

The God who Predestines

By Jay Wegter

In our study the book of Esther, we have investigated the plot, the players and the historical background of this book in great detail. And our teachers have really made the history of this book live in our hearing. We've probed so deeply we practically know what Mordecai had for breakfast on Tuesdays. So, in my closure of the book this morning, I want to address what ought to be obvious, but what oddly might be hidden—namely that this book which does not mention the name of God actually gives us much about God.

This reminds me of a story of an elementary school boy who gave his oral report on acorns. He described their size, shape, color, texture. He noted they could be found on the ground in Autumn. He shared that squirrels eat them and store them. And that native Americans ground them into flour for bread. He then concluded his talk and sat down. The teacher noted his fine delivery but added this, “Bobby you’ve forgotten the most important thing about acorns; it is where oak trees come from.”

So, my task this morning is to explain that the book of Esther is in the canon of Scripture because it reveals the character of God. He is the God of the impossible—and humanly impossible circumstances are the backdrop for Him to reveal His might and wisdom.

Our human perspective on things tends to make God far smaller than He is. We need regular recalibrations by beholding His majesty in the Word that we might be jarred out of our finite shrunken God concept. We need to comprehend afresh that there is nothing manageable about Him. We can’t appease Him, obligate Him, take His measure, or transact with Him. It’s impossible to box Him in. His creation and creatures are utterly dependent upon Him.

I heard recently from an aging grad’ of DTS that their remarkable professor, Dr. Walt Hendrickson used the following criterion to decide which students he would invest in. Said Walt, “There’s two kinds of ministerial students, little god-ders and big god-ders. I only invest in the big godders. They are the ones through whom God will do significant things.”

God’s sovereignty is loved by big god-ders. His rule over all things is an essential aspect of His glory. We think of the love and joy of the Holy Trinity which they had in eternity past before creating the universe, and that God purposed

to make the cosmos for His own glory. In view of this, one of the greatest questions the Bible answers is this: “Did the entrance of sin thwart God’s plan to do all for His glory? Did sin’s entrance rob Him of the glory He planned to receive from His creation?”

Jonathan Edwards, in one of his greatest sermons (“The End for which the Creation exists”), argues from Scripture that it is inconceivable that God should make a universe out of nothing, every electron, atom and molecule—and then have the entrance of sin rob Him of His glory. The entrance of sin did not cause God’s purposes of glory to miscarry. Did the wickedness of fallen people and fallen angels cancel the glory God is worth receiving?

These are vital questions for our study, for evil is a theme running through the book of Esther. Another way of asking this question would be: is God trying to make the best out of a bad situation?

Part of the answer to our question: did the entrance of sin cause God’s purposes of glory to fail—is found in Romans chapter 9. The apostle Paul states in that passage, that from the same lump of corrupt clay (humanity), God is forming vessels of wrath and vessels of mercy. For He has determined to demonstrate both mercy and justice, both His grace and His wrath and He will be glorified by both demonstrations.

And, the highlight of grace exalted in that chapter is that the vessels of mercy did not make themselves vessels of mercy, for it is sovereign mercy. Key to Paul’s argument is the term, ‘same lump’—from the same lump of defiled clay, vessels of wrath are formed, and vessels of mercy are formed.

This section in Romans 9 is taken from Exodus 33 wherein Yahweh shows Moses His essential glory. “And He said, “I Myself will make all My goodness pass before you, and will proclaim the name of the LORD before you; and I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and will show compassion on whom I will show compassion” (Ex 33:19).

This section in Romans chapter 9 is also taken from Jeremiah 18 wherein God speaks of His right over His creatures—comparing it to the right of a potter over His clay (potter’s wheel). “Can I not, O house of Israel, deal with you as this potter *does*?” declares the LORD. “Behold, like the clay in the potter’s hand, so are you in My hand, O house of Israel” (Jer 18:6). (Also note Romans 11:32—“For God has shut up all in disobedience so that He may show mercy to all.”

