

## Luck, Hap, and Chance

### I. The purpose of this study.

1. There are some people who believe that the idea of luck is pagan and that Christians should never use the words *lucky* or *luck*.
  - A. I used to believe this years ago.
  - B. This study will show that this idea is not true.
2. There are some people who think that nothing happens by chance, but all events that happen are predestinated by God.
  - A. Christians in another church once told me that they believed that nothing happens by coincidence.
  - B. This study will show that these ideas are not true.
3. Believers sometimes say that "Christians are not lucky, they are blessed."
  - A. I used to say this myself.
  - B. This study will show that *lucky* and *blessed* are synonyms.
  - C. Therefore, the above statement is self-contradictory, just as is the statement "Geniuses are not smart, they are intelligent."
4. This study is designed to clear up misunderstandings about the concepts of luck and chance and also to relieve Christians of the burden of being afraid to use certain words that are perfectly fine to use.

### II. Definitions

1. Luck *n.* - 1. a. Fortune good or ill; the fortuitous happening of events favourable or unfavourable to the interests of a person; a person's condition with regard to the favourable or unfavourable character of some fortuitous event, or of the majority of the fortuitous events in which he has an interest. Often with *adj.*, as *bad, hard, evil luck, good-luck, ill-luck*. Also, the imagined tendency of chance (esp. in matters of gambling) to produce events continuously favourable or continuously unfavourable; the friendly or hostile disposition ascribed to chance at a particular time.
2. Fortune *n.* - 1. a. Chance, hap, or luck, regarded as a cause of events and changes in men's affairs.
3. Fortuitous *adj.* - That happens or is produced by fortune or chance; accidental, casual.
4. Lucky *adj.* - 1. Of persons: Having, or attended by, good luck. In early use often, Fortunate, successful, prosperous. Now with narrower meaning: Favoured by chance; successful through causes other than one's own action or merit.
5. Fortunate *adj.* - 1. Favoured by fortune; possessed of or receiving good fortune; lucky, prosperous. Said of persons; also, of an enterprise, event, etc.
6. Hap *n.* - 1. Chance or fortune (good or bad) that falls to any one; luck, lot.
7. Happy *adj.* - 1. Coming or happening by chance; fortuitous; chance. 2. a. Having good 'hap' or fortune; lucky, fortunate; favoured by lot, position, or other external circumstance. b. Blessed, beatified.
8. Blessed *adj.* - 1. Consecrated, hallowed, holy; consecrated by a religious rite or ceremony. 2. That is the object of adoring reverence, adorable, worthy to be blessed by men. 3. a. Enjoying supreme felicity; happy, fortunate.
9. Chance *n.* - I. 1. a. The falling out or happening of events; the way in which things fall out; fortune; case. b. A happening or occurrence of things in a particular way; a casual or

fortuitous circumstance; = accident n. 1b. II. Phrases. 7. *by chance*: a. As it falls or fell out; without design; casually, accidentally, incidentally, haply; by any chance = PERCHANCE *adv.* 3.

III. As the definitions plainly show, *luck*, *hap*, and *chance* are all synonyms.

1. The words *luck* and *lucky* are not in the Bible, but the concept most definitely is.
2. Fortuitous events happen to God's children such as Ruth whose *hap* it was to end up gleaning in Boaz's field (**Ruth 2:3**).
  - A. Hap *n.* - 1. Chance or fortune (good or bad) that falls to any one; luck, lot.
  - B. In other words, Ruth was *fortunate* and *lucky* to land in Boaz's field.
  - C. There is nothing wrong with using the word *luck* to describe Ruth's circumstance because *hap* means *luck*!
  - D. Did Ruth end up in Boaz's field purely by random chance?
    - i. No, of course not.
    - ii. A man's heart deviseth his way, but the Lord directeth his steps (**Pro 16:9**).
    - iii. Ruth trusted in the Lord with all her heart (**Ruth 1:16**), and the Lord directed her path (**Pro 3:5-6**).

IV. *Happy* is a synonym of *lucky* and *blessed*.

1. Happy *adj.* - 1. Coming or happening by chance; fortuitous; chance. 2. a. Having good 'hap' or fortune; lucky, fortunate; favoured by lot, position, or other external circumstance. b. Blessed, beatified.
2. Blessed *adj.* - 1. Consecrated, hallowed, holy; consecrated by a religious rite or ceremony. 2. That is the object of adoring reverence, adorable, worthy to be blessed by men. 3. a. Enjoying supreme felicity; happy, fortunate.
3. Women who conceive and bear children are said to be both *happy* and *blessed* (**Gen 30:13**).
4. Therefore, women who conceive and bear children are *lucky*, since *happy* means *lucky*.
5. Consider other people whom the scripture calls *happy* (*lucky*, *blessed*).
  - A. People who are saved by God and belong to Him are *happy* (**Deu 33:29; Psa 144:15**).
  - B. Therefore, I am a *lucky* man.
  - C. Those that get to learn from wise men and find wisdom are *happy* (**1Ki 10:8; Pro 3:13**).
  - D. Therefore, I am a *lucky* man.
  - E. Those whom God corrects are *happy* (**Job 5:17**).
  - F. Therefore, I am a *lucky* man.
  - G. Those who have many children are *happy* (**Psa 127:5**).
  - H. Therefore, many of the people in this church are *lucky*.
  - I. Those who suffer for Christ are *happy* (**1Pe 3:14; 1Pe 4:14**).
  - J. Therefore, I am a *lucky* man.
  - K. Those who know that we ought to wash each others feet and do it are *happy* (**Joh 13:17**).
  - L. Therefore, the members of this church are *lucky* people.
6. In that *happy*, *blessed*, and *lucky* are synonyms, don't make a man an offender for a word (**Isa 29:21**) if he says that he was *lucky* that a certain good thing happened to him.

