

Doctrine of Predestination

Reformation Study Bible

1. “Predestination” is a word often used to signify God’s foreordaining of all the events of world history—past, present, and future. This usage is quite appropriate.
2. In Scripture and historic Protestant theology, however, “predestination” refers specifically to God’s decision, made in eternity before the world existed, regarding the final destinies of individual persons.
3. In general, the New Testament speaks of the predestination, or election, of particular sinners for salvation and eternal life (Rom. 8:29; Eph. 1:4,5,11), although Scripture also on occasion ascribes to God an advance decision about those who are finally not saved (Rom. 9:6-29; 1 Peter 2:8; Jude 4).
 - *Romans 8:29 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.*
 - *Ephesians 1:4 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:*
 - *Ephesians 1:5 Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will,*
 - *Ephesians 1:11 In whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will:*
 - *Romans 9:6 Not as though the word of God hath taken none effect. For they are not all Israel, which are of Israel: 7 Neither, because they are the seed of Abraham, are they all children: but, In Isaac shall thy seed be called. 8 That is, They which are the children of the flesh, these are not the children of God: but the children of the promise are counted for the seed. 9 For this is the word of promise, At this time will I come, and Sara shall have a son. 10 And not only this; but when Rebecca also had conceived by one, even by our father Isaac; 11 (For the children being not yet born, neither having done any good or evil, that the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works, but of him that calleth;) 12 It was said unto her, The elder shall serve the younger. 13 As it is written, Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated. 14 What shall we say then? Is there unrighteousness with God? God forbid. 15 For he saith to Moses, I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion. 16 So then it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that sheweth mercy. 17 For the scripture saith unto Pharaoh, Even for this same purpose have I raised thee up, that I might shew 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 shew 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? 25 As he saith also in Osee, I will call them my people, which were not my people; and her beloved, which was not beloved. 26 And it shall come to pass, that in the place where it was said unto them, Ye are not my people; there shall they be called the children of the living God. 27 Esaias also crieth concerning Israel, Though the number of the children of Israel be as the sand of the sea, a remnant shall be saved: 28 For he will finish the work, and cut it short in righteousness: because a short work will the Lord make upon the earth. 29 And as Esaias said before, Except the Lord of Sabaoth had left us a seed, we had been as Sodoma, and been made like unto Gomorrha.

- *1 Peter 2:8 And a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offence, even to them which stumble at the word, being disobedient: whereunto also they were appointed.*
 - *Jude 4 For there are certain men crept in unawares, who were before of old ordained to this condemnation, ungodly men, turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness, and denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ.*
4. For this reason it is usual in Protestant theology to define predestination as including both God's decision to save some from sin (election) and the corresponding decision not to save others (reprobation).
 5. It is sometimes asserted that God's choice of individuals for salvation is based on His foreknowledge that they would choose Christ as their Savior.
 6. Foreknowledge in this case means passive foresight by God of what individuals will do apart from His foreordaining their action.
 7. But there are weighty objections to the view that election is based on passive foresight.
 8. "Foreknow" in Rom 8:29; 11:2 (cf. 1 Peter 1:2, 20) indicates not only an advance recognition, but also an advance choice by God of His people.
 - *Romans 9:29 And as Esaias said before, Except the Lord of Sabaoth had left us a seed, we had been as Sodoma, and been made like unto Gomorrha.*
 - *Romans 11:2 God hath not cast away his people which he foreknew. Wot ye not what the scripture saith of Elias? how he maketh intercession to God against Israel, saying,*

- *1 Peter 1:2 Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ: Grace unto you, and peace, be multiplied.*
 - *1 Peter 1:20 Who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you,*
9. It does not express the idea of a spectator's passive anticipation of what will happen spontaneously.
 10. God's "knowledge" of His people in Scripture implies a special relationship of loving choice (Gen 18:19).
 11. Since all are naturally dead in sin (cut off from the life of God and unresponsive to Him), no one who hears the gospel will ever come to repentance and faith without the inner renewal that only God can impart (Eph. 2:4-10).
 - *Ephesians 2:4 But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, 5 Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;) 6 And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus: 7 That in the ages to come he might shew the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus. 8 For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: 9 Not of works, lest any man should boast. 10 For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.*
 12. Jesus said, "no one can come to me unless it is granted him by the Father" (John 6:65, cf. 6:44; 10:25-28).
 - *John 6:65 And he said, Therefore said I unto you, that no man can come unto me, except it were given unto him of my Father.*
 - *John 6:44 No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day.*
 - *John 10:25 Jesus answered them, I told you, and ye believed not: the works that I do in my Father's name, they bear witness of me. 26 But ye believe not, because ye are not of my sheep, as I said unto you. 27 My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me: 28 And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand.*
 13. Sinners choose Christ because God chose them first, and moved them to their choice by graciously renewing their hearts.

14. Though all human acts are free in the sense of an immediate self-determination, such acts are also the outworking of God's eternal purpose and foreordination. We have difficulty understanding precisely how divine sovereignty and human freedom and responsibility are compatible, but Scripture everywhere assumes that they are so (Acts 2:23; 4:28 and notes).

- *Acts 2:23 Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain:*
- *Acts 4:28 For to do whatsoever thy hand and thy counsel determined before to be done.*