

Dogmatic Theology I



Servants Preparation

"Predestination"

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Original Sin & Atonement

- Righteousness in human before the fall is:
 - Catholic → righteousness is a gift added to human which is not part of human nature.
 - Fall is losing this gift. Which means human nature is not affected much, just lost additional gift. → Human is responsible to get back what was lost.
 - Protestant → Human is created complete and perfect in complete fellowship and communion with God and in the image of God.
 - Fall is losing the image of God. God has to give human the image back. Hence, grace! Once human get it back, keep it!
 - Orthodox → Adam is created naturally righteous and guarded with grace
 - Fall is lose of natural righteousness. Image of God is still in human but distorted due to inheriting original sin. Regeneration in baptism (Repentance & Confession) is needed to bestow grace again . Death entered into the world through the envy of the devil.

Grace in Orthodox Perspective

“By the grace of God I am what I am, and His grace toward me was not in vain; but I labored more abundantly than they all, yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me” (1 Cor 15:10)

(Catholics) Works ← Works – **Orthodox** – Grace → Grace (Protestants)

As a general rule, the Orthodox view concerning any issue of debate is the moderate approach between two extremes.

The controversy reached its peak in the 16th century

The foundation for the Protestant teachings was provided by St. Augustine’s anti-Pelagian writings and the misinterpretation of St. Paul’s writings to the Romans and the Galatians.

Indeed, the epistles of St. Paul contain “things hard to understand, which those who are untaught and unstable twist to their own destruction as they do also the rest of the Scripture” **(2 Pet 3:16)**.

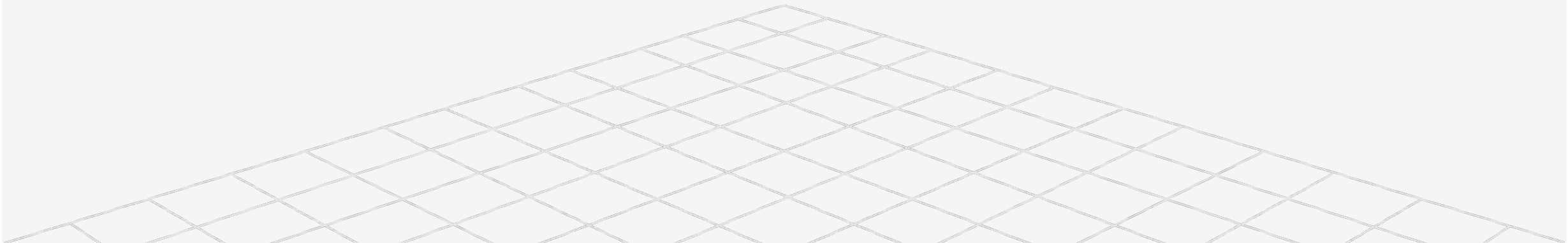
Predestination in The Orthodox Concept

“Whom He foreknew, He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son.” (Rom 8:29)

St. Augustine & Predestination: Grace is a gift, not a reward. This insight is fundamental to St. Augustine.

Grace is only given to some (It is actually **offered to all**, but not all **accept it**).

All of humanity is contaminated by sin, and unable to break free from its grasp. Only grace can set humanity free. Yet grace is not bestowed universally; it is only granted to some individuals who accept it.



Predestination in The Orthodox Concept

The Universal Saving Will of God: (offered to all)

(Ez 33:11), (1 Tim 2:4), (Jn 3:16), (1 Jn 2:2), (Mk 16:15)

Human Free Will: (to accept salvation)

(Deut 30:19), (Is 1:19-20), (Mt 16:27), (Mt 19:17), (Mt 19:21), (Rev 3:20), (Mt 23:37), (Jn 5:40), (Mt 22:2-3) –

“He came to His own, and His own did not receive Him.” (Jn 1:11)