The subject of predestination raises hackles. It angers some and frustrates many. It is like a downed power line no one wants to touch. But, my friends our God is the God who predestines. He is the God of the Bible. He predestines

according to His infinite love, wisdom, and holiness. His work of predestination is inseparable from His character, attributes and purposes. History is ‘His story’. He tells us precisely how history will be consummated—He is actively fulfilling the prophecies He has given in His Word; this is a function of His sovereign control and involvement. It is inseparable from His rule, ownership and majesty.

Those who have sought to attack God’s work of predestination, have raised a straw man which they whack over the head. They’ve attempted to divorce predestination from God’s character and purposes—reducing it to fatalistic determinism in which men are mere puppets. They’ve attempted to reduce His predestination to arbitrariness—as if God is like a man tosses a stack of papers down a flight of stairs and then allows where the papers have landed on the stairs to determine their order. But the Word of God keeps God’s decree and character joined.

God foreordains all things unto the achievement of a goal. History is moving ineffably toward this divine objective, namely that the entire cosmos will be subject to Christ Jesus forever with His church at His side as His Bride and co-regent.

Every major and minor beat of history is dove-tailing toward this goal—even if we do not see it. The Israelites’ rejection of the gospel, recorded in the book of Acts opens the door to Gentile conversion. Once the fullness of the Gentiles have come in (Rom 11:25-27), God will do a mighty work among ethnic Israel, even using the wicked campaign of the Anti-Christ in that purpose.

God’s providence is inscrutable. We can know His purposes from Scripture, but His ways are past finding out (by inquiry and investigation). As a brand new believer, I sat in a church in Palo Alto and heard Corrie Ten Boom speak about God’s providence. Several times during her message she held up the backside of large needle point. Gold, blue and purple threads were going all over the place with of many of those threads hanging loose. There was no discernible pattern. But, at the end of her message, she shared that when believers reach glory, God will disclose countless mysteries of His providential dealings with us. As she closed her message, she showed the front of the needlepoint for the first time; it was an image of beautiful crown.

Telling the truth about God’s work in predestinating frequently produces more frustration than gratitude. This is primarily because we love our own opinions often more than we love the difficult truths of Scripture. We love the idea of control being shared with God, rather than God’s absolute control.

When I was six years old, I started a truth campaign in my neighborhood.

My mother was a new believer and had just told me that Jesus is real and Santa Claus was not. Well, my response was to go house-to-house telling each of my friends that Santa Claus, the Easter Bunny and the Tooth Fairy did not exist. But, did I receive any appreciation for my myth-busting efforts? Were my playmates grateful for the reality check—that they had been deluded by a hoax? Far from it; you can guess what happened; their moms got mad at me and told me to stop.

Well I want you to know today that from Scripture I intend to bust a myth. It's a myth believed by many in churches today. It's a myth that is actually destroyed by the message of the book of Esther. Here is the myth in layman's terms. God's sovereign predestinating control limits man's freedom and responsibility. No, my friends this is not so. God is not a large version of you. He does not live in time and space.

His ways are above our ways not by degree or magnitude but by an altogether different qualitative standard. God has decreed events from eternity past, and what He has ordained is carried out in His works of providence. There are innumerable passages which teach the infinitesimal level of detail in His involvement in human affairs. I just love Jonah chapter 4—God *appoints* a plant, He *appoints* a worm, He *appoints* a scorching east wind—all to reveal that His mercy and compassion are infinite, and Jonah's is very small.

Are we to believe that God can appoint a tiny destructive worm, but does not appoint a destructive man? Scripture states that God raised up Pharaoh for His purposes (and this king was evil—ordered babies be thrown into the Nile). “For the Scripture says to Pharaoh, ‘FOR THIS VERY PURPOSE I RAISED YOU UP, TO DEMONSTRATE MY POWER IN YOU, AND THAT MY NAME MIGHT BE PROCLAIMED THROUGHOUT THE WHOLE EARTH.’ So then He has mercy on whom He desires, and He hardens whom He desires” (Rom 9:17-18).

