

Predestination

Introduction:

A. Predestination Defined:

1. “Pre”=before and “destination”=destined thus, destined or determined before hand.
2. “What is to be will be” (Grandma and the storm house)

B. Our study is about two concepts of predestination – The Biblical and the Theological.

1. The Bible does mention predestination (Rom. 8:29-30; Eph. 1:5, 11; cf. 1 Pet. 1:20).
2. **Theology.** **a.** The doctrine that God has foreordained all things, especially that God has elected certain souls to eternal salvation. **b.** The divine decree foreordaining all souls to either salvation or damnation. **c.** The act of God foreordaining all things gone before and to come.¹
 - a. God, from all eternity, did, by the most wise and holy counsel of his own will, freely and unchangeably ordain whatever comes to pass²
 - b. “By the decree of God, for the manifestation of his glory, some men and angels are predestinated unto everlasting life, and others fore-ordained to everlasting death. These angels and men thus predestinated and fore-ordained are particularly and unchangeably designed, and their number is so certain and definite that it can not be either increased or diminished. Those of mankind that are predestinated unto life, God, before the foundation of the world was laid, according to His eternal and immutable purpose and the secret counsel and good pleasure of His will, hath chosen in Christ, Unto everlasting glory, out of His mere free grace and love, without any foresight of faith or good works or perseverance in either of them, or any other thing in the creature, as conditions or causes moving him thereunto.”³

C. We will address three questions about predestination:

1. Has God from all eternity unchangeably foreordained whatever comes to pass?
2. Has God unchangeably predestinated the number to be saved and the number to be lost?
3. What is the Bible doctrine of predestination?

Discussion:

I. Has God from All Eternity Unchangeably Foreordained Whatever Comes to Pass?

A. Therefore, sin is God-ordained (Ill.. Scotsman and the judge)

1. It has come to pass that men lie, steal, cheat, murder, commit adultery, etc.
2. It was foreordained that Cain should do the thing for which God cursed him.
3. Thus, God has foreordained whatever He has forbidden.

B. God’s decrees are not always unchangeable.

1. His decree to destroy Nineveh (Jonah 3:4, 10)
2. His death decree to Hezekiah (2 Kings 20:1, 5, 6).
3. Circumstances changes God’s dealings with men (cf. Jer. 18:7-10).

C. Some problems of foreknowledge and foreordination.

1. Calvinists say that since God foreknew everything, He foreordained everything.
2. God’s omniscience and omnipotence.
 - a. Though omnipotent He cannot lie (Titus 1:2; Heb. 6:18)
 - b. Though omnipotent, can he make two hills without a low place, make a rock too heavy for Him to move?
 - c. Though omniscient He can choose not to know (Gen. 6:5-7; 18:20, 21; 22:11-12; Ex. 10:12-14; Jer. 7:31; 19:5).
 - d. There is a difference in what God can do and know and what he does do and know.
 - e. In trying not to limit his foreknowledge, we must not limit his power (See A. Clark on Acts 2:47).

II. Has God Unchangeably Predestinated the Number of the Saved and the Lost?

A. This is an extension of the first assumption i. e., *everything* is predestinated and foreordained.

B. This makes a mockery of every conditional promise of God

1. Relating to man’s salvation.
 - a. The great commission (Mark 16:15-16).
 - b. What must one do to be saved? (Acts 2:37-38; 16:30, 31; 22:9, 10, 16)

- c. The command to remain faithful (Rev. 2:10)
- C. This makes a mockery of our Lord's invitations.
 - 1. "Choose" (Deut. 30:19; Josh 24:15)
 - 2. "Come" (Matt 10:28; Rev. 22:17)
- D. This makes a mockery of every warning to Christians about falling away.
 - 1. 1 Cor. 10:1-13
 - 2. Heb. 12:12ff

III. What is the Bible Doctrine of Predestination?

- A. Ephesians 1.
 - 1. He chose us *in Him* before the foundation of the world. (v. 4)
 - 2. He predestinated us unto the adoption of children by *Jesus Christ* (v. 5; cf. Gal. 3:26, 27).
 - a. *In whom* we have redemption/forgiveness (v. 7-10).
 - b. *In whom* we have received inheritance. (v. 11)
 - 3. He predestinated us in Him conditioned upon our response (v. 13; cf. 1 Pet. 1:18-25)
- B. Romans 8:29-30
 - 1. The "called" and "justified" are same as those foreknown, predestinated and later glorified.
 - 2. Called and chosen by the gospel (2 Thess. 2:13, 14)
 - 3. Justification is conditioned on faith and works (Jas. 2:21-26).
 - 4. The surety of our calling and election is conditional (2 Pet. 1:5-11).

