

Healing Hereafter: Quick-read Version

(For briefly examining nearly all the questions and conclusions found in Booklet 4.

Please explore the Full Version of this booklet for a more thorough discussion and extensive biblical and scholarly evidence validating the summaries below.)

Booklet 4: Yes, I Gotta Have Faith, Ooooo, I Gotta Have Faith

Chapter 1

We have now found fresh and functional ways the Bible explains how every human will be reached with Jesus' message, so that they can freely choose to accept it or not. However, there are many who believe that God—not humans—decides even before we are created who is saved and consequently who is not. Therefore, we examine exactly what God does decide is going to happen before it does and if such predestination affects our eternal destination. We start by demonstrating how it is not possible for God to either predestine or foreknow our salvation decisions while still allowing us to freely choose. As soon as truly free will is introduced, even God's foreknowledge is no longer reliable, as humans can alter their choices at any time, independent of any outside influence or foreknowledge. And if they can't, then they don't have free will. Therefore, God either must directly or indirectly force free-willed humans to be saved or unsaved, or he must leave that decision to them, setting aside any foreknowledge of which way they will choose. We conclude that God does the latter because it makes a lot more sense, but also because he would otherwise be forced to abandon his stated purpose in creating humans, openly lie to us several times, and violate his just nature. We ask how God can be sovereign while limiting his omniscience, but then we discover numerous biblical passages where he does exactly that—not to

mention the extensive limits he places on himself as Jesus. We realize that the completely voluntary, self-imposed restriction of his foreknowledge of our response to the gospel maintains—not diminishes—his sovereignty, because it allows him to keep his purpose intact, his integrity intact, and his very nature intact.

Chapter 2

However, the Bible does confirm that God commonly interferes with our free will to make a great many circumstances and events inevitably certain, so that he can fulfill his prophecies and keep his promises. We review several examples of these predestinations that have nothing to do with human salvation, but then we take a closer look at the four that most poignantly do appear to influence people's eternal fates. By incorporating the literary context, we find that the first three comment on God's knowledge of either present or temporary future circumstances, but not eternal destinies. They also demonstrate again how God would not contradict his nature, does limit his omniscience, and persistently links a necessary component of human faith to the salvation process. However, the final passage does confirm that before he created humans, God predestined for a group of them to be saved, but we are not told if God picked specifically who would be in this remnant or if folks who already had become Christians simply considered themselves part of it retrospectively. To choose the most logical and biblical option, we ask which one is more consistent with who the Bible says God is and which one is more consistent with the context of this passage. Because God is honest and just, because Jesus tells us that Hell wasn't originally intended for humans, because he consistently includes human action in the salvation process, and because it is hypocritical for God to encourage, reward, command against, and punish such action if he himself predestined it, we decide the latter option is the more logical.

In the passage itself we find three reasons God predestines that at least a remnant of people will be saved: for his glory, for his desire, and for his pleasure. The passage's context teaches us how all three are compromised if God picks precisely who is saved, and it even reminds us that free-willed human faith is an indispensable parameter affecting a person's eternal fate.

Chapter 3

Therefore, we survey numerous biblical examples of this faith that is bound to salvation, and we discover that its only necessary, fundamental essence is belief that God can and will do what he says, and that what he says is the best. We explain why it was not specifically faith in Jesus or the gospel that initiated God's salvation for so many in the Bible, but we also confirm that it must always result in that to complete salvation. Knowing—not foreknowing—everything of our minds and motives, God identifies when humans are freely and genuinely demonstrating the faith that their creator can and will do what he says and that what he says is the best, which requires no specific knowledge about God or Jesus to possess. He then knows that he only needs to say the message of Jesus to them in order for them to believe that he can and will save them through the gospel and that the solution of Jesus is the best. So he does, and we already know how God provides meaningful access to the gospel, whether before physical death or afterwards if necessary. We explain how this free-willed human choice justifies God to only *then* specifically (specially) predestine that these folks will hear the gospel and believe it. In other words, once we freely convince God of the faith he seeks, he essentially runs the salvation process to make certain that it will be completed. A further exploration of this faith throughout the Bible reveals that it is fair and equal-opportunity. Moreover, it makes remarkable sense, because it directly opposes the nature of sin, continues to be useful and necessary beyond the moment of conversion, and

ultimately helps to accomplish not only salvation, but the goal of salvation: eternal perfect community with God. We finish our discussion on faith, both by showing how it is a human work for which God at least partially credits us but also how we still can't take any credit at all for the salvation that arises from it. This allows us to explain how our faith remains indispensable in proving to God that we want his salvation without allowing us to earn it.