

Predestination

Key verses

- “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. Moreover whom He did predestination, them He also called; and whom He called, them He also justified; and whom He justified, them He also glorified.” Rom.8:29-30
- “Having predestined us to the adoption as sons by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will.” Eph.1:5
- “In Him also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestined according to the purpose of Him who works all things according to the counsel of His will.” Eph.1:11

What does ‘predestinate’ mean?

The word “predestinate” comes from the Greek word “proorizo” (pronounced pro-or-id'-zo) and literally means: 'to mark off first' or 'to limit beforehand'. As well as “predestinate”, this word has also been translated as “**determined before**” (Acts 4:28) and “**ordain**” (1 Cor.2:7) in our English Bibles.

Is this a difficult subject?

Many people will not discuss the subject of predestination, preferring either to ignore it or claim it is too difficult to understand. The difficulty arises because predestination does not seem to make any allowance for freedom of choice on our part. It is because of this misunderstanding that the teachings of John Calvin still hold sway in many churches today. These teachings claim that people are predestined to salvation or condemnation from birth, no matter what the circumstance. Any Bible subject that deals with God's knowledge and understanding is of course hard to comprehend by our mortal finite minds. Seeing though that this is a Bible subject that God has revealed, then there is no reason why we should not at least try for a simple explanation.

God's foreknowledge is the key

- “Your eyes saw my substance, being yet unformed. And in Your book they are written, the days fashioned for me, when as yet there were none of them.” Psa.139:16
- “Declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times things that are not yet done, saying, My council shall stand, and I will do all My pleasure.” Isa.46:10
- “...and new things I declare; before they spring forth I tell you of them.” Isa.42:9

Even though we accept the Gospel message of our own free will, God has, **by His foreknowledge**, always known eternally in the past that we would be servants of His at a set time in the future. This is why God can use such positive language about our future because He knows the end from the beginning and can speak of things **in the future as having already come to pass**.

The five stages of salvation

- “Who has saved us and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace which was given to us in Christ Jesus before time began” 2 Tim.1:9

The verse above and the key verses from Romans ch8 already quoted are an example of God's foreknowledge, as the whole process of salvation is spoken of as having already happened for those who have still to accept and obey the Gospel call at some time in the future. You will also note from these verses that mention is first made of God's foreknowledge about us, then followed by predestination. This sequence allows for God's knowledge of the future to be a 'guide' for His predestination or 'defined list' of His future children. The **five stages of salvation** that God can speak of as having already happened are as follows:

- **Foreknowledge**
“Elect according to the foreknowledge of God” 1Pet.1:2
- **Predestination**
“predestined according to the purpose of Him” Eph.1:5
- **Calling**
“...and called us with a holy calling” 2 Tim.1:9
- **Justifying**
“Being justified freely by His grace” Rom.3:24
- **Glorifying**
“that we may also be glorified together.” Rom.8:17

As disciples of Jesus we are in the fourth “justifying” stage which involves repentance, belief, baptism and living a life of obedience to Jesus' Gospel.

A simple everyday example

The following is a copy of a short article from an old magazine, giving a simple everyday example of how predestination can be understood. This magazine was dated February 1928.

“A medico who was training for examination of public hospital nurses was asked to apportion the numbers of the nurses corresponding to the names, which were unknown to the board of examiners. In order to kill the superstition of '13' being an unlucky number, and 'Friday' an unlucky day, he assigned '13' to the nurse who he knew weeks ahead would in the ordinary course come out on top in this Friday's examination. And No. 13 did receive the prize, ie. came first of all the successful candidates. In the following year, the same nurse numbered the same, and, similarly predestined, gained the prize. The other candidates who were successful, although not top, received the same training from the same text books, but No.13 was predestined to receive the prize, freewill being left unfettered to decide its own part.”

All Scripture quoted on this sheet is from the N.K.J.V.