The Lord tells Moses at the burning bush encounter that Pharaoh's wicked obstinance is an important puzzle piece in the demonstration of divine power. “So I will stretch out My hand and strike Egypt with all My miracles which I shall do in the midst of it; and after that he will let you go” (Ex 3:20).

Now, . . . the part that angers those who hear about predestination is not only God's choice of whom He will save, but also that God is sovereign over the evil deeds of men. Please do not miss this, God's control over what He has made is a precious gem in His sovereign crown. Those who fight against the truth that God predestines, are warring against the truth of Scripture. They wish to pluck that gem from His crown.

My friends, Isaiah tells us in chapter 55:8-9 that God's ways are not our

ways. He works His plans by intertwining the smallest details, details which have no logical connection from our perspective. God saved the Mediterranean world, including the patriarchs from death by famine by allowing Joseph to be sold by his brothers. Joseph's pathway to the throne in Egypt involved the heinous sins of his brothers, the favoritism of his father, the murderous jealousy and hatred of his siblings, the wickedness of Potiphar's wife, and the crimes of Pharaoh's baker. And yet God brings to pass Joseph's calling without being a partner in those sins which brought him to the throne in Egypt.

It says in Genesis 50:20 Joseph says to his brothers, "As for you, you meant evil against me, *but* God meant it for good in order to bring about this present result, to preserve many people alive." That single verse embraces the entire scope of Joseph's rise to power. God's ways are not our ways. If you had a doctorate in every imaginable discipline on planet earth from yoga to yogurt, from physics to philanthropy—even if you had five hundred thousand doctorates you would not have gained any more knowledge of the ways of God.

Those who argue against God's work of predestinating think that they are operating by common sense: "How could God ordain what He hates and forbids?" But in their arguments, they tend to make predestination into a caricature. We see these humorous distortions in caricatures in the images drawn in political cartoons. Obama was given ears like an elephant. And Nixon, an immense nose that covered his face. Features are exaggerated to the point of being ludicrous.

Now here's the caricature drawn by the enemies of predestination: "The elect will be saved no matter what they do and the non-elect will be lost no matter what they do." Now, what is left out this statement is what makes this a caricature. For, by reduction and by deletion that statement winds up changing the doctrine of predestination from a precious vital truth to a horrid error.

Here is what is intentionally missing in that 'caricature' statement about destinies. According to Scripture, people arrive at their final destination, Heaven or Hell by the use of means. Those predestined to life shall be saved by the use of means. Those means include faith, repentance, diligence, and gospel living.

"Be on guard, so that your hearts will not be weighted down with dissipation and drunkenness and the worries of life, and that day will not come on you suddenly like a trap; for it will come upon all those who dwell on the face of all the earth. 'But keep on the alert at all times, praying that you may have strength to escape all these things that are about to take place, and to stand before the Son of Man'" (Lu 21:34-36).

“Or do you think lightly of the riches of His kindness and tolerance and patience, not knowing that the kindness of God leads you to repentance? But because of your stubbornness and unrepentant heart you are storing up wrath for yourself in the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God, who WILL RENDER TO EACH PERSON ACCORDING TO HIS DEEDS: to those who by perseverance in doing good seek for glory and honor and immortality, eternal life; but to those who are selfishly ambitious and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, wrath and indignation. *There will be* tribulation and distress for every soul of man who does evil, of the Jew first and also of the Greek, but glory and honor and peace to everyone who does good, to the Jew first and also to the Greek. For there is no partiality with God” (Rom 2:4-10).

“But now having been freed from sin and enslaved to God, you derive your benefit, resulting in sanctification, and the outcome, eternal life” (Rom 6:22).