- A. If the man says that he is *happy* or *blessed* that that thing happened to him, he is saying that he is *lucky* because the words are synonyms.
  - B. If you wouldn't reprove a man for saying he's *happy* or *blessed*, then don't reprove him for saying he's *lucky*.
  - C. The important thing is not whether the word *happy*, *blessed*, or *lucky* is used, but rather to whom the hap, luck, or blessing is ascribed.
  - D. Fortuitous events happen to all of God's children.
    - i. Some happen as a direct gift of God, such as salvation (**Deu 33:29**), conceiving a child (**Gen 30:13**), finding a godly wife (**Pro 18:22**), etc.
    - ii. Some happen by chance (or at least they could be by chance) like getting a hole-in-one golfing, winning a raffle, or finding \$100 bill in an old couch someone dumped off at the dumpster.
    - iii. *Chance* will be covered later in the outline.
  - E. When we say that we are *lucky* to have this or that, we should always recognize that the blessing either:
    - i. 1) came directly as a gift from God,
    - ii. 2) might have come directly from God, or
    - iii. 3) God allowed it to come to us through chance, and therefore He is still to be thanked for it.
  - F. So, no matter what, we should always thank the Lord for every good thing (and "bad" thing - **Ecc 7:14**) that happens to us because they all, either directly or indirectly, come from God (**Jam 1:17**).
- V. God is sovereign over all creation (**1Ch 29:11-12; Psa 115:3; Psa 135:6; Isa 14:24; Dan 4:35**).
1. Though God could actively cause every movement and event that occurs in the universe, some things He does leave to *chance*.
  2. There are things that happen *by chance* (**Luk 10:31**).
    - A. Chance *n.* - 7. *by chance*: a. As it falls or fell out; without design; casually, accidentally, incidentally, haply; by any chance = PERCHANCE *adv.* 3.
    - B. If words mean anything, the priest *did NOT* walk by the man that was fallen among thieves *by design*.
    - C. The young man that reported Saul's and Jonathan's death to David said that he happened along them *by chance* (**2Sa 1:6**).
      - i. David slew him for claiming to have slain Saul (**2Sa 1:9-10 c/w 2Sa 1:14-16**).
      - ii. But he didn't chastise him for saying that he came upon them "by chance."
  3. The scripture teaches that *time and chance* happens to us all (**Ecc 9:11**).
    - A. Chance *n.* - I. 1. a. The falling out or happening of events; the way in which things fall out; fortune; case. b. A happening or occurrence of things in a particular way; a casual or fortuitous circumstance; = accident *n.* 1b.
    - B. Fortune *n.* - 1. a. Chance, hap, or luck, regarded as a cause of events and changes in men's affairs.
    - C. This verse clearly teaches that *luck* happens to all men at times.
    - D. It teaches that sometimes things fall into our laps that we are not working for and that we are not deserving of.
  4. God can *allow* things to happen by chance and still be sovereign.

- A. God *allows* things to happen (**1Co 16:7; Heb 6:3**), which means that He doesn't actively cause those things to happen.
  - B. Permit v. - To allow, suffer, give leave; not to prevent.
  - C. If God allows some things to happen, that demands that He does not actively cause those things to happen, or else words have no meaning.
  - D. Just because a thing happens *by chance* doesn't mean that God has no control over it or that He didn't know it was going to happen.
    - i. God knows everything and all possibilities of things that could happen (**Psa 147:5**).
    - ii. Therefore, nothing that happens *by chance* happens without God knowing about it and permitting it to happen.
    - iii. Therefore, God has a design in chance when He allows the outcome of chance to occur.
5. God doesn't *actively* cause *all things* to happen.
- A. If God actively caused all things to happen, then He would cause sin to happen.
  - B. God does not cause sin (**Jer 7:9-10; Jer 32:35; Jam 1:13-16**).
    - i. God *allows* sinners to sin to accomplish His purpose, but He doesn't *cause* them to sin (**1Ki 22:20-23**).
    - ii. God sends nations to destroy other nations as a judgment against them like He did Babylon, Assyria, and Syria to Israel (**Isa 10:5-7; Jer 25:8-11 c/w Hab 1:12; 2Ch 24:24**).
    - iii. But He doesn't cause their sin, but rather He permits them to act out their bellicose desires to accomplish His purpose in punishing wicked nations (**Psa 76:10**).
  - C. The "all things" that God works together for our good (**Rom 8:28**) are "all things" that pertain to the eternal salvation of His elect (**Rom 8:29-32; 2Pe 1:3**).
    - i. If the "all things" in **Rom 8:28** that work together for our good are all things in the universe without exception, then the "all things" in **Rom 8:32** that God freely gives us are also all things in the universe without exception.
      - a. Does God give us all the women in the world to be our wives?
      - b. If an error proves anything, it proves too much.
    - ii. The "all things" in **Rom 8:28** cannot include every event in the universe without exception.
      - a. If that were the case, then God would be using our sin to bring us good through it.
      - b. But *sin withholds good things from us* (**Jer 5:25**); it is not used by God to bring good to us.
  - D. If God predestinates all events in the universe, then God predestinates sin.
    - i. A simple syllogism will prove this.
      - a. Major premise: God predestinates all actions in the universe.
      - b. Minor premise: Sin is an action.
      - c. Conclusion: Therefore, God predestinates sin.
    - ii. The conclusion of the syllogism is false: God does not cause sin (**Jer 7:9-10; Jer 32:35**).
      - a. If the conclusion is false, then either the major or minor premise must be false.

