

## CHAPTER XX

# Understanding Predestination

**BIBLICAL DOCTRINE:** “God is absolutely sovereign, and in His sovereignty gave man a free will to accept or reject the salvation that He has provided. It is God’s will that all would be saved and that none should perish. God foreknows but does not predetermine any man to be condemned. God permits man’s destiny to depend upon man’s choice” (Florida Bible College Doctrinal Statement, Point Four) .

I Tim. 2:4 tells us that God would have all men to be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth. God does not predetermine who will believe and who will not believe, but God predetermined what will HAPPEN to the believers and to the unbelievers.

The father who asks the son to mow the yard may have predetermined that if he does, he will reward him, and if he doesn’t, he will chasten him. God explains our salvation in this same way . . . that the choice of our salvation is up to us, but He has predetermined the RESULTS of our choices.

Acts 10:34; Eph. 6:9; Col. 3:25; Rom. 2:11; and II Chron. 19:7 all point out clearly that God is no respecter of persons and does not choose one to be saved and one to be lost, but loves all alike. This is certainly clear in John 3:16, “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.”

II Thess. 2:13 says, “But we are bound to give thanks alway to God for you, brethren beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation THROUGH sanctification of the Spirit AND belief of the truth.” We are made pure and holy by sanctification of the Spirit. Look up the word “holy” in the Strong’s Concordance, #37 in the Greek New Testament, and you will find it means to be made “holy, pure, and blameless.” God chose those that believe the truth to be sanctified by the Spirit. But He did NOT choose WHO would believe the truth!

Eph. 1:4 is addressed to those who have received Christ as their Saviour and says that God predetermined all BELIEVERS to be before Him, holy, and without blame. Fatalists believe that this verse is teaching God chooses some to be saved. But the entire epistle of Ephesians is written to those who are already saved (Eph. 1:1), and verse four specifically says this is to those who are already “in Him”—believers who are in Christ. Ephesians 1:13 tells us we heard the Word of truth first; then, by believing, we were sealed with the Holy Spirit.

Romans 8: 29 tells us more about God’s foreknowledge, “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.” Some take this out of its context and say God chose some and made them to be conformed to the image of His Son, instead of realizing that God FOREKNEW those who would believe and predestinated the BELIEVERS to be conformed to the image of His Son. He did not predetermine WHO would believe. He predetermined what would happen to those who did believe. I Peter 1: 2 also tells us we are chosen according to God’s foreknowledge of who would believe.

God has a faculty that people do not have. He can see the future perfectly. Perhaps this is because God is “timeless,” and therefore is actually living in the future as well as in the present. If we could see into the future and know exactly what things would take place, we could tell people what would happen in the future . . . not that we would MAKE these things happen . . . but simply that we would KNOW what will happen.

God does not “decide” who will be saved. God does not “make” any one believe, even though He wants all to believe and be saved. But God, since He can see the future, knows who will believe and who will not believe. Long before I was ever born, God knew I would decide to trust Christ as my Saviour. But this “foreknowledge” of His did not CAUSE me to trust Christ as my Saviour.

In Matt. 23:37 we find that Christ looked over Jerusalem and said that He would have gathered them together many times, but the people would not receive Him. God did not make these people reject Him. In fact, it is God who is desiring them to accept Him. But it is the people who would not, by their own free will and choice.

Our salvation comes through OUR OWN belief. The Bible is full of Scriptures that point this out. Rom. 1:16, “For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that BELIEVETH...” I Cor. 1:21, “For after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that BELIEVE.” John 3: 18, “He that BELIEVETH ON HIM is not condemned: but he that BELIEVETH NOT is condemned already, because he hath not BELIEVED in the Name of the only begotten Son of God.” See also Habakkuk 2:4; Luke 7:50; Matt. 15:28; Psalm 119:173; Jude, vv. 10, 16-19; Psalm 119:30; Gen. 6:12; Isa. 29:13; John 17:8; Hos. 4:6; Isa. 55:1.

II Peter 3:9 says God is “not willing that ANY should perish, but that ALL should come to repentance (change of mind) .”

Luke 2:10—The angel told us that the good news would be to ALL people, not to a limited number.

**FATALIST POSITION:** Many fatalists teach that faith is a gift of God and that God would have to “give” you the faith in order for you to believe. But God gives everyone the ability to believe (faith). Man may exercise this ability in any direction. Man can have faith in Buddha, Mohammed, or any cult or sect . . . and by their same definition, this would be a God-given ability to believe (faith) in Buddha, etc., as well as Christ. The faith we placed in the Lord Jesus Christ to save us COULD have been placed in Mohammed. The CHOICE was left up to us.

Some fatalists use the “sign theory,” trying to take contradictory statements and make them seem not to be contradictory. They place a sign over heaven saying, “Whosoever will may come.” But after you get to heaven you see the reverse side of the sign which says, “Chosen in Him before the foundation of the world.” (This, of course, is only a partial quotation of Scripture, and you just studied the answer to these—the answer is that BELIEVERS are chosen to be before the Lord, holy and blameless someday.) The fatalists say, “We do not understand it,” and they think this explains it.

This “sign theory” cannot be true because you would have to place the same sign over hell in the same way, saying, “Whosoever rejects Christ goes to hell,” and on the other side of the sign you would have to place, “Chosen to go to hell from the foundation of the world.” The reverse side of this sign would be just as unscriptural as the reverse side of the one over heaven.

**IN CONCLUSION:** “WHOSOEVER shall call upon the Name of the Lord shall be saved” (Romans 10:13).

Praise the Lord that our God is truly one of love, and who offers, “And ye shall seek Me, and find Me, when ye shall search for Me with all your heart” ( Jeremiah 29: 13) . Psalm 107:9 says, “For He satisfieth the longing soul, and filleth the hungry soul with goodness.”

There is no person who has ever lived on the face of the earth that the Holy Spirit of God hasn't worked with continually, showing the person the truths of God. Christ in John 16:8 says the Holy Spirit convicts the world (every body) of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment. No one can stand before God and say he didn't have the opportunity to hear the truth. “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” (Rom. 1:20). “For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to ALL MEN” (Titus 2:11).

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