“And we desire that each one of you show the same diligence so as to realize the full assurance of hope until the end, so that you will not be sluggish, but imitators of those who through faith and patience inherit the promises” (Heb 6:11-12). **Do you see the use of ‘means’ in each of these passages?**

Those eternally lost shall be lost by their rebellion, complacency, impenitence, and willful rejection of the means of salvation. When they ultimately die separated from Christ, they perish by choice. They did exactly what they wanted to do; they lived a self-directed life and regarded the loving rightful rule of Christ to be an unwanted intrusion; they loved their lives in the world.

You see, God’s decree, His predestinating work did not make them rebellious, they acted out their moral connection to Adam by loving their sin more than the Savior. Those hostile to the biblical doctrine of predestination say that it destroys freedom and responsibility. They suggest that God’s sovereignty represents an inverse proportion—the greater God’s control, the less freedom and responsibility men have.

Here is an example of an inverse proportion: the lower the atmospheric pressure, the greater the water vapor content (i.e. a hurricane). The greater the distance from a light source the dimmer the light appears (the sun is not very bright on Pluto). Those are inverse proportions. A direct proportion would be: the more you lift weights the stronger you will become.

So, if we expressed the myth about predestination as an inverse proportion, it would go like this: The greater God’s sovereign control over the lives of men, the less freedom and responsibility people have. That, according the Word of God is a myth. This scandalizes our intellects because we cannot imagine how God can

be sovereign over evil and yet be no partner in it. The Lord has given us numerous passages in His Word which comprise a kind of paradigm of understanding for us in terms of His sovereignty over evil.

And when they had summoned them, they commanded them not to speak or teach at all in the name of Jesus. But Peter and John answered and said to them, “Whether it is right in the sight of God to give heed to you rather than to God, you be the judge; for we cannot stop speaking about what we have seen and heard.” When they had threatened them further, they let them go (finding no basis on which to punish them) on account of the people, because they were all glorifying God for what had happened; for the man was more than forty years old on whom this miracle of healing had been performed. When they had been released, they went to their own *companions* and reported all that the chief priests and the elders had said to them. And when they heard *this*, they lifted their voices to God with one accord and said, “O Lord, it is You who MADE THE HEAVEN AND THE EARTH AND THE SEA, AND ALL THAT IS IN THEM, who by the Holy Spirit, *through* the mouth of our father David Your servant, said,

‘WHY DID THE GENTILES RAGE,
AND THE PEOPLES DEVISE FUTILE THINGS?
‘THE KINGS OF THE EARTH TOOK THEIR STAND,
AND THE RULERS WERE GATHERED TOGETHER
AGAINST THE LORD AND AGAINST HIS CHRIST.’

“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 purpose predestined to occur. “And now, Lord, take note of their threats, and grant that Your bond-servants may speak Your word with all confidence, while You extend Your hand to heal, and signs and wonders take place through the name of Your holy servant Jesus.” And when they had prayed, the place where they had gathered together was shaken, and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and *began* to speak the word of God with boldness (Acts 4:18-31).

For the present, He limits it and directs it for His purposes, and will finally judge it and confine and punish it forever.

Just as God raised up Pharaoh for His purposes (Rom 9:17), God raised up Haman for His purposes and through him, showed forth His divine power and wisdom. Through Haman’s advancement and wicked genocidal decree, God

accomplished much. He put the world on notice that antisemitism will cost you dearly. He prepared His people for repatriation to Judah after the exile. He deepened His people's trust in Himself. He brought the enemies of the Israelites out into the open so that they could be destroyed. And He did what was humanly impossible: He turned the tables on an irrevocable Medo-persian decree to exterminate the Jews—preempting it with an irrevocable decree for the Jews to destroy their enemies, and do so legally. And, He brought His people to a new level of trust in the God of the impossible; commemorating this incredible deliverance in the feast of Purim.

In the book of Esther, the providence of God is on display even in apparently mundane things—for God has ordered these seemingly unrelated events as well. Note the refusal of Vashti to be ogled by the king's intoxicated guests; Ahasuerus' night of insomnia; the neglect to previously honor Mordecai for saving the king from an assassination plot; and Esther's loss of her parents so that she is raised by her older godly cousin.