- b. The minor premise is true: sin is an action.
      - c. Therefore, the major premise must be false.
      - d. Therefore, God does not predestinate all actions in the universe.
    - iii. There is no way to get around this.
    - iv. If sinful actions are predestinated, no man could be responsible and accountable for them because he was caused to do them against his will.
    - v. Now consider what God *does* actually predestinate.
      - a. God predestinates His elect to eternal life and glory (**Rom 8:29-30; Eph 1:4-5, 11**).
      - b. Because of that, they are in no way responsible for their salvation.
      - c. These are the only verses in the Bible where the word *predestinate* is used.
      - d. Once again, the "all things" in **Eph 1:11** are all things that pertain to eternal salvation (**Eph 1:3-11**).
  - E. It is an exercise in futility to argue for absolute predestination (the idea that God predestinates all things).
    - i. I will illustrate this point with an example.
      - a. "ak1986" commented on part 1 of this series saying, "Wrong, God predestined all things."
      - b. I responded with, "I would apologize for my error, but I had no choice but to be wrong."
    - ii. How can you try to convince a man of his error and try to change his mind when God predestined him believe it before the world began?
6. God sometimes intervenes into the natural course of things and controls the outcome of chance (**Pro 16:33**).
- A. Lot n. - 1. a. An object (app. usually a piece of wood) used in a widely diffused ancient method of deciding disputes, dividing plunder or property, selecting persons for an office or duty, etc., by an appeal to chance or the divine agency supposed to be concerned in the results of chance. The 'lots', each bearing the special mark of one of the competitors, were placed in a receptacle (in Homeric Greece a helmet); according to Greek procedure the vessel was shaken, the winning lot being that which fell out first; in Scandinavia (see Vigf. s.v. hlutr) the winning lot was drawn out by an uninterested party.
  - B. It appears that sometimes God had an interest in the outcome of a lot (**Lev 16:8-9**).
  - C. Sometimes it's evident that God manipulated the lot, though it's not outrightly stated.
    - i. God did this in Jonah's case when lots were cast to see who was responsible for the storm at sea (**Jon 1:7**).
    - ii. God did this when the Persians cast Pur (the lot) to decide when the Jews would be destroyed (**Est 9:24**).
      - a. They cast Pur in the first month of the year (**Est 3:7**).
      - b. The lot fell on the 12th month for the time of the genocide (**Est 3:7, 13**).
      - c. After Haman's wicked plot was exposed, king Ahasuerus made a decree that the Jews be ready to defend themselves from the assault (**Est 8:10-14**).

- d. Because the ethnic cleansing was set by the lot for 11 months after it was cast, the Jews had a lot of time to prepare to fight.
  - e. They were able to fight off all of the wicked who tried to destroy them (**Est 9:1-2**).
  - f. This is an obvious case of where "the whole disposing thereof was of the Lord" (**Pro 16:33**).
- D. It does not appear that God always actively controls the results of a lot though (**Pro 1:14; Pro 18:18; Joel 3:3; Mat 27:35**).
7. If God actively controls everything that happens and has predestinated all things, then is there really a such thing as a miracle?
- A. Miracle *n.* - 1. a. A marvellous event occurring within human experience, which cannot have been brought about by human power or by the operation of any natural agency, and must therefore be ascribed to the special intervention of the Deity or of some supernatural being; chiefly, an act (e.g. of healing) exhibiting control over the laws of nature, and serving as evidence that the agent is either divine or is specially favoured by God.
  - B. Wouldn't every event be a miracle if God was actively, supernaturally directing every event in the universe?
  - C. If God actively, supernaturally controls every event in the universe, why does the Bible specifically call some things miracles? (**Num 14:22; Mar 6:52; Joh 2:23**)
  - D. The fact that only a few specific things are called miracles in the Bible means that the rest are not miraculous occurrences.
  - E. God has set up the laws of nature to control how the elements behave.
  - F. In that He set up the laws of nature and reserves the right to alter the course of events at any time, He is in control of everything.
  - G. But this doesn't mean that He actively causes every action or thought we make.