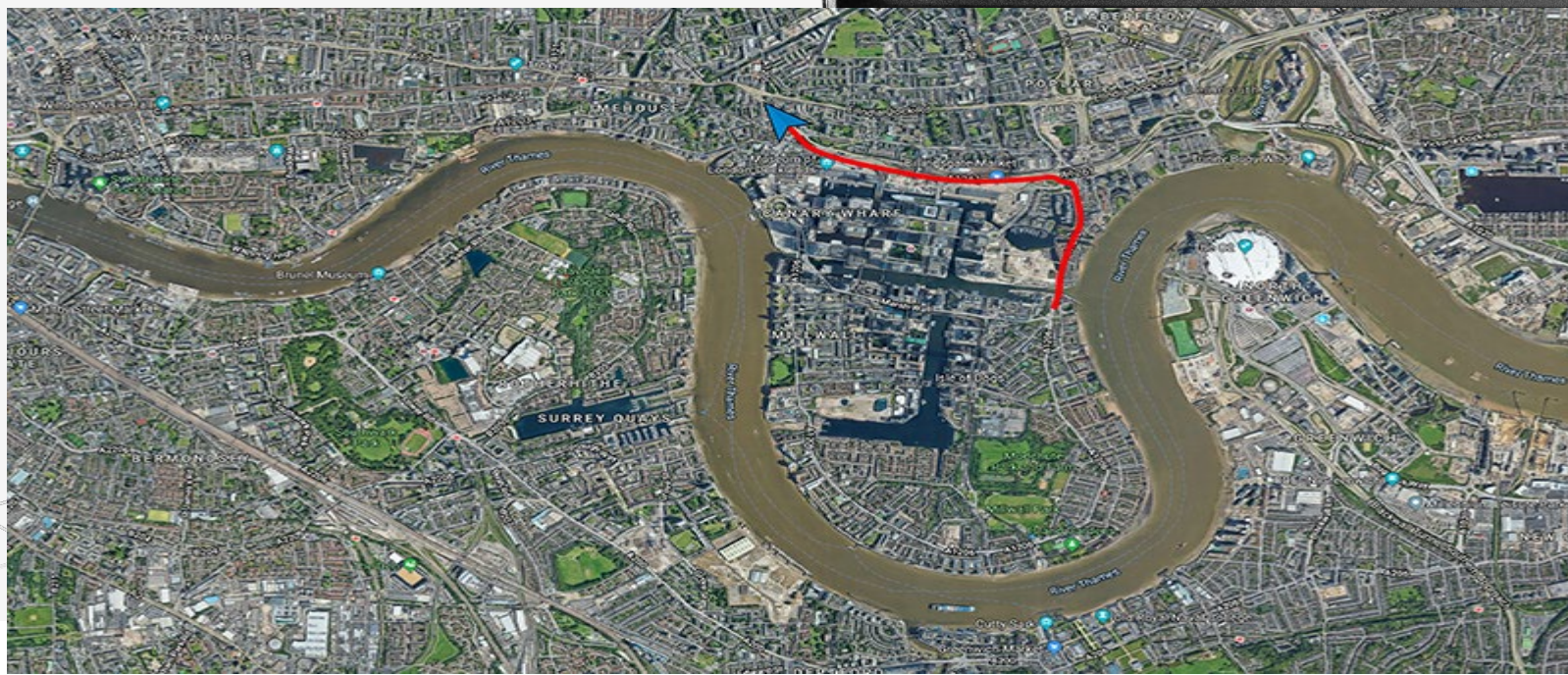
God’s Foreknowledge:

God, through His divine foreknowledge and recognition of what would take place in the future, knows who would do what. In case of those who perish, God wants them to be saved but He knows that they will take the wrong decisions. **Analogy of Satellite view Vs Street level view**

To those who love God: (Not whom God loves) – Orthodox Concept

(Rom 8:28-30), (1 Cor 2:9) “elect according to the foreknowledge of God” (1 Pet 1:2)

The key point is to differentiate between God’s will and His foreknowledge.









