

## **Predestination, II**

In this lesson, we will again consider Calvin's treatment of predestination. We are spending two lessons on this for a number of reasons. One is it is important. Another is that many people misunderstand what Calvin was teaching when he discussed election and reprobation in his theology. Thus we need to carefully work through it and spend a little more time with it than with other topics.

We have already considered some important matters, such as the location of the doctrine in the *Institutes*. I cannot stress that enough. The location was important to Calvin. I recently heard a lecture on Calvin's *Institutes*, and the lecturer said the location did not matter. I think that is quite wrong, because Calvin told us that he was concerned about where doctrines appeared in the *Institutes* and that he was not satisfied until 1559 with the order, or arrangement, of the *Institutes*. Calvin positioned the doctrine of predestination very consciously and deliberately in Book III, where it can express the teaching that he wanted. He wanted it to answer the question, where does my faith come from?

We considered the location, the function, and the description. We considered Calvin's definition of election. God is the author. Election is eternal. Even though there is a general election that extends to the people of Israel, there is also a specific individual election that relates to every person, for election and reprobation. Calvin also said that God is the author of that decree. That is eternal. It also extends to individuals. Now we are ready to move on to the cause and ground of election and reprobation.

As we begin to think about this topic again, let us look to the Lord in prayer, praying the same prayer that I used at the beginning of the previous lesson. Let us pray.

*“Grant, Almighty God, that as Thou hast been pleased to adopt us once for all as Thy people to this end, that we might be engrafted as it were into the body of Thy Son and so be made conformable to our Head; O, grant, that through our whole life we may strive to seal in our hearts the faith of our election that we may be the more stimulated to render Thee true obedience and that Thy glory may also be made known through us. And those others also whom Thou hast chosen together with us, may we labor to bring with us that we may with one accord celebrate Thee as the author of our salvation and so ascribe to Thee the glory of Thy goodness and, having cast away and renounced all confidence in our own virtue, we may be led to Christ as the only fountain of Thy election, in whom also is set before us the certainty of our salvation through Thy Gospel until we shall at length be gathered with Him into that eternal glory which He has procured for us by His own blood. Amen.”*

It is rather remarkable that Calvin summarized almost everything that he had to say about election in that prayer. Calvin's prayers are rather weighty prayers, theologically. Yet they are also prayers of great devotion to God.

We have seen what election is, its definition. We have seen the definition of reprobation. What are the cause and the ground of election? We will consider that first and then reprobation. Calvin makes it clear that God's decree does not rest on our good works. He said that some people believe that predestination is equivalent to foreknowledge. The definition of foreknowledge is simply that God sees beforehand what is going to take place. That would mean that God sees that some people will be good, and He elects them on the ground of their good works. Calvin rejected that. God's decree is made before the foundation of the world. Consequently, He made the decree before the existence of people who could produce good works that He could foresee. Calvin made this point with a question. He asked in Book III, chapter 22, section 2, “What basis for distinction is there among those who did not yet exist?” God

chooses, but He did not choose on the basis of foreseeing good works, because there was nothing to see. Those individuals did not yet exist. Thus God's election does not rest on good works, because there were not any.

Nor does God's election rest on foreseeing good works. There were not really any good works to be foreseen. Calvin said in Book III, chapter 22, section 8, "The grace of God does not find, but makes, persons fit to be chosen." So it is not based on good works. God does not see any. It is not based on foreseeing good works, because God will not see any in sinful individuals.

Calvin then concludes that what the Bible teaches about election is that its cause and ground is God's good pleasure. He says that repeatedly. Calvin says in Book III, chapter 22, section 7, "He compacted with Himself, for the intrinsic cause of this is in Himself." You could probably find 100 phrases like that in Calvin that tell us that the single cause and ground of God's election is found in Himself, in His own good pleasure, in His own will, His own decision.

What is the cause and ground of reprobation? God's decree does not rest on sinful works. We will see that sinful works are the cause of condemnation but not the cause of reprobation. Reprobation does not rest on sinful works, nor does it rest on foreseen sinful works of individuals. Calvin illustrates that point with the passage in Romans 9 in which Paul was discussing Jacob and Esau. The verse from the Scripture says, "Just as it is written, 'Jacob I loved, but Esau I hated.'" Calvin asked, as Paul did, why that is. It would be easy to defend God's righteousness to say that God recompensed Esau according to his works. Esau was going to be a person of unrighteousness and disobedience. So we might think that the reason God would hate Esau would be because Esau hated God. As Paul pointed out, as well as Calvin, that is not the solution that was given. Paul said that the reprobate are raised up in order that the glory of God may be thereby displayed. Consequently, reprobation does not rest in foreseen sinful works. They are not the cause and ground of reprobation.

