came to circumcise the child, and they were going to call him Zacharias, after his father. But his mother answered and said, "No indeed; but he shall be called John."

c. *To salute by a name*; Matthew 23:9; "Do not call anyone on earth your father; for One is your Father, He who is in heaven."

d. Matthew 22:43-45, "He said to them, "Then how does David in the Spirit call Him 'Lord,' saying, 'THE LORD SAID TO MY LORD, "SIT AT MY RIGHT HAND, UNTIL I PUT YOUR ENEMIES BENEATH YOUR FEET"'? "If David then calls Him 'Lord,' how is He his son?"

2. *Passive. To bear a name or title among men;*

a. Luke 1:35; "The angel answered and said to her, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; and for that reason the holy Child shall be **called** the Son of God."

b. Luke 22:25, "And He said to them, "The kings of the Gentiles lord it over them; and those who have authority over them are **called** 'Benefactors.'

c. I Corinthians 15:9, "For I am the least of the apostles, and not fit to be **called** an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God."

3. *To be acknowledged or to pass as;*

a. Mat. 5:9, "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God."

b. Mat. 5:19, "Whoever then annuls one of the least of these commandments, and teaches others *to do* the same, shall be **called** least in the kingdom of heaven; but whoever keeps and teaches *them*, he shall be **called** great in the kingdom of heaven.

c. James 2:23, "...and the Scripture was fulfilled which says, "AND ABRAHAM BELIEVED GOD, AND IT WAS RECKONED TO HIM AS RIGHTEOUSNESS," and he was **called** the friend of God."

4. *To invite;*

a. Matthew 22:3, "And he sent out his slaves to call those who had been **invited** to the wedding feast, and they were unwilling to come.

b. Matthew 22:9, Go therefore to the main highways, and as many as you find *there*, **invite** to the wedding feast.'

c. John 2:2, "...and both Jesus and His disciples were **invited** to the wedding."

d. I Corinthians 10:27, "If one of the unbelievers **invites** you and you want to go, eat anything that is set before you without asking questions for conscience' sake."

6. *To summon;*

a. Matthew 4:21, "Going on from there He saw two other brothers, James the *son* of Zebedee, and John his brother, in the boat with Zebedee their father, mending their nets; and He called them."

b. Acts 4:18, "And when they had **summoned** them, they commanded them not to speak or teach at all in the name of Jesus."

c. Acts 24:2, "After *Paul* had been **summoned**, Tertullus began to accuse him, saying *to the governor*, "Since we have through you attained much peace, and since by your providence reforms are being carried out for this nation,..."

#### 7. *To call out from;*

a. Matthew 2:15, "He remained there until the death of Herod. *This was* to fulfill what had been spoken by the Lord through the prophet: "OUT OF EGYPT I **CALLED** MY SON."

b. Hebrews 11:8, "By faith Abraham, when he was **called**, obeyed by going out to a place which he was to receive for an inheritance; and he went out, not knowing where he was going." (This could also be a summons.)

c. I Peter 2:9, "But you are A CHOSEN RACE, A royal PRIESTHOOD, A HOLY NATION, A PEOPLE FOR *God's* OWN POSSESSION, so that you may proclaim the excellencies of Him who has **called** you out of darkness into His marvelous light;..."

#### 8. *To appoint. Select for an office;*

a. Galatians 1:15-16, 15: "But when God, who had set me apart *even* from my mother's womb and **called** me through His grace, was pleased 16: to reveal His Son in me so that I might preach Him among the Gentiles, I did not immediately consult with flesh and blood,..."

b. Hebrews 5:4, "And no one takes the honor to himself, but *receives it* when he is **called** by God, even as Aaron was."

#### 9. *To salvation;*

a. Romans 8: 29-30, 29: "For those whom He foreknew, He also predestined *to become* conformed to the image of His Son, so that He would be the firstborn

among many brethren; 30: and these whom He predestined, He also called; and these whom He **called**, He also justified; and these whom He justified, He also glorified."

b. Romans 9:10-12, 10: "And not only this, but there was Rebekah also, when she had conceived *twins* by one man, our father Isaac; 11: for though *the twins* were not yet born and had not done anything good or bad, so that God's purpose according to *His* choice would stand, not because of works but because of Him who **calls**, 12: it was said to her, "THE OLDER WILL SERVE THE YOUNGER."

10. *Of God's creative decree. To call forth from nothing;*

a. Isaiah 41:4, "Who has performed and accomplished *it*, **Calling** forth the generations from the beginning? 'I, the LORD, am the first, and with the last. I am He.'" (The Hebrew here is "Qara" and the LXX uses "ka-leh-oh" for the translation)

b. II Kings 8:1, "Now Elisha spoke to the woman whose son he had restored to life, saying, "Arise and go with your household, and sojourn wherever you can sojourn; for the LORD has **called** for a famine, and it will even come on the land for seven years." (The same Hebrew word and LXX translation is used here.)

Again, these passages are included only for the point that the Greek words for "call", "called", or "calling are not as theological charged as some would claim. This term is a general term and normally indicates a name, summons or invitation.

Here are some more passages with various forms of "call" in them.

