

Saul: An Example to Those Destined to Believe, 1 Tim 1:16: Destiny Defined: Omniscience, Divine Decree, Foreknowledge, Election, & Predestination

42. If any member of the human race needs a reference point on understanding the perfect patience of God and Christ toward them, they only need to look toward Saul for an example.
43. The period of time during which Saul was the world's worst sinner portrays "with accuracy and in detail" the forbearance of divine patience.
44. The words of an eighteenth-century hymn by German minister, Erdmann Neumeister, express the principle of grace salvation being available to anyone who would believe regardless of the measure of his sins:

**"Christ Receiveth Sinful Men"
(Erdmann Neumeister & James McGranahan)**

Sing it o'er and over again;
Christ receiveth sinful men;
Make the message clear and plain:
Christ receiveth sinful men.

Come, and He will give you rest;
Trust Him, for His Word is plain;
He will take the sinfulest;
Christ receiveth sinful men.

Christ receiveth sinful men,
Even me with all my sin;
Purged from every spot and stain,
Heaven with Him I enter in.

1 Timothy 1:16 - Nevertheless, because of this I received mercy that in me, as worst of all sinners, Jesus Christ might demonstrate His perfect patience as an example to them who are about to ...

1. The reason God used Saul as an example was so He could portray to unbelievers His perfect patience toward anyone who would believe. First there is the present active participle of the verb:

μέλλω, mellō - Relates what is destined to take place and is translated, "for those who are about to," or "for those who are destined to."

present: Futuristic: denotes an event that has not yet occurred but is regarded as so certain that in thought it may be contemplated as already coming to pass.

active: Church Age believers produce the action of being among those who are destined to believe.

NOTE: This does not imply the false doctrine of predestination which asserts that in eternity past a predetermined few were sovereignly chosen by God as the elect while all the rest were left reprobate. This view also insists that human free will plays no part in salvation, only the sovereignty of God.

Several definitions are necessary to fully grasp the true doctrine of predestination:

Thieme, R. B., Jr. *The Integrity of God*. 4th ed. (Houston: R. B. Thieme, Jr., Bible Ministries, 2005), 301, 298, 303, 307, 306:

Omniscience: God knows simultaneously all things outside of Himself. God knows all things about believers and unbelievers, both the *actual*—which He Himself decreed—and the *possible*—which could have happened but did not happen. God knew in eternity past that you would not make that decision and He did not decree it. (p. 301)

The **divine decree** is the eternal plan by which God has rendered certain all of the events of the universe, including both angelic and human history. God's decree rendered all things as certain to occur; He decided that they *would* exist. In doing so, He did not interfere with angelic or human free will. In giving us volition, He also decreed that our decisions, whatever they might be, would certainly take place. Being omniscient, He knew ahead of time precisely what we would decide. (p. 298)

Foreknowledge: This subcategory of God's cognizance acknowledges only what is decreed, but foreknowledge does not make the decree certain. It is a computer printout of the actual facts, not mere possibilities, regarding the volition of the believer. The term "foreknown" is used in Scripture only of believers and of Jesus Christ. God's foreknowledge is related only to the actual. (p. 301)

Foreknowledge means that nothing can be certain until it is first decreed; only then can what *will* happen be foreknown. (p. 303)

Election is the plan of God for believers only. All the elect are believers. Election means "chosen, selected, set apart for privilege." God elected or chose believers in the sense, first, that He *knew ahead of time* [omniscience] that, if given free will, they would freely choose to believe in Christ; second, He *decreed* that such an act of faith would actually occur [the divine decree]; third, that He *agreed not only* that their positive volition to the Gospel would occur at a certain point in time (foreknowledge) but also that all the blessings of salvation would be their eternal possessions [e.g., eternal life]. (p. 307)

Predestination describe(s) the act of the infinite, eternal omniscience of God which determined the certain futurity of events related to the believer. (p. 306)

Predestination is the work of God the Father in eternity past on behalf of every Church Age believer to execute God's plan, purpose, and will for his life. Therefore, predestination is the grace provision of God the Father for the royal family. Predestination is the provision of the sovereignty of God for the execution of the protocol plan of God.

PRINCIPLE: In human history the sovereignty of God and the free will of man coexist by divine decree.

The true doctrine of predestination recognizes that the elect are foreknown in eternity past by means of the omniscience of God which was able to determine those individuals in history who would believe in Christ and those who would not. The former are the elect while those who reject Christ are left in a status quo of unbelief and remain in their just condemnation.

PRINCIPLE: Because God knew who would and would not believe does not mean that He sovereignly decided who these people would be. Instead, He identified those that through faith would use their free will to believe the message of the Gospel and decreed that these will be granted salvation in time. Although they are recognized as the elect in eternity past their destiny does not become operational until they are saved at which point they enter into God's predetermined plan.

In our passage, the verb *mellō* recognizes the certain fruition of what foreknowledge recognizes in the divine decree: that when individuals in the future believe in Christ they will be saved and Paul provides the pattern of the magnificence of grace that saved the worst sinner of human history. The principle that emerges here may be described by *a fortiori* logic:

Thieme, *The Integrity of God*, 92-93:

A fortiori is a Latin term meaning “with stronger reason.” *A fortiori* logic has two parts: the *greater* and the *less*. The greater is found in the protasis and the less in the apodosis. *A fortiori* logic states that if God can do something that is extremely difficult, it only makes sense that He can do something that is much easier. If God has already done the greater, it follows *a fortiori* that He can do the less. If the more difficult function of the justice of God has already been provided, then “with stronger reason,” the less difficult will not be withheld.

Using this logic we can construct the following conditional sentence:

If the justice of God can do the most difficult thing in saving Paul, who is history’s worst sinner, then, *a fortiori*: with stronger reason, He can do the less difficult thing by saving those who are less sinful than Paul.

2. What these individuals are about to do that is certainly future is believe, the present active infinitive of the verb:

πιστεύω, *pisteuō* - “to believe”