When I refer to these events as mundane, I don't mean that they are tiny events per se, but that they are events which appear in themselves to have absolutely nothing to do with the preservation of Israel. But, oh the matchless ways of God, in eternity past, He decreed that these events would be certain—there is fixity involved. How different this is from a finite god who may see into the future, but like a pin ball wizard must frantically adjust to every situation (this finite view of God pictures everything operating around human contingency in order to guard against making people into divinely controlled puppets).

So how does God's ordaining of events connect with nature, freedom, and grace? Much of that is a deep mystery from our standpoint. But, first, theology including predestination, is the study of God that we might worship Him aright, live wisely unto Him, and live God-ward oriented lives. When we define human freedom, or what is known as moral free agency, we are describing the fact that people are responsible moral agents and their behavior cannot be blamed on their environment (Note Edwards on *The Freedom of the Will*—the concept of 'diminished capacity' is a breach of justice; it won't play on Judgment Day) (George Moscone and Harvey Milk shot by Dan White—and the Twinkie defense). The same sun in the sky that hardens clay softens wax because of the differences in the nature of these substances.

The sinful nature you were born with has cut you off from God (Eph 2:1-2). You must receive a new nature from God if you are to be with Him in heaven (Jn 3:3-8). Every baby born into the world has an invisible spiritual death

certificate attached to its birth certificate. You must receive a new nature by the new birth, be born again, born from above, regenerated (Titus 3:5), if you are to have life in God. This miraculous work of God in granting a new nature is associated with believing the gospel (Gal 1:15-16; Phil 1:29). For, if we die in a state of nature—apart from the new birth, we will be damned eternally (1 Cor 2:14).

When we speak of freedom we do not mean that a person will, or can choose behavior contrary to their nature, habits, and inclinations. For, example, your pet cat is free to—it could, if it wanted to, roll in the mud puddle in your backyard, but it won't do so—for that is contrary to its nature. Freedom does not imply the will and power to do what is contrary to one's nature, or beyond one's capacity (flapping arms and 'willing' yourself airborne will not get you across town).

Also, when we refer to human moral responsibility, we do not mean that responsibility is a measure of ability—for the natural man is dead in trespasses and sins (Col 2:13). An African lion is free to choose between a wildebeest hindquarter or veggies—but because he is a carnivore, we know what he will choose the raw meat every single time.

People will not choose contrary to their natures—a work of divine grace is needed. To desire holiness through submission to Christ is a desire not found in our Adamic natures—the source of that desire requires a work of grace. In view of this dilemma of human ruin by sin, you can see the need for urgency in preaching the need of salvation. For the key that unlocks salvation for the sinner is not in the sinner's own hand—as if he can exercise the prerogative when he may feel like it (maybe next Saturday at 11:00 am).

People will not choose contrary to their natures. Scripture demands that we do not see human responsibility as a measure of ability (see the 14 point indictment against our fallen natures recorded in Romans 3:9-19). In one of John MacArthur's books on salvation in the NT, he states, "If you go to heaven, God gets all the credit; if you go to hell it is all your fault."

Except for the cultural and historical differences, Haman's personal score card was a lot like that of many Americans. "Then Haman recounted to them the glory of his riches, and the number of his sons, and every *instance* where the king had magnified him and how he had promoted him above the princes and servants of the king. Haman also said, 'Even Esther the queen let no one but me come with the king to the banquet which she had prepared; and tomorrow also I am invited by her with the king'" (Esther 5:11-12).

He no doubt assumed that he had favor with the divine because of the extensiveness of his prosperity. But an un-bowing Jew, Mordecai, brought to the surface the murderous hatred of Haman. How did Haman become Haman in the first place? How did Judas become Judas?

In God's universe, moral cause and effect is an ineffable law of sowing and reaping, energized by God. “Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, this he will also reap. For the one who sows to his own flesh will from the flesh reap corruption, but the one who sows to the Spirit will from the Spirit reap eternal life” (Gal 6:7-8).