The ultimate cause of reprobation is that the glory of God might be thereby displayed. Calvin said in Book III, chapter 22, section 11, "When it is said that God hardens, or shows mercy, to whom He wills, men are warned by this to seek no cause outside His will." God hardens, which is reprobation, and God shows mercy, which is election. We are warned to seek no cause outside God's will.

There is something we need to notice, because it is important. Reprobation does not parallel precisely what we have with election. There is both an ultimate cause and a proximate cause with reprobation. There is an ultimate cause for election, but there is no proximate cause. The ultimate cause for election is God's good pleasure. When we think about reprobation, however, we have to think about an ultimate cause, which is God's good pleasure, and we also have to think about a proximate cause. Calvin called it an evident cause, which is man's sin. Man's sin is not the cause of reprobation, as such. We see the cause of it as God's good pleasure, although we should remember that Calvin said it is an awesome decree, one that is beyond our grasp. We should remember, however, that the proximate cause, which is man's sin, did not cause reprobation as such but rather condemnation. God's good pleasure is the cause and ground of reprobation. Man's sin is the cause and ground of condemnation.

That means it is in man's sin that we find guilt, blame, and condemnation. God condemns people because of their sin. Calvin said in Book III, chapter 23, section 8, "Man falls according as God's providence ordains." That would be the ultimate cause, God's good pleasure. Then Calvin continues, "But he falls by his own fault." That is the proximate cause, the sin.

There is a disjunction here. When we think of election, we know it is because of God's good pleasure, and that is all we can say. We cannot say it is because of our righteousness or our good works or a kind of proximate cause. When we think of reprobation, however, the reprobate are condemned because of their own sin and because of their own rebellion against God. Calvin also said in Book III, chapter 23, section 8, "Accordingly, we should contemplate the evident cause of condemnation in the corrupt nature of humanity, which is closer to us, rather than seek a hidden and utterly incomprehensible cause in God's predestination." That is a very important sentence.

Let me emphasize that further. As we think about the salvation of the saved, what we see is God's predestination. We see God's grace. If you believe in grace, as Warfield said, you will believe in predestination. So what we see as we think about salvation is simply God's grace expressed to us in Christ. When we think about the condemnation of the lost, however, we see human sinfulness. We also see God's predestination. Remember that Calvin says in Book III, chapter 23, section 8, "We should contemplate the evident cause of condemnation in the corrupt nature of humanity [in human sinfulness], which is closer to us, rather than seek a hidden and utterly incomprehensible cause in God's predestination." Calvin was not saying that a hidden and utterly incomprehensible cause does not exist. It is the ultimate cause. Yet the evident cause, the one that is closer to us, is human sinfulness. Thus we can say that people go to heaven because of God's predestination, and we can say that people go to hell because of their sin. Then beyond that, we know that there is a hidden and utterly incomprehensible cause. Yet Calvin said that we have the evident cause, which is closer to us. That evident cause really is sufficient. As a Christian, we look to God's election and not to anything in ourselves. When we think about the condemnation of the lost, however, we look to their sins rather than to God's decree. It is being true to Calvin to put it that way. At the same time, there is the decree of reprobation. Yet, it is inaccessible. What is accessible to us is the fact that people go to hell because of their sin, their rejection of God and His truth.

Calvin believed that God ordained all. He said that outright in a number of places. Yet he also said that human beings are guilty of the Fall. Not only Adam and Eve, but also all of their descendants are guilty with them in joining in their rebellion against God. It was not that Calvin denied the ultimate decree. In a sense, however, Calvin was saying that the secret things belong to the Lord. What is clear to us is that people sin because of their rebellion against God. It is their fault. That is the cause of their condemnation. At the same time, he insists that the ultimate cause of their reprobation is God's decree. I will return to that idea later. We will want to see further how reprobation relates to election.