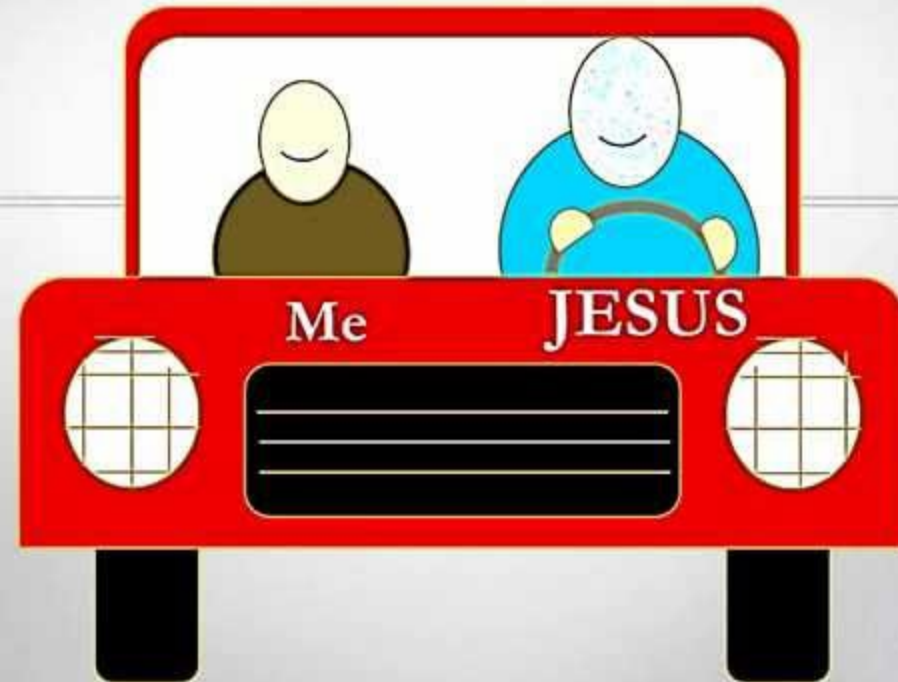


Thanks to Richard Germain

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of your life !



The scope of Salvation (Predestination) repeated slide!

Concerns with limited Atonement (Predestination):

- ❑ Implies injustice and partiality.
- ❑ It leads sinners to despair, feeling that their striving is in vain and useless.
- ❑ As for the righteous, it leads them to slackness and negligence.
- ❑ Why is there a need for commandments?
- ❑ Why would the devil toil in tempting the elect if they will certainly be saved?
- ❑ On what basis would reward be given to the elect if they had no choice in their destiny?
- ❑ Why would God punish a person predestined to perdition?

'Eternal Security of The Believers' is false, for all the elect are indeed believers but not all the believers are elect!

True or False Orthodox teaching?

No one knows the extent of our strength better than the God who gave that strength. (Pelagius) Alister E. McRath Reader 5th

Edition, p. 350

I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me. (Phil 4:13)

when we say that it is possible for someone to be without sin, we are even then praising God by acknowledging the gift of possibility which we have received. (Pelagius) Alister E. McRath Reader 5th Edition, p. 351

for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God (Rom 3:23)

Questions?



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6.10 PELAGIUS ON HUMAN RESPONSIBILITY

In this letter written to Demetrias, a Roman woman of high social status who eventually became a nun, Pelagius (c.354–c.420) argues that the divine commands are unconditionally binding upon Christians. God knows the abilities of humanity, and the commands reflect the ability with which God endowed humanity at creation. There is no defect in human nature which prevents them from achieving what God commands people to do. See also 6.9, 6.11, 6.12, 6.13.

[Instead of regarding God's commands as a privilege] we cry out at God and say, "This is too hard! This is too difficult! We cannot do it! We are only human, and hindered by the weakness of the flesh!" What blind madness! What blatant presumption! By doing this, we accuse the God of knowledge of a twofold ignorance – ignorance of God's own creation and of God's own commands. It would be as if, forgetting the weakness of humanity – God's own creation – God had laid upon us commands which we were unable to bear. And at the same time – may God forgive us! – we ascribe to

the righteous One unrighteousness, and cruelty to the Holy One; first, by complaining that God has commanded the impossible, second, by imagining that some will be condemned by God for what they could not help; so that – the blasphemy of it! – God is thought of as seeking our punishment rather than our salvation. [...] No one knows the extent of our strength better than the God who gave us that strength. [...] God has not willed to command anything impossible, for God is righteous; and will not condemn anyone for what they could not help, for God is holy.