The power of God in the gospel is how spiritually dead sinners are made alive by the Spirit of God. Grace is not grace if man can save himself through his own wisdom, industry, and moral exertion. Grace is not grace if man has the innate power to trigger the grace of God. Or, if a man can do something to make God love him eternally.

God commands what men can't and won't do apart from enabling grace. This why it is such an important part of the gospel to spell out man's dilemma (his deadness, helplessness, and rebellion), his need of a new nature, his bondage to sin.

No wonder, the effectual call by the Spirit of God is described by a series of metaphors which stress God's power acting upon a spiritually dead sinner: resurrection, birth, creation, fiat creation of light, etc. Let me just insert this for a moment: there are 16 Greek words in the N.T. associated with God's work of predestination.

As John MacArthur has brought out in his book, The Gospel according to the Apostles, saving faith is a gift of God (Phil 1:29). MacArthur shows from Scripture that it is neither innate (as if every man possesses it if he would just exercise it), nor is it inert (as if saving faith is one pure little island of righteousness in the soul of man, separate from what he is by nature—totally depraved).

God set His love on the elect and He told us of His sovereign mercy in His inscripturated Word so that He might receive all of the credit for our salvation and so that there would not be a single occasion of boasting. “For consider your calling, brethren, that there were not many wise according to the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble; but God has chosen the foolish things of the world to shame the wise, and God has chosen the weak things of the world to shame the things which are strong, and the base things of the world and the despised God has chosen, the things that are not, so that He may nullify the things that are, so that no man may boast before God. But by His doing you are in Christ Jesus, who became to us wisdom from God, and righteousness and sanctification, and redemption, so

that, just as it is written, “LET HIM WHO BOASTS, BOAST IN THE LORD” (1Cor 1:26-31).

“In the exercise of His will He brought us forth by the word of truth, so that we would be a kind of first fruits among His creatures” (Jas 1:18).

“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His great mercy has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead” (1 Pet 1:3). ***Every gift of grace is traceable to God’s predestinating love (Rom 8:28-30).***

“Declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times things which have not been done, saying, ‘My purpose will be established, and I will accomplish all My good pleasure’; calling a bird of prey from the east, the man of My purpose from a far country. Truly I have spoken; truly I will bring it to pass. I have planned *it*, surely I will do it” (Isaiah 46:10-11).

“Woe to Assyria, the rod of My anger and the staff in whose hands is My indignation, I send it against a godless nation and commission it against the people of My fury to capture booty and to seize plunder, and to trample them down like mud in the streets (Isaiah 10:5-6).

“*He says*, “You are My war-club, *My* weapon of war;

And with you I shatter nations,

And with you I destroy kingdoms.

“With you I shatter the horse and his rider,

And with you I shatter the chariot and its rider,

And with you I shatter man and woman,

And with you I shatter old man and youth,

And with you I shatter young man and virgin,

And with you I shatter the shepherd and his flock,

And with you I shatter the farmer and his team,

And with you I shatter governors and prefects (Jer 51:20-23).

Predestination commends the glory of God (Rom 11:36).

Predestination intimately concerns eternal welfare and present comfort of God’s people (Rom 8:28-30).

The most infamous breach of God’s perceptive or moral will was fully embraced in God’s decreative will or secret counsels. The greatest crime ever committed was beyond doubt fore ordained (Acts 2:23; 4:27-28).

Biblically our posture toward predestination should be the following: Reverential fear (Eccl 3:14), Resignation and Honor to God (Dan 4:34-35), Humility (Rom 33-36), Comfort (Eph 1:4-5), Trust (Ps 115-2-3)

Christ spelled out His mission to fulfill His Father's will in terms of predestination (Jn 6:36-39)

Why is predestination a common theme in the Book of Acts? 1) To repair perplexity (Acts 2:23). 2) To relieve troubled minds in troubled times (Acts 4:27-28). 3) To restore, resolve among mixed results (Acts 13:48).

