

Predestination, Choice, and the God of the Universe

Let me begin this lesson by stating that this particular doctrine of predestination is a very difficult doctrine to understand. Two passages of scripture are very helpful for us to keep in mind as we study this lesson.

“For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the Lord. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts.” (Isaiah 55:8-9)

“For now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known.” (1 Corinthians 13:12)

Jeremiah 1:5a

5 Before I formed thee in the belly I knew thee;

We are predestinated according to the foreknowledge of God, but does this then mean that we do not have a choice?

Romans 8:29-31

29 For whom he did **foreknow**, he also did **predestinate** **to be conformed to the image of his Son**, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren. {the first begotten of the dead (Rev 1:5); the firstfruits of them that slept. (1 Cor 15:20)... in the likeness of his death, burial, and resurrection.}

30 Moreover whom he did **predestinate**, them he also **called**: and whom he **called**, them he also **justified**: and whom he **justified**, them he also **glorified**. {to be justified in the sight of God one needs to be born again of water and of the Spirit.}

31 What shall we then say to these things? **If God be for us, who can be against us?**

If you take notice, those who he did foreknow were predestinated to be conformed to the image of his son. Another words jointly formed or similar to by partaking of the Lord's sufferings, being born again of God, and entering into the Body of Christ.

Romans 6:8

8 Now **if we be dead** with Christ, we believe that **we shall also live with him**:

Ephesians 1:4-5

4 According as he hath **chosen us in him before the foundation of the world**, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love:

5 Having **predestinated** us unto the **adoption of children** {the born again process} **by Jesus Christ to himself**, according to the **good pleasure of his will**,

Let me briefly mention that sonship was lost when Adam and Eve sinned in the Garden of Eden. There were not any more sons of God until the New Covenant (Testament) of God was in force

(the born again process of God) and we were once again able to become the sons of God (Spiritual regeneration). The Sons of God you see throughout the Old Testament after the fall of Adam and Eve are referring to Angels.

Romans 8:14-19

14 For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, **they are the sons of God.**

15 For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but **ye have received the Spirit of adoption**, whereby we cry, Abba, Father. {Abba - This Syriac word, which intimates filial affection (the relation of a child to a parent) and respect, and parental tenderness,}

16 The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are **the children of God**:

17 And **if children**, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; **if so be that we suffer with him**, that we may be **also glorified together.**

18 For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time **are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.**

19 For the earnest expectation of the creature **waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God.**

Though we were predestinated unto God by Jesus Christ unto himself **before the foundation of the world**, **this would in no way eliminate freedom of choice.**

John 3:16

16 For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.

2 Peter 3:9

9 The Lord is not slack **concerning his promise**, {the promise of his coming} as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, **not willing that any should perish**, but that **all** should come to repentance.

Though we were predestinated according to **the foreknowledge of God** the Lord has told us, "that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." We were also told that, the Lord is, "longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance."

The choice is ours. Do we believe in Jesus Christ? Have we become **obedient unto the faith** of the gospel of the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ? **By repenting of our sins and being baptized in Jesus name?** For the remission of our sins that were inherited from birth; where the body of sin is destroyed as we are buried with him by baptism into death? Have we received **the promise of the receiving of the Holy Ghost with the evidence of speaking with other tongues** as the Spirit gives the utterance? As is taught throughout scripture?

What about God hardening Pharaoh's heart? And has not the Potter power over the clay?

Romans 9:16-24

16 So then it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, **but of God that showeth mercy.**

17 For the scripture saith unto Pharaoh, **Even for this same purpose have I raised thee up**, that I might show **my power in thee**, and **that my name might be declared throughout all the earth**.

18 Therefore **hath he mercy on whom he will** have mercy, and **whom he will** he hardeneth.

19 Thou wilt say then unto me, Why doth he yet find fault? For who hath resisted his will?

20 Nay but, O man, **who art thou that repliest against God?** Shall the thing formed say to him that formed it, **Why hast thou made me thus?**

21 **Hath not the potter** power over the clay, of the same lump to make **one vessel unto honour**, and **another unto dishonour?**

22 **What if God**, willing to show his wrath, and to make his power known, **endured** with much longsuffering the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction:

23 And **that he might make known** the riches of his glory **on the vessels of mercy**, which he had **afore prepared unto glory**,

24 Even us, whom he hath called, not of the Jews only, but also of the Gentiles?

How could one have a choice if God had afore prepared the vessels of mercy unto glory? Who has resisted his will?

What did we read above?

Though we were predestinated according to the foreknowledge of God the Lord has told us, “that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.” We were also told that, the Lord is, “longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.”

So how does this work together?

2 Timothy 2:19-21

19 Nevertheless the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, **The Lord knoweth them that are his**. And, **Let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity**.

20 But in a great house there are not only vessels of gold and of silver, but also of wood and of earth; and **some to honour, and some to dishonour**.