Conclusion:

- A. The Bible teaches predestination.
- B. The Bible does not teach the predestination of Calvin and other such theologians.

As God's omnipotence implies his power to do all things, so God's omniscience implies his power to know all things; but we must take heed that we meddle not with the infinite free agency of this Eternal Being. Though God can do all things, he does not all things.

Infinite judgment directs the operations of his power, so that though he can, yet he does not do all things, but only such things as are proper to be done. In what is called illimitable space, he can make millions of millions of systems; but he does not see proper to do this. He can destroy the solar system, but he does not do it: he can fashion and order, in endless variety, all the different beings which now exist, whether material, animal, or intellectual; but he does not do this, because he does not see it proper to be done. Therefore it does not follow that, because God can do all things, therefore he must do all things. God is omniscient, and can know all things; but does it follow from this that he must know all things? Is he not as free in the volitions of his wisdom, as he is in the volitions of his power? The contingent as absolute, or the absolute as contingent? God has ordained some things as absolutely certain; these he knows as absolutely certain.

He has ordained other things as contingent; these he knows as contingent. It would be absurd to say that he foreknows a thing as only contingent which he has made absolutely certain. And it would be as absurd to say that he foreknows a thing to be absolutely certain which in his own eternal counsel he has made contingent. By absolutely certain, I mean a thing which must be, in that order, time, place, and form in which divine wisdom has ordained it to be; and that it can be no otherwise than this infinite counsel has ordained. By contingent, I mean such things as the infinite wisdom of God has thought proper to poise on the possibility of being or not being, leaving it to the will of intelligent beings to turn the scale. Or, contingencies are such possibilities, amid the succession of events, as the infinite wisdom of God has left to the will of intelligent beings to determine whether any such event shall take place or not.

To deny this would involve the most palpable contradictions, and the most monstrous absurdities. If there be no such things as contingencies in the world, then everything is fixed and determined by an unalterable decree and purpose of God; and not only all free agency is destroyed, but all agency of everything, except that of the Creator himself; for on this ground God is the only operator, either in time or eternity: all created beings are only instruments, and do nothing but as impelled and acted upon by this almighty and sole Agent. Consequently, every act is his own; for if he have purposed them all as absolutely certain, having nothing contingent in them, then he has ordained them to be so; and if no contingency, then no free agency, and God alone is the sole actor. Hence, the blasphemous, though, from the premises, fair conclusion, that God is the author of all the evil and sin that are in the world; and hence, follows that absurdity, that, as God can do nothing that is wrong, **WHATEVER IS, is RIGHT**. Sin is no more sin; a vicious human action is no crime, if God have decreed it, and by his foreknowledge and will impelled the creature to act it.

On this ground there can be no punishment for delinquencies; for if everything be done as God has predetermined, and his determinations must necessarily be all right, then neither the instrument nor the agent has done wrong. Thus all vice and virtue, praise and blame, merit and demerit, guilt and innocence, are at once confounded, and all distinctions of this kind confounded with them. Now, allowing the doctrine of the contingency of human actions (and it must be allowed in order to shun the above absurdities and blasphemies), then we see every intelligent creature accountable for its own works, and for the use it makes of the power with which God has endued it; and, to grant all this consistently, we must also grant that God foresees nothing is absolutely and inevitably certain which he has made contingent; and, because he has designed it to be contingent, therefore he cannot know it as absolutely and inevitably certain. I conclude that God, although omniscient, is not obliged, in consequence of this, to know all that he can know; no more than he is obliged, because he is omnipotent, to do all that he can do.

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2. Presbyterian Confession of Faith, chap. 3, sec. 1

3. Presbyterian Confession of Faith, chap. 3 secs. 3, 4, 5.