

Book Review of *Determined to Believe*, by John C. Lennox

In the world of contradicting opinions and interpretations, the questions about God's sovereignty and human freedom/responsibility has been widely debated. This is in context of atheist that argue for chance and randomness while Christians question determinism over freedom. In his book, *Determined to Believe*, John C. Lennox addresses issues raised by Christians about theological determinism. The long-standing debates about God's sovereignty, human freedom/responsibility, predestination and perseverance are discussed within a textual framework and Judeo-Christian tradition.

As a professor of mathematics and philosophy of science at the University of Oxford, he not only approaches this subject theoretically but also experientially from a philosophical perspective. Lennox observes that theological determinism brings about several assumptions that must be reconsidered in light of human freedoms. He identifies the risk of framing his arguments on experience-based convictions but observes that it broadens the conversation to many who do not share similar Christian world views. In addition to this, he approaches the subject by eliminating labels developed by those who agree and disagree with different theological determinism perspectives.

The book is divided into five parts, each serving its purpose to frame the whole debate. Lennox defines the issues of contention raised with both the nature of freedom and determinism while helping the reader understand the history of each line of thinking. He then explores key terms and concepts in the theology of determinism that leads to how the Gospel is perceived in light of the human condition. Different perspectives of determinism are explored while its effect on interpretation are compared to biblical passages and other writings from theological scholars.

The last portion of the book is first devoted to three chapters of Romans which compares Israel and determinism. It then addresses and calls into question the assurance of believers and how it is reflected in Hebrews.

Lennox's book contributes to the wide range of perspectives Christians have while also comprehensively clarifying what is being debated. His biblical exegesis and experiential human perspective in response to deterministic claims answers questions but also raises others. Though the debate in theological determinism can often lead to mere proof texting, the arguments laid out in the book are comprehensive, well argued and charitable towards different interpretations. The book allows the reader to step away from labeled categories and take a fresh view of the subject.

Though the author raises theological, biblical and philosophical questions about determinism, the starting point of approaching the subject from a human experience and philosophical perspective can lead to questions about Lennox's conclusions. He does recognize the limitations of framing God in one's own convictions but also states that by doing so, it broadens the understanding. Though this may be true, the reliance on mankind's experience and therefore interpretations could place limitations on one's conclusions. Over simplifying assurance and freedom to a mere human reaction or decision can bring about confusion. Overall, I believe this book is a good introduction to the subject. It clearly articulates the different views of debate while also having the potential to be a good catalyst for discussion.

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