Let me stress again what I have just said, but let me say it in another way. Calvin said in Book III, chapter 21, section 5, "God stands in a direct relation to the elect. God adopts some to hope of life. God stands in a direct relation to the reprobate and sentences others to eternal death." So God stands in a direct relation to both the elect and the reprobate. Yet God also stands in an indirect and accidental relation to the reprobate. Calvin said in his commentary on John 3:17, "When Christ says that He has come for judgment, when He is called a "stone of stumbling," when He is said to be "set for the falling of many," it may be regarded as accidental or, so to say, foreign. For those who reject the grace offered in Him deserve to find Him the judge and avenger." So there is both a direct relation, in which God sentences some to eternal death, and that indirect, or as Calvin said, "accidental," relation in which His coming and His will is for some judgment. Those two ideas are always held together in Calvin. He was content to let those two concepts stand side by side, or rather, one behind the other. Both are true, and Calvin did not attempt to find some sort of logical explanation as to how both can be true.

Next we can consider the means by which God saves the elect. Calvin made it clear to us in these chapters that the elect are elect from all eternity, but at a certain point in life, those elect people are

called and justified. So there are elect people who are not yet saved people. This reality can raise difficult questions. For instance, Scripture says that the child of one or both believing parents is sanctified. One might ask what happens to a child who is born to parents who are not yet believers, and that child dies, but then one or both of the parents becomes a Christian after the child's death. Neither Scripture nor Calvin teaches that the child of one or more believing parents is saved because of the parents. The child is sanctified and blessed in covenant relationship with the church, but as I understand Scripture, it does not promise or guarantee salvation of that child. We will consider such questions more from Calvin's point of view when we study Calvin's teaching on the sacraments and infant baptism. We will see how infant baptism functions in Calvin's theology.

God, in time, calls and justifies the elect. The means include the offering of the Gospel. The elect at some point hear the Gospel. God calls them. There is the external call and the internal call. God regenerates them through justification by faith, which He gives to them.

Calvin said the shutting off of the reprobate comes as the reprobate are "shut off from knowledge of His name or sanctification of His Spirit." We can say that, even though the reprobate may externally hear the Gospel, God's spirit is not with them. They do not understand and do not respond.

The goal of election is twofold. The glory of God is the ultimate goal. Our sanctification is the proximate goal. In addressing the opening verses of Ephesians 1 and other similar passages, Calvin said, "Paul teaches that we have been chosen to this end, that we may lead a holy and blameless life." It is not simply that the goal is to elect some people. The goal is rather to elect those people to holiness and to righteousness. We can see two goals in mind: the glory of God and the sanctification of the elect.

In reprobation, we see one goal. That is the glory of God. Calvin said, "When mention is made of the glory of God, let us think also of His righteousness." The aspect of God's character that is particularly set forth in reprobation is the righteousness, or justice, of God, in punishing sin. In election, God graciously chooses some who deserve to be punished. In reprobation, God righteously reprobates others who deserve to be reprobated. Of course, we all deserve reprobation. We all deserve condemnation. Out of the mass of humanity, to use Augustine's expression, God chooses to save some.

Calvin gave us a chapter on objections to predestination. That is chapter 23. By this time, after reading chapters 21 and 22, there are objections. It is probably that even we have at least some questions and difficulties with all of this. Calvin went through five objections. I will simply read them through, but you can look to the chapter for Calvin's detailed answers to these objections.

One objection is that it makes God a tyrant. Calvin rejected that. He spoke of the depth of the riches of the knowledge of God. Another objection is that it takes guilt and responsibility away from us. Calvin said, "We fall according as God's providence ordains, but he falls by his own fault." Another objection is that it teaches that God shows partiality toward persons. Calvin said, "The fact that God therefore chooses one man but rejects another arises not out of regard to the man but solely from His mercy." Another objection is that it destroys all zeal for an upright life. Calvin said, "Paul teaches that we have been chosen to this end, that we may lead a holy and blameless life." The final objection is that it makes all admonitions meaningless. Calvin said, "Let preaching then take its course that it may lead men to faith."

I remember a seminar at Princeton in which we were studying the *Institutes*. There was a student there who had graduated from a Methodist seminary. He understood and embraced the Arminian position on these issues. He was quite astounded at this chapter. He said that these objections were the things he had

been taught at seminary, but Calvin had already given answers to the same objections that he was so familiar with from his teachers at seminary.

Let us think about the uses of the doctrine of election. Then we will move to a critique. What effects follow? We are still in Book III, which is “The Way in Which We Receive the Grace of Christ, What Benefits Come to Us from it, and What Effects Follow.” We need to consider the proper effects and also consider what should not be a proper use of the doctrine of election and reprobation.

