

12. When the original couple sinned they lost their perfect life, became dichotomous, and were in need of reconciliation. Faith in Christ resulted in their salvation and introduced, through procreation, the process of acquiring witnesses for the Prosecution to resolve the appeal. (Genesis 3)
13. James instructs us in James 1:15 that the sin nature's lust pattern tempts a believer's free will to commit a sin resulting in the delivery of a "child born dead," i.e., personal sin results in loss of fellowship outside the bubble.
14. In verse 18, we again see the imagery of a birth in the phrase, "He brought us forth," which is the aorist active indicative of the sentence's main verb *apokuéō* meaning "spiritual birth."
15. Here we see the new birth. Whereas an individual who was born physically alive but spiritually dead, is now born spiritually alive by means of the "word of truth," i.e., the gospel of salvation.
16. The process which makes salvation possible was devised in eternity past by the "exercise of His will." We have translated this phrase to emphasize the source of this exercise being God's divine decree.
17. In order for fallen man to have a resource to receive reconciliation through faith in Christ, God must precede that event with a divine solution.
18. This is why the grammar of this verse is so important. We have the principle, the action of the aorist participle, *boúlomai*, the divine decree, precedes the action of the main verb, *apokuéō*, the spiritual birth by means of the gospel of salvation.
19. So our expanded translation reads, "Having been decreed in eternity past, God regenerated us by a spiritual birth"
20. This context demonstrates the principle: In human history the sovereignty of God—*boúlomai*, the divine decree—and the free will of man—*apokuéō*, human volition—must coexist.
21. The decree of God must pave the way for the free will of man to have an option for or against salvation through faith in Christ.

22. Omniscience, which knows all that is knowable, perceived those who would believe in time. God decreed that those “free-will” decisions would take place in time in response to the “word of truth.”
23. The source of the divine decree is omniscience which determines before anything existed those things which would actually occur in human history.
24. From this we have the term, the “will of God” which established that certain things would actually come into being while other things would not—actual historical events as opposed to events that are possible but do not occur.
25. In making these observations omniscience recognizes actual events and decrees that they will occur. This results in foreknowledge. This introduces the principle that nothing can be foreknown until it is first decreed.
26. It is from foreknowledge that election is declared while predestination refers to those things that are related to election such as the assets imputed to the believer at the moment of salvation.
27. Divine omniscience is depicted in a visual where God programs a computer with the content of the divine decree. The illustration shows data regarding the sovereignty of God being collected in a ROM chip while data regarding the free will of man is retained in a PROM chip.
28. Only the actual events of divine and human history are retained in this imaginary computer the totality of which is the divine decree or the will of God.
29. There are a number of doctrinal terms that are related to the decree, for example foreknowledge. God knows who will use his free will to believe in Christ for salvation. Foreknowledge of these decisions cannot be foreknown until they are first decreed.
30. What this means is that our volition is absolutely free. God does not preprogram us to believe. In His omniscience, He is able to look into human history and discern who will believe and who will not do so.

31. That information is retained in the divine decree. From that information God is able to foreknow those who will believe. Those who are identified as believers will then be classified as being among the elect.
32. Predestination is associated with the divinely imputed assets and privileges that are to be imputed to these believers beginning at the moment of their salvation.
33. Principle: If God knew in eternity past that you would use your free will to believe in Jesus for salvation, then it follows that He also made decisions to accommodate that decision with plan for you.
34. That plan is also in the divine decree. It is personal with your name on it. If you placed your faith in Jesus, God knew it would occur in time. Knowing this, He had a plan for you.
35. If He knew you would become positive to the inculcation of His Word, there is a plan for that in the decree. If not interested, there is a plan for that called divine discipline.
36. At this point we reviewed the Doctrine of the Seven Salvation Ministries of the Holy Spirit. Access lessons JAS1-108–109 for this summary.

James 1:18a Having been decreed in eternity past, He regenerated us by a spiritual birth by the word of truth, namely the gospel ... (EXT)

1. The KJV and NASB translate the verb *boúloomai* with the word, “will,” but the better and more precise translation is “divine decree” or “decreed” to indicate its occurrence in eternity past.
2. The phrase “brought us forth,” is the NASB’s translation of the verb *apokuéō* and refers to our “spiritual birth” accomplished by the “word of truth” or the gospel. This process results in:

Regeneration, or new birth, is an inner re-creating of fallen human nature by the gracious sovereign action of the Holy Spirit (John 3:5–8). The Bible conceives salvation as the redemptive renewal of man on the basis of a restored relationship with God in Christ, and presents it as involving “a radical and complete transformation wrought in the soul (Romans 12:2); Ephesians 4:23) by God the Holy Spirit (Titus 3:5; Ephesians 4:24).⁵

⁵ J. I. Packer, “Regeneration,” in *Evangelical Dictionary of Theology*, ed. Walter A. Elwell (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1984), 924.

3. The Agent in the process of regeneration is the Holy Spirit. An unbeliever is incapable of processing divine thought. The idea that a substitutionary sacrifice by a “man” could produce salvation and eternal life is abstruse and profound.
4. In the process of evangelizing an unbeliever, the Holy Spirit provides two ministries: (1) common grace and (2) efficacious grace.
5. **Common Grace** is the ministry of the Holy Spirit in making the gospel lucid, perspicuous, and understandable to the person who is spiritually dead.
6. **Efficacious grace** is the ministry of the Holy Spirit in making the faith of the spiritually dead person effective for eternal salvation.
7. The Holy Spirit is the sovereign executive of the gospel. The works of a person who is spiritually dead have no place in evangelism.
8. Therefore, both hearing the gospel and believing in Jesus Christ are totally non-meritorious and compatible with the grace of God.
9. Some principles and guidelines on evangelism are expressed by Dr. Lewis Sperry Chafer in his *Systematic Theology*:

It is true, also, that God may indict within the Christian that prayer which shall be an essential factor in the great work of inclining the lost to accept the Savior; but prayer does not determine the election of men: rather, prayer will itself be subject to the same sovereign Spirit, if prayed in the will of God. There can be no salvation apart from a preliminary, preparatory enlightenment of the unsaved by the Holy Spirit. That such a work by the Spirit is required becomes evident from certain Scriptures which set forth the inability of the unsaved.⁶

1 Corinthians 2:14 But the natural man does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to Him; and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually appraised. (NASB)

(End JAS1-62. See JAS1-63 for continuation of study at p. 621.)

⁶ Lewis Sperry Chafer, “The One Who Convicts the Unsaved,” in *Systematic Theology: Pneumatology* (Dallas: Dallas Seminary Press, 1948), 6:88–89.