Man has no right to a logic that quarrels with the rationality of God. For the Word of God places sovereignty and responsibility in juxtaposition without apology (Mt 11:25-30; Jn 6:37-39).

The subject of prayer is intimately tied to predestination. Contact with God in prayer depends upon the following: God must be personal, present, able to hear answer prayer, and He must have unlimited power over His creation including the hearts and wills of men. Prayer without predestination is nonsense. For, in prayer we do not impose our will upon God, but we seek His will and align ourselves to it. Our prayers are written into His predestination. How else could we effectually pray for salvation, protection and healing of those we care about? (Tom Lyon)

“Are there two wills in God?” (John Piper). An illustration of the two wills: “Men of Israel, listen to these words: Jesus the Nazarene, a man attested to you by God with miracles and wonders and signs which God performed through Him in your midst, just as you yourselves know—this *Man*, delivered over by the predetermined plan and foreknowledge of God, you nailed to a cross by the hands of godless men and put *Him* to death” (Acts 2:23).

Judas was inspired immediately by Satan (Lk 22:3-5). Herod was filled with contempt toward Christ (Lk 23:11). Pilate overthrew justice in his spurious decision (Lk 23:24). The Gentiles mocked Jesus and beat Him (Lk 23:36). All the mistreatment Jesus suffered at the hands of men were the result of wicked deeds and attitudes. Yet it says in Acts 4:27-28 that God was sovereign in those acts and predestined those acts so that these sinners provided unwitting service in the inscrutable design of God and yet they are one hundred percent guilty for their deeds.

It says in Isaiah 32:4,10 that the Lord was pleased to crush Him and put Him to grief. God did this by means of Christ's enemies, betrayers, murderers and

persecutors. God willed that Christ our High Priest be perfected through sufferings (Heb 2:10).

God's active involvement in fulfilling prophecy is vividly illustrated in Revelation. "These will wage war against the Lamb, and the Lamb will overcome them, because He is Lord of lords and King of kings, and those who are with Him *are the* called and chosen and faithful." And he said to me, "The waters which you saw where the harlot sits, are peoples and multitudes and nations and tongues. "And the ten horns which you saw, and the beast, these will hate the harlot and will make her desolate and naked, and will eat her flesh and will burn her up with fire. "For God has put it in their hearts to execute His purpose by having a common purpose, and by giving their kingdom to the beast, until the words of God will be fulfilled" (Rev 17:14-17).

God is not merely predicting a bad event. It states in this passage that He is fulfilling it. For, during the Satanic career of the Anti-Christ, God is removing all middle ground and according to 2 Thessalonians 2:8-12, God is sending a lie or delusion.

The king's heart is *like* channels of water in the hand of the LORD; He turns it wherever He wishes (Prov 21:1). God frustrates the plans of the people so that they fail (Ps 33:10-11). The Lord desired to put Eli's wicked sons to death (1 Sam 2:22-25). Yet, Scripture does not desire the death of the wicked (Ezek 18:23, 32; Ezek 33:11). God states that He sends calamity and creates woe (Is 45:7; Lam 3:37-38; Amos 3:6).

God has immutable counsel, purpose and plan (Job 42:2; Is 43:13; Is 46:7-10). In judging Judah, God says He will bring a nation to destroy you (Jer 6:15-17). He will kill by sword and famine (Jer 11:22). He will send cannibalism (Jer 19:9). Bodies will not be buried (Jer 16:4). He will bring on you men skilled in destruction (Ezek 21:31).

Gospel centrality means that on our behalf Christ entered the sowing and reaping principle. He entered the cog works of God's justice to be crushed on our behalf. This is brought out ten times in Isaiah 53. As our substitute, He willingly bore our penalty. To trust the gospel is to believe the guilt exchange planned by God the Father so that in our salvation God's justice is upheld. Saving faith in Christ, His person and work affirms device justice. For God's justice at the cross is the basis of the gospel.