The misuse that Calvin warns against repeatedly, even back in Book III, chapter 21, section 1, when he was only starting to explain this doctrine, is curiosity. He says, “Curiosity will leave no secret to God.” If we are simply curious, if we simply want to know more than God has revealed, then we are going to find ourselves in a labyrinth, and we will never get out. We can state the doctrine. Calvin said we must state it. He faulted others, including his friend Philip Melancthon, for saying that the doctrine was too complex and controversial, and it was better not to talk much about it. Calvin said that if Scripture talks about it then we have to talk about it. Yet we cannot explain it. We cannot go beyond Scripture. We can only state what we know. That is what we have looked at up until this point.

I like the way the old Southern Presbyterian theologian, James Benjamin Green, put it, “People want to know why God chose some and passed by others. Do not ask me. Do not ask John Calvin. Do not ask any man, but ask God. His answer is Deuteronomy 29:29, ‘The secret things belong to the Lord our God, but the things revealed belong to us and to our children forever.’ God chose some to holiness and sonship, because it pleased Him to do so. Why it pleased Him to do so, it has not pleased Him to reveal.” If you are not satisfied with some mystery here, you will be in serious trouble. Calvin did not point to a way out of the mystery. Calvin says in Book III, chapter 23, section 2, “When therefore one asks why God has so done, we must reply, ‘Because He has willed it.’ But if you proceed to ask further why He has so willed, you are seeking something greater and higher than God’s will, which cannot be found.” Calvin’s comment there is very much in line with J. B. Green’s explanation. It will not be possible for us to have all of our questions answered.

There are three proper uses of the doctrine of election. Calvin talks about “the very sweet fruit” of this doctrine. This is where we should put our emphasis. Calvin says repeatedly that this doctrine gives glory to God and humbles people. He says in Book III, chapter 23, section 13, “Let preaching then take its course, that it may lead men to faith and hold them fast in perseverance with continuing profit, and yet, let not the knowledge of predestination be hindered.” In other words, we should preach. We should preach the Gospel. We should preach justification by faith. We should preach all that the Bible says, and part of what the Bible teaches is predestination. Calvin says, “Let not the knowledge of predestination be hindered, in order that those who obey may not be proud, as of something of their own, but may glory in the Lord.” Salvation is all of God. It is not of us. It humbles us because it is not of us. It is not of works, lest anyone should boast.

John Leith, who taught at Union Seminary for many years, said, “Predestination undercuts all confidence in work-righteousness and lays bare the source of human salvation. It is the negation of all merit and places salvation solely in the mercy of God. It means that salvation is rescue and not achievement.” I like that last sentence because the Roman Catholic theology that Calvin was writing against viewed salvation as achievement. It was not just human achievement, because God’s grace was necessary, but people had to do their part. So salvation was achievement for them. Calvin would agree with what Leith said, however, that salvation is rescue and not achievement. Leith also said, “Predestination was Calvin’s most emphatic way of saying that justification is the work of God’s grace, just as justification by grace through faith was Luther’s most emphatic way of saying the same thing.”

Luther taught the doctrine of election, very much like Calvin. They both taught a doctrine of election very much like Augustine. Leith's point is correct, however, in that there is an emphasis on this doctrine in Calvin. What that means is that salvation is not by works. It is by God's grace. Luther did not write anything like the *Institutes*, so we do not have a comparable body of material from Luther. In looking at Luther's writings, what he emphasized repeatedly was that justification is by faith alone. Calvin taught that as well. Both of those doctrines lead to the same conclusion, which is that salvation is the work of God's grace.

I have already said that the position of this doctrine in the *Institutes* is unusual. Calvin's teaching on election, however, is not unusual. Calvin was not breaking new ground. It was not original to him. You can find it in Augustine. You can find it in a stream, although a minority, of Augustinians, all the way to the Reformation. You find it in Luther and the other Reformers. Even Melancthon taught it just as Calvin did. Yet Melancthon thought it should not be preached or taught too much. In his own theology, however, Melancthon held it.

What is original, or different, in Calvin is the use that he makes of the doctrine. This doctrine encourages confidence. That is something I have not seen elsewhere in the history of the doctrine of election. Election encourages confidence. If we consider the context in which Calvin was working, the big question was how one can know he or she is saved. That has been a big question throughout history, and it still is. The Roman Catholic answer to that question was you do what is within you. You do what you can, and with God's help, assistance, and grace, you do the best you can. When a person would ask what the best he could do was, the answer would be the sacramental system. You follow the order of the church. You participate in the seven sacraments.