I Corinthians 1:1-2, 1: "Paul, **called** *as* an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, and Sosthenes our brother, 2: To the church of God which is at Corinth, to those who have been sanctified in Christ Jesus, **saints by calling**,<sup>1</sup> with all who in every place **call** on the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, their *Lord* and ours:..."

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<sup>1</sup> The phrase "saints by calling" should be "called saints" and has nothing to do with a predestined "election" by God.

In this same passage the term "called" is used several times. We have it in Romans 8:28-30 as well. This term is also a large matter in Calvinism and in the doctrine of predestination. Often, the phrase, "Many are called, but few are chosen"<sup>2</sup> is used to support the predestination theory. Other use it to deny it. We'll come back to this in a moment. Let's look at this in the rest of the passage.

I Corinthians 1:9, "God is faithful, through whom you were **called** into fellowship with His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord."

Now, as we jump to 1:17-24, we see something important;

I Corinthians 1:17-24, 17: "For Christ did not send me to baptize, but to preach the gospel, not in cleverness of speech, so that the cross of Christ would not be made void. 18: For the word of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God. 19: For it is written, "I WILL DESTROY THE WISDOM OF THE WISE, AND THE CLEVERNESS OF THE CLEVER I WILL SET ASIDE." 20: Where is the wise man? Where is the scribe? Where is the debater of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world? 21: For since in the wisdom of God the world through its wisdom did not *come to know God*, **God was well-pleased through the foolishness of the message preached to save those who believe.** 22: For indeed Jews ask for signs and Greeks search for wisdom; 23: but we preach Christ crucified, to Jews a stumbling block and to Gentiles foolishness, 24: but to those who are the **called**, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God."

In verses 21-24, we can see that the "called" are those who believe the gospel.

Faith.

Calvin teaches that true faith in God and in Christ is of the Spirit alone and infused only in the elect or predestined. He refutes, once again, that faith is defined by involvement in the church, or acknowledging and accepting the teachings of the "schoolmen" by which he means Catholic theologians.

"By the same grace and energy of the Spirit we become his members, so that he keeps us under him, and we in our turn possess him."<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Matthew 22:14.

<sup>3</sup> Book 3, chapter 1, section 3

"But as **faith** is his principal work, all those passages which express his power and operations are, in a great measure, referred to it, as it is, only by **faith** that he brings us to the light of the Gospel, as John teaches, that to those who believe in Christ is given the privilege "to become the sons of God, even to them that believe in his name, which were born not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God."<sup>4</sup>

"Ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise" ([Eph 1:13](#)); thus showing that he is the internal teacher, by whose agency the promise of salvation, which would otherwise only strike the air or our ears, penetrates into our minds. In like manner, he says to the Thessalonians, "God has from the beginning chosen you to salvation, through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth" ([2Th 2:13](#)); by this passage briefly reminding us, that **faith** itself is produced only by the Spirit."<sup>5</sup>

II Thessalonians 2:13-14, 13: "But we should always give thanks to God for you, brethren beloved by the Lord, because God has chosen you from the beginning for salvation through sanctification by the Spirit and faith in the truth. 14: It was for this He called you through our gospel, that you may gain the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ."

Now the Calvinistic position on this is that God uses the gospel to call those whom He has already predestined to salvation, and thus chosen, to Himself and to faith which is infused by the Holy Spirit so they can indeed believe.

One issue for me is the timing. Often, terrible tragedies occur or horrors are committed before one who is predestined for salvation is "called" to faith. Then, what about those who are predestined for salvation and there is nothing that can be done about this.

For me, this is because God knows in advance who will be His and will believe and who will not and has thus predestined that those who believe will inherit His kingdom and those who do not, will not.

This is actually all the ancient Jews believed when it came down to it. As Paul and the other apostles taught so clearly, it was faith that caused Abraham to be accounted righteous, not his works or his circumcision. Calvin would agree. But he stands in the reformation environment opposing Catholicism and resorts to a

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<sup>4</sup> Book 3, chapter 1, section 4.

<sup>5</sup> Book 3, chapter 1, section 4

very complex system to point out its flaws.

For the apostles, faith, not works was their emphasis, and that is why the Gentiles had equal access to the kingdom. This was also stated by God to Abraham in Genesis 22:18 and 26:4. The Jews became exclusive (as they still are today) but God wanted their truth and His glory to be made available to all.

Those who understood this simply believed that God had predestined those that believe to eternal life and those who do not to destruction. Otherwise, the ancient Jews gave all of this absolutely no thought at all. Thus, the mandate to spread the gospel to the world, as God is not willing that any should perish. His love for the world is the reason.

Finally, for this discussion, Calvin sets the premise that due to the so-called "fall" of man, and the ensuing "total depravity," that no-one can come to a place of faith unless predestined to do so. Yet there is no Biblical evidence to support this claim upon which his entire thesis rests.

Even after the "fall" in Genesis 4, the entire cast including Cain had communication with God. As do a great many people in the Old Testament. So, I have trouble reconciling this with Calvin's assumption. As I have said before, if the premise upon which everything is built is in error, the the entire structure is in error. I find Calvin having built his house on the sand.

However, it is up to you to decide about these things, remembering that the very character and nature of God is at stake in the decision.