

Predestination

By Elder David Pyles

A sad testament to the biblical illiteracy of our times is the contempt with which many modern Christians view the concept of predestination. Most never mention it except for the purpose of deriding it. This attitude will be supported neither by scripture nor by sound reasoning. Nor does it serve our own personal interests. One of the most famous and beloved passages in the Bible asserts that all things work together for good to them that love God (Rom 8:28), but the very next verse builds this confident hope upon predestination. Consequently, predestination is a thing that will be dismissed only to our personal peril.

When the Holy Spirit put this term in Rom 8:29-30 and Eph 1:5-11, it obviously was not His intent that the reader deride it, dismiss it or impute to it a meaning that would effectively nullify its implications. Nor did He intend such reactions when presenting the same concept in different words, as is done throughout the Bible, with notable examples in the New Testament occurring in Acts 4:28, 13:48, 17:26, 1Cor 2:7, 2Tim 2:9, Tit 1:2 and 1Pet 1:10.

This aversion to predestination is also patently contradictory to things nearly all Christians believe about God. Practically all Christians would answer the following questions correctly:

- 1) Has God ever done anything He did not intend to do?
- 2) Has God ever failed to do anything He did intend to do?
- 3) If God has intended to do a thing, then for how long has He intended to do it?

The answer to the first question is clearly “no.” God has never done anything by way of accident. The next question must also be answered negatively. If God has ever failed to do anything He intended to do, then none of us could be sure of any prophecy or promise written in the inspired text, including promises to resurrect and save us. As to the last question, the scriptures are very clear: “*Known unto God are all his works from the beginning of the world,*” (Acts 15:18). Hence, whatever God has intended to do He has *forever* intended to do. This is an important fact about God. Through the course of any day, men will make decisions they had not anticipated on prior days. Such is never the case with God.

But when these three answers are logically combined, the sure conclusion is that *everything* God does was predestined. This is not to say that all events were predestined. For example, the

wicked actions of men that are in rebellion against God obviously were not predestined. But if God does a thing, then we can be sure it was predestined to be done. Logic allows nothing else.

This then brings to the real issue at the heart of most debates on predestination: The real issue is whether God saves sinners or do sinners save themselves? Now if God saves sinners, then our conclusion must be that those same sinners were predestined to be saved. Since the primary message of the Bible is that God does in fact saves sinners, none should be surprised that everywhere the New Testament uses the term “predestination” the salvation of sinners is the subject, and those same texts assert that such sinners were predestined to be saved.

But this will provoke a cry of unfairness. Since not all people will be eternally saved, it follows that not all of them were predestined to that effect. Now the way many Christians seek to resolve this presumed injustice is by saying that God has not truly predestined anyone. These are of course the same Christians whose habit is to deride predestination. Their purported solution is quite curious. It is a curious proposition that says it is bad thing to drink a jigger, but a good thing to drink the whole bottle. If it be wrong for God to omit some people from predestination, then omitting all of them seems a dubious fix.

When properly taught, the doctrine of predestination says that some people were simply left to their choices whereas others were not. In these latter cases, God predetermined to arrest them in the wicked path He knew they would choose, and to turn them to a righteous path they would not have otherwise taken. As for the others, if no injustice is done them in a system wherein *all* men are left to their choices, then surely no injustice can be charged against a system wherein only *some* of them are. Now if it be the case that none in this class will actually choose for what is right, but will all choose the way of infidelity and rebellion (Jn 6:44-45, Jn 8:43-47, 1Cor 2:14, Rom 8:5-8), then the fault clearly lies with them, not with God or with His predestination.

And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose. 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 predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he

also glorified. What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us? – Rom 8:28-31

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ: 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: Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will, To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved. In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace; Wherein he hath abounded toward us in all wisdom and prudence; Having made known unto us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure which he hath purposed in himself: That in the dispensation of the fulness of times he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; even in him: 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: That we should be to the praise of his glory, who first trusted in Christ. – Eph 1:3-12