Some people, like Luther, asked, "How can I know when I have done enough? How can I know if I measure up to what is required?" After all, one of the sacraments was confession. The first step of confession is contrition. Contrition means to be absolutely sorry for and repentant of your sins. Luther got stuck right there, because he did not know whether he was absolutely contrite for his sins. He did not know how he could judge that. So the Catholic answer was to do the best that was in you. That left some questions. So another part of the Catholic answer was purgatory. Purgatory will take care of what you have failed to do in this life. So the Catholic answer to "How can I know I am saved?" was, "Do what you can." The Catholic answer included the idea that you will probably not make it to heaven immediately, but after a long time in purgatory, you will eventually get to heaven.

There was another answer in the sixteenth century to that question, which came from the radical wing of the Reformation. How do I know that I am saved? Their answer was because of the good works that I do, or because of the good life I have lived. That was not Calvin's answer either. That reminded Calvin of Pelagianism. He would admit, however, that good works are a kind of secondary assurance.

Calvin located assurance in the promises of God, and specifically in the doctrine of election. He began his section on this issue, in Book III, chapter 21, section 1, by saying, "We shall never be clearly persuaded, as we ought to be, that our salvation flows from the wellspring of God's free mercy, until we come to know His eternal election." Calvin connected assurance and confidence with the doctrine of election. He says in Book III, chapter 24, section 9, "Predestination, rightly understood, brings no shaking of faith, but rather its best confirmation." So Calvin says we have to understand it rightly. He says in Book III, chapter 24, section 5, "If we have been chosen in Him, we shall not find assurance of our election in ourselves." That means we will not find assurance in our own good works. So he rejects the radical position. Our good works are not worthless as aids to our assurance. We derive confirmation from our works, but we must not begin with them. We begin with God's grace in Christ and with the

fact that God has done everything for us. Thus we have a stable, not an unstable, basis for confidence. In either the Roman Catholic view or the Anabaptist view, which both said to a certain extent that salvation depends on what we do, then there is no real confidence there. There could not really be confidence that we have done enough. For Calvin, we cannot look to our works.

Calvin also said that we cannot even look to God the Father, if we perceive Him as severed from His Son. If we are looking for assurance, we are not going to find it if we seek to somehow go directly to the Father. We do not have direct access to the list of the elect. Calvin said that we will not find our assurance of election in God the Father, if we conceive of Him as severed from His Son. We cannot seek our election in the mystery of God. We do not have independent access to the decrees of God. Therefore, the point of all this is that Christ is the mirror in which we must, and without self-deception may, contemplate our own election.

Christ is the mirror. Calvin loved that image. He used it a number of times in the *Institutes*, as well as frequently in his sermons. Sometimes Calvin expressed it as he did in Book III, chapter 24, section 7, when he refers to “that sure establishment of election, which I bid believers seek from the word of the Gospel.” Let me explain that. When the Christian looks at election, the only entry that we have into that teaching is through Christ. It is through our faith in Christ. It is through Christ that we see our election. It is through Christ and Christ alone, who is the mirror of our election, that we may without self-deception contemplate our own election. Faith is the only way into the doctrine, and all it sees is Christ. That is the approach that we take to this doctrine.

Pighius was a person whom Calvin wrote against in his book, *On the Eternal Predestination of God*. Calvin said, “If Pighius asks me how I know I am elect, I answer that Christ is more than a thousand testimonies to me.” We are not going to find confidence in our works, in our sanctification. We will not find it in some kind of direct access to the decrees of God, severed from Christ. We will find our confidence in Christ, in the promises of the Bible, in the Gospel.

One problem with the idea of confidence is the idea of temporary faith. When Calvin introduced the idea of temporary faith, even in his discussion of reprobation, you would think that the use of the doctrine of election to instill confidence would fail. How can a worried believer know whether what he or she experiences is a sure establishment, which was Calvin’s phrase for true faith, or whether her or she is only expressing signs that are similar to true faith? The question would be “Is my faith true faith?” With faith, I look at the promises of the Gospel, that God is merciful to me in Christ, and I can read my election there. What if that faith is not true faith, however, but is only temporary faith? I am not sure I have an answer to that. I have thought about these sections in the *Institutes* for some time. I have also thought about the warnings in the Bible that things that look like faith might not be true faith. One way to see passages like this would be to read them as warnings that God gives to us that should be and can be used as means of perseverance. In other words, as I read about temporary faith or think about the fact that people can be hypocrites, then I am forced to examine my faith. That is a means that God uses for perseverance of the saints. This has been a problem in some expressions of Reformed history. People have struggled with the idea of election. How do I know that I am elect? There have been some sad stories of people who have come to grief on that rock.