21 **If a man therefore purge himself from these, he shall be a vessel unto honour, sanctified, and meet for the master's use, and prepared unto every good work**.

If we want to be a vessel of honour, sanctified, and meet for the master's use, **we must depart from iniquity and purge ourselves from vessels of dishonour**. **The choice is ours!!**

John 6:37

37 All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out.

For the Lord will in no wise cast out those that come to Him. **The choice is ours**. For the Lord is, “longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.”

And who are those that the Father gives unto Jesus that he will in no wise cast out?

Answer is: whosoever will. Freedom of choice!!

Revelation 22:17

17 And the Spirit and the bride say, **Come**. And let him that heareth say, **Come**. And let him that is athirst **come**. **And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely.**

For there is **no respect of persons with God**.

Colossians 3:25

25 But he that doeth wrong shall receive for the wrong which he hath done: and **there is no respect of persons**.

Remember: God knew the end before the beginning. He knew **every choice** that every person would make before he ever made them, yet he chose to make us **anyway**. Thus he predestinated those that he foreknew **to be conformed** to the image of His Son. For through the blood of Jesus Christ is **the redemption and reconciliation** for mankind.

Isaiah 46:9-10

9 Remember the former things of old: for I am God, and there is none else; I am God, and there is none like me,

10 **Declaring the end from the beginning**, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done, saying, My counsel shall stand, and **I will do all my pleasure:**

John 13:19

19 Now I tell you **before it come, that, when it is come to pass, ye may believe that I am he.**

Let us take a deeper look at the doctrine of predestination.

Did God predestinate Adam and Eve to sin? No, he gave them a choice of whether to obey or not to obey. Man fell. Did God predestinate man to sin and die to fulfill his plan? No, God created man to have fellowship with him and obey him by freedom of choice. Was God's will for mankind to sin and fall short of the glory of God? No, his will was for man to fellowship with him in obedience by freedom of choice.

So man was not predestinated to sin, but God in his foreknowledge knew that man would fall because he is omniscient (all knowing). So he knew the choices that each individual would make in their lifetime and ultimately where they would spend their eternity.

For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate **to be conformed to the image of his Son**. Those of whom he **did not** foreknow were prepared for destruction. The reason he did not foreknow them (in the sense of being his children) was because they were none of his. The reason they were none of his was because God in his foreknowledge knew that they would not choose to serve him and therefore he shows mercy on whom he will and he hardeneth who he will.

But what about those who never had a chance to know God like the Indians or those in the far reaches of the jungle, they could not choose to serve him because they did not know him? No, the very Creation witnesses of the God of the universe.

Romans 1:20-25

20 For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are **clearly seen**, being understood by the things that are made, **even his eternal power and Godhead**; so that they are **without excuse**:

The very creation of God speaks of his existence as the God of the universe, not as a plurality of deities but as One God. Meaning the very creation itself demands an intelligent creator. Design demands a designer. God's eternal power and Godhead is made manifest within the very creation and the rules of which govern this creation.

21 Because that, when they knew God, **they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful**; but became vain in their imaginations, **and their foolish heart was darkened**.

22 Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools,

23 And changed the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and fourfooted beasts, and creeping things.

24 Wherefore **God also gave them up to uncleanness** through the lusts of their own hearts, to dishonour their own bodies between themselves:

25 Who changed **the truth of God** into a lie, and worshipped and served **the creature** more than the Creator, who is blessed for ever. Amen.

So he hath chosen us in him **before the foundation of the world...** Having **predestinated** us unto the **adoption of children...** according to the **good pleasure of his will**.

In God's foreknowledge he knew who would choose him and therefore he chose those who he foreknew would choose him. He knew the end from the beginning and predestinated us around this foreknowledge of which the Almighty Supreme Sovereign God of the universe, who is omniscient, chose us by election before the foundation of the world because he knew every choice that you would make in your life. Thus he knew who were his before the foundation of the world.

Again, if one starts to ask but doesn't that mean that God made this person this way because God is the creator and this person then had no choice? The answer is still no, because God did not predestinate mankind to sin, but rather foreknew that mankind would fall. Did God predestinate mankind to fall? The answer again is no, God made man to have fellowship with him and obey him by freedom of choice. Otherwise you are actually accusing God of deliberately designing the Angels and mankind to fall. This is not true! He allowed them to exercise freedom of choice. Understand the will of God was freedom of choice to obey him because you so chose to. Not because you were forced to. God's will was for man to fellowship with him in obedience by freedom of choice. Just like it was his will for all the Angels to fellowship with him in obedience by freedom of choice.

This is where you begin to recognize the love that God had for his creation of man. He gave man a way to once again become the sons of God and to be reconciled unto himself by Christ Jesus our Lord, even though we were in a fallen state. “But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.” (Romans 5:8) He did not give this same choice to the Angels that fell. This I believe is because they knew so much more than man and yet still chose to rebel against him.

So all of mankind was predestinated around what God already foreknew.

