

Predestination: Protocol, the Divine Dynasphere, & the Royal Family; Two Commissions: Royal Priest & Royal Ambassador; Hamilton: Archaeological Evidence of the Historicity of Abraham & the Patriarchs

19. Predestination has three major concepts:

- 1) Protocol: A rigid, long-established code, prescribing complete deference to superior rank and authority, followed by strict adherence to due order of precedence, coupled with precisely correct procedure.

The *long-established code* goes back to eternity past and the divine decree. It is termed *rigid* because righteousness is the principle of all God does and immutability means that His standards do not change.

Complete deference to superior rank and authority refers to the believer's orientation and adjustment to God's system of authority: Jesus as Head of the Church has superior rank; He delegated authority to the apostles and those closely related to them to write Scripture.

Once the canon was complete, He then assigned communication gifts to evangelists and pastors to preach the gospel and teach doctrine respectively. Believers must therefore pay deference to divine areas of authority: Christ, Scripture, and pastors.

Strict adherence to due order of precedence makes reference to our Lord's demonstration of the divine dynasphere during the Incarnation. He utilized this system of divine power to execute His spiritual life, deal with adversities, get to the cross, and undergo substitutionary spiritual death for the human race. The plan He followed and carried out is to be utilized by believers in their journey through the days of their lives. We should seek to learn about the Lord's decision-making process and consider it the precedence to which we must orient and adjust.

Precisely correct procedure refers to the fact that God has a policy for doing things, i.e., a right thing must be done in a right way. Therefore, precisely correct procedure means that a right thing done in a wrong way is wrong; a wrong thing done in a right way is wrong; and a wrong thing done in a wrong way is wrong. For the believer to fulfill the requirements of the protocol plan of God, Bible doctrine must be priority one.

- 2) The Divine Dynasphere: God's plan for the royal family of God or Church Age believer. It is God's game plan for the Church Age; the boundary for the Christian way of life. It is the will of God and plan of God for the believer's spiritual life.¹ Jesus Christ executed the great power experiment during the Incarnation by utilizing the divine dynasphere to fulfill the salvation plan of God and thus prove it effective in managing the challenges, problems, and difficulties common to the devil's world.
- 3) The Royal Family. When a person believes in Christ he is adopted as an adult son into the royal family of God with all the privileges and advantages enjoyed by royalty.

Since the believer has eternal life, his royalty is likewise eternal. There are two commissions associated with our royalty: (1) royal priests who represent themselves before the High Priest Jesus and (2) royal ambassadors who represent Jesus to fellow members of the human race: to unbelievers through one-on-one evangelism and to believers through unconditional love, benevolence, and legitimate Christian service.

20. Under predestination, every believer has the equal privilege in Christ by means of the baptism of the Spirit, and equal opportunity from life inside the divine dynasphere. Being in Christ grants the believer all the advantages of royalty while life inside the divine dynasphere enables him to engage soul renovation and become a person of honor.
21. We conclude our study of Abraham, Ishmael, Isaac, and the covenants with this synopsis of the structure of Genesis:

There is a consensus among biblical scholars that the theological theme that unites at least Genesis 12–36 is that of divine promise to the individuals Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

God's first and last speech to the patriarch is one of promise. God's first spoken word to Abraham is a series of "I will's" (12:1–3), in which the movement is from imperative (v. 1) to indicative, future tense (vv. 2–3).

"Go forth [Qal imperative of הָלַךְ *halak*] from your country, and from your relatives and from your father's house, to a land which I will show you." (Genesis 12:1)

"I will make you a great nation, and I will bless you, and make your name great; and so you shall be a blessing; and I will bless those who bless you, and the one who curses you I will curse. And in you all the families of the earth will be blessed." (12:2–3)

God's final word to Abraham also starts with an imperative (22:2) and ends with an indicative, future tense (22:15–18).

¹ See point 16 above.

God said, “Take [Qal imperative of נָקַח *laqach*] now your son, your only son, whom you love, Isaac, and go to the land of Moriah, and offer him as a burnt offering on one of the mountains of which I will tell you.” (Genesis 22:2)

“I will greatly bless you, and I will greatly multiply your seed as the stars of the heavens and as the sand which is on the seashore; and your seed shall possess the gate of their enemies.” (Genesis 22:17) (p. 666)

One notices that overwhelmingly these promises are made by God unconditionally. The absence of the word “if” in Genesis is as striking as its presence in Exodus, at least from chapter 19 on (“Now if you obey me fully and keep my covenant...,” Exodus 19:5). This element of unconditionality is sounded clearly both in the promises themselves and in the covenant God makes with Abraham, and by extension with his descendants (instituted in 15:1–21 and confirmed in 17:1–27).

Nowhere does God ever add a conditional if clause to any promise he makes to Abraham or Jacob that suggests that obedience or faithfulness is a sine quo non for the fulfillment of that promise. Note that God’s first word to Abraham is a command, not a conditional clause, and that pattern continues throughout Genesis. This means, for one thing, that the Genesis narratives are not so much primarily about the faith of the patriarchs as they are about the faithfulness of God.

This does not mean that in Genesis obedience or faithfulness is inconsequential. On the contrary, they are important and acceptable to God. After all, the text does record that Abraham believed God’s promises (15:6), his questions borne of disappointment and disenchantment notwithstanding (15:2, 8). Here is the appropriate response to a word from God. Again, at the conclusion of the Moriah incident Abraham is told, not once but twice that “because you have done this ... because you have obeyed me” (22:16, 18), God’s blessings will be on his descendants. Thus, faithful, obedient living is one of two ways in Genesis in which one exercises spiritual influence. The other way is intercessory prayer (18:16–33).² (p. 668)

22. Our research into the history of Abraham, Sarah, Hagar, Ishmael, and Isaac, the unconditional covenants given to Abraham and his descendants, and the eternity clauses contained in each have given us the background necessary to understand Paul’s allegory in Galatians 19–31.
23. We have observed the principle that Eastern Religions emphasize legalism over grace. The Galatians passage provides insight that this dichotomy also exists between Islam and Christianity.
24. As we return to the Galatians passage it is necessary that we review the verses we have already studied. The background we have established from Genesis and Romans will give clarity to the remainder of the chapter.

² Victor P. Hamilton, “Genesis: Theology of: The Structure of Genesis,” *New International Dictionary of Old Testament Theology and Exegesis*, gen. ed., Willem A. VanGemeren (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1997), 4:666, 668.