I was thinking about this recently, in a practical way, and a question occurred to me. Calvin said that the way into the teaching of election is the promises of God in Christ. I have accepted those, believed those, and responded to those. Consequently, Christ is the mirror of election for me. The question is whether my faith is temporary or real. While that is a question that can be asked, I wonder if we really ask that.

At this moment, I have no doubt that my faith is real rather than temporary. Is that something you worry about? Do you wonder if you really believe or if you are a hypocrite?

Calvin certainly saw a difference in quality between true faith and temporary faith. He said that a person deceives himself. There is a kind of process by which self-deception begins, and a person can think he has real faith when he has deceived himself. There is something more stable, more enduring in true faith, because it is going to last. Temporary faith, however, will eventually fall and falter, and it will prove to not be real faith. I do not know that a person can be so self-deceived that he will think he has true faith and will test that faith as a true believer will. Calvin solves that only by saying that temporary faith is temporary. It will fail, and true faith will not. Calvin seemed to say that temporary faith will fail in this life.

Let me sum this up, even though I am not sure we can answer every question. My view is that the whole idea of temporary faith should prompt us to recognize the warnings in Scripture. We should be aware that something like this can exist. We should examine ourselves carefully. Yet I do not see it as something that shakes the foundations of a true believer. I am humble, and I believe that I need to be vigilant and cautious, and I need to pray and trust. Yet I do not feel shaken in my confidence or destroyed by that idea. My confidence in God is just as strong as when I ask that question. It is, however, a question to be asked. Asking the question enables us to persevere.

So far we have seen that the proper uses of the doctrine of election include that it exalts God and humbles man. It also encourages confidence. We have raised a question there, but we can still agree with Calvin that we can find confidence in this doctrine, because Christ is the mirror of our election. Third, election creates worship and reverence. Calvin liked to quote Augustine, who was quoting Paul, in saying, "O depth, thou seekest reason. I tremble at the depth. Reason thou, I will marvel. Dispute thou, I will believe. I see the depth. I do not reach the bottom. Paul rested, for he found wonder." The resting place is not understanding, but rather wonder. Paul rested, for he found wonder. We see the depth, but we do not reach the bottom.

There is another proper use that can be added, which I noticed when I was reading Calvin's sermons on Ephesians. If you want to find Calvin the preacher on this topic, read the first three of Calvin's sermons on Ephesians 1. You will see how Calvin preached election. In the last sentence of Calvin's sermon on Ephesians 1:4-6, he said, "In being quite abased in our selves, let us seek that we may be so renewed in the image of God that it may shine perfectly in us, until we are made partakers of the glorious immortality, which He has so dearly bought for us." In other words, as we think of this doctrine, we humble ourselves, and we seek the goal that God has in mind, which is our holiness and righteousness. As Calvin said, it is so that "we are made partakers of the glorious immortality, which He has so dearly bought for us. Also, that it may please Him to grant this grace not only to us but also to all peoples and all nations." That is an amazing closing sentence. Calvin said we use the doctrine of election to humble ourselves, to move forward in our sanctification, and to pray for the salvation of the whole world. Elsewhere, he would say that it should move us to work for the salvation of the whole world. Even though many people would see it opposed to this use, the doctrine of election should lead us to prayer for the lost and to evangelism of the lost. As he said, "Also, that it may please Him to grant this grace not only to us but also to all peoples and all nations."

Let me summarize the teaching so far. When we consider God's will as He has revealed it to us in Scripture, we see two things. We see teaching about His election and His reprobation. We also see His teaching of His love for the lost. He is not willing that any should perish. Both of those are present in the Bible. Sometimes the first concept is called God's hidden will, His election and reprobation. Even



Calvin used the concept of hidden will. Then His love for the lost is His revealed will. I do not believe that is a particularly helpful distinction, because God has revealed His will concerning election and reprobation as well. It is not that we do not know anything about it. The Bible does teach us about these things. So we have two parts of God's revealed will. He elects and reprobates, and he loves the lost. Calvin did not put those two together in any kind of logically coherent way, because he did not think the Bible allows us to do it. In terms of the mystery, we simply accept God's election and reprobation and His love for the lost. As we engage these doctrines, on the side of His election and reprobation, there is humility. We know that His salvation of us rests in His unshakable mercy and grace. That produces confidence, because it does not depend on us, but rather it depends on God and His love for us. On the side of God's love for the lost, that produces prayer for the lost and evangelism, as we attempt to reach lost people in this world.