Matthew 11:21

21 Woe unto thee, Chorazin! woe unto thee, Bethsaida! for if the mighty works, which were done in you, had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes.

God in his foreknowledge knew how people would have responded **to events that did not take place.** Here you see two cities that would have repented if the works that Jesus did in Chorazin and Bethsaida were done in them. What one begins to take notice of here is that people under different situations and circumstances would have chosen repentance versus not repenting. In essence they would have chose God rather than not choosing God. **But those situations and circumstances did not take place.** This is **a great illustration of choice.** These two towns, Chorazin and Bethsaida, did not repent by their own choice after seeing the mighty works of God within them, yet God in his omniscience knew that two other cities, Tyre and Sidon, would have repented under those same circumstances. **But that is not what took place. What matters to us is what is, not what might have been.**

God knew Pharaoh’s heart. Therefore God in his foreknowledge predestinated Pharaoh to be a vessel of wrath fitted for destruction because God knew what was going to take place with his children in Egypt... **and this is what was... not what might have been.**

To say that Pharaoh had no choice of serving God is to say God predestinated sin. God did not predestinate sin but God allowed freedom of choice, of which if exercised against God is sin. God did not create Pharaoh to sin, but rather Pharaoh inherited sin from birth. It was Pharaoh’s choice to continue to afflict the children of Israel in the bondage of slavery. God then chose to redeem the children of Israel by the hand of Moses and Pharaoh was given over to a reprobate mind and his heart was hardened. This is God showing mercy on whom he will and upon whom he will he hardenth.

“The Lord hath made all things for himself: yea, even the wicked for the day of evil.” (Pro 16:4)

Let us take a closer look at God’s eternal purpose. God had an **eternal purpose** in Christ Jesus. Just as God is eternal, his purpose in Christ was also eternal.

Ephesians 3:9-11

9 And to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world **hath been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ:**

10 To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the church the manifold **wisdom of God**,

11 According to the **eternal purpose** which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord:

Acts 2:22-24

22 Ye men of Israel, hear these words; Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among you by miracles and wonders and signs, which God did by him in the midst of you, as ye yourselves also know:

23 **Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God**, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain:

24 Whom God hath raised up, having loosed the pains of death: because it was not possible that he should be holden of it.

Revelation 13:8

8 And all that dwell upon the earth shall worship him, whose names are not written in the book of life of **the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world**.

1 Peter 1:19-20

19 But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot:

20 Who verily was **foreordained before the foundation of the world**, but was manifest in these last times for you,

The eternal purpose in Christ Jesus was to save his people that he foreknew from their sins!!

Psalms 51:5

5 Behold, I was **shapen in iniquity**, and **in sin did my mother conceive me**.

Every one of us were born in sin and shapen in iniquity. This is why **we must be born again**.

Romans 3:23

23 For **all have sinned**, and come short of the glory of God;

Ephesians 2:3

3 Among whom also **we all had** our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature **the children of wrath**, even as others.

Every one of us were worthy of death...

Romans 5:6-8

6 For when we were yet without strength, in due time **Christ died for the ungodly**.

7 For scarcely for a righteous man will one die: yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die.

8 But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, **while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us**.

John 3:19-21

19 And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and **men loved darkness** rather than light, **because their deeds were evil.**

20 For every one that doeth evil **hateth the light**, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reprov'd.

21 But **he that doeth truth** cometh to the light, that his deeds may be made manifest, that they are wrought in God.

Those who hate the Light are blinded.

2 Corinthians 4:3-4

3 But if our gospel be hid, it is hid **to them that are lost:**

4 In whom the god of this world hath **blinded the minds** of them which **believe not**, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, **who is the image of God**, should shine unto them.

Is there any hope for those who are blinded by satan?

2 Timothy 2:24-26

24 And the servant of the Lord **must not strive**; but **be gentle** unto all men, **apt** {prepared; ready; willing} **to teach, patient,**

25 **In meekness** instructing those that oppose themselves; if God **peradventure** will give them repentance **to the acknowledging of the truth;**

26 **And that they may recover themselves out of the snare of the devil, who are taken captive by him at his will.**

The Lord takes no pleasure in the death of the wicked.

Ezekiel 33:11

11 Say unto them, As I live, saith the Lord GOD, I have **no pleasure** in the death of the wicked; but **that the wicked turn from his way and live: turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways;** for why will ye die, O house of Israel?

The choice is ours. Never the less...

Proverbs 16:4

4 The LORD hath made all things **for himself**: yea, **even the wicked** for the day of evil.

Though the Lord does not take pleasure in the death of the wicked, he never the less chooses to make them **anyway.**

Acts 13:47-48

47 For so hath the Lord commanded us, saying, I have set thee to be a light of the Gentiles, that thou shouldest be for **salvation unto the ends of the earth.**

48 And when the Gentiles heard this, they were glad, and glorified the word of the Lord: **and as many as were ordained to eternal life believed.**