

For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the first-born 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. Rom. 8:29-30

PREDESTINATION

To begin with, it must be said that there seems to be no evading the doctrine of an election by grace, as found both in the letter and the spirit of Scripture. The eternal purpose to save men through Christ is evident throughout scripture. It is not meant to perplex us, but to encourage and reassure all who trust in His grace.

Charles Haddon Spurgeon said: "Whatever may be said about the doctrine of election, it is written in the Word of God as with an iron pen, and there is no getting rid of it; there it stands."

To comprehend the doctrine of predestination we must consider some related doctrines and words, some of which tend to be used interchangeably, but each word has its own significance, which contributes separately and significant to our understanding of this doctrine of the working of God to glorify Himself. There is a logical progression in the working of the eternal plan and purpose of God.

1. Fore-ordination. To know beforehand, or to fix beforehand. God possesses the ability to provide, with infinite precision, the things necessary for the ongoing of the universe, which He has created. Eph. 1:4 shows is that God's purpose was determined previous to the act of creation. God predetermined a purpose and a plan and then chose those things that would promote the purpose and plan He predetermined. In Eph. 1:5,11 shows that God also provides the means by which that plan and program are accomplished, to glorify Himself. See also I Cor. 2:7.

2. Decree. The act by which God established the certainty of what He has planned or predetermined. By fore-ordination, God determines what the program will be, and by His decree He establishes the certainty of that which was fore-ordained. God settled on a plan, and purpose. See Job 22:28 when God decreed a course of action, it finalized and solidified His plan and limited God to that specific course of action in the execution of His purpose to glorify Himself. God has ordained a program (Luke 22:22, Acts 2:23 and 4:27-28). He established the certainty and irreversibility of that program by issuing a decree as to what would take place.

3. Foreknowledge. In scripture this refers to as what God knows with a certainty will come to pass because He has decreed that event. God foreknows, not only what will take place, but the people who will be instruments in the fulfillment of His plan and program. Rom 8:29. God did know who would be included in His plan because He had foreordained and decreed that they would be included. This also is illustrated in I Pet. 1:2 where we are elect in keeping with the foreknowledge. This was also seen in Eph. 1:11 where His purposes refers to the blessed fact that God, in Himself, in the exercise of His divine and sovereign will, in the dateless past, devised a system of government and glory to be displayed in the coming ages.

4. Election. This means to "call out" or select. It has to do with separation unto Himself. Election is the sovereign work of God, according to His own purpose and will, predetermined by His fore-ordination, in which He selects those through whom the divine purpose will be fulfilled. Election is of grace because all men were under curse. He has selected those instruments He chooses by which His program is to come to fulfillment. See Eph. 1:4 and I Thess. 1:4. All those divinely chosen cannot perish, for they were chosen in Christ before sin entered. Thus elected, neither the state or the one elected nor his doing can destroy God's eternal purpose. Election is:

- a. According to God's foreknowledge (I Pet. 1:2)
- b. Wholly of grace (Rom. 9:11; 11:5,6)
- c. Proceeds from Divine Volition (John 15:16)
- d. Sovereign Act of God (John 15:19)
- e. God's sovereign act to elect persons for His distinctive service (Luke 6:13; Acts 9:15; I Cor. 1:17,18)
- f. Election is always inclusive, never exclusive. He chooses a few in order that all may be blessed (I Tim. 2:17)

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5. Predestination. To determine beforehand. Predestination has to do with the end to which those who are elect are set apart. This word, when used in scripture, is always qualified by a statement of the end or the aim in view. See Eph. 1:4-5 (to adoption); 1:11 (to obtain an inheritance) and Rom. 8:29 (to be conformed to the image of His Son) and I Cor. 2:7 (unto glory). When predestination is used it determines the end, or the goal for those whom God has elected unto Himself. There is no place where it is said that we were predestined to faith, or to belief, or to accept Christ. We were predestined to glory, to a son-ship or inheritance.

6. Called. God summons those whom He has fore-known, those whom He has elected, predestined unto Himself. The call of God, to His elect is the consummating act of God's fore-ordination. God sees to it that His purpose will be accomplished. This call is a summons to Himself, because the person has been predestined unto glory by His fore-ordained purpose and program. God's call is not a call to the human will to respond unaided by divine grace. God's call is also His enablement, and God, who issues the call, imparts the power through the ministry of the Holy Spirit to respond to that call. See John 6:44. The drawing of the Father is the call of the Father to those who have been elected by His grace, to those who have been predestined, or set apart unto glory, to those who God had foreknown would be the instruments to accomplish His foreordained purpose, which is settled and sure by the eternal and unchangeable decree of God.

Since our workshop is on the doctrine of predestination, we will concentrate on that particular doctrine in this section. The following are the passages dealing with the word predestination. And we concentrate entirely on predestination as expressed in the N.T.

Word: Proorizó – to predetermine, foreordain. Establish boundaries, limits. From [pro](#) and [horizo](#); to limit in advance, i.e. (figuratively) predetermine -- determine before, ordain, predestinate.

Acts 2:48 - to do whatever your hand and your plan had **predestined** to take place.

Rom. 8:28-29 – And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are **called** according to his purpose. For those whom he foreknew he also **predestined** to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the firstborn among many brothers. And those whom he **predestined** he also **called** and those whom he called he also justified and those whom he justified he also glorified.

I Cor. 2:7 - but we speak God's wisdom in a mystery, the hidden wisdom which God **predestined** before the ages to our glory;

Eph. 1:4-5, 11 – even as he **chose** us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him. In love he **predestined** us for adoption as sons through Jesus Christ according to the purpose of His will...In him we have obtained an inheritance, having been **predestined** according to the purpose of him who works all things according to the counsel of his will,

The following are some of the key passages, also in the N.T., where the doctrine of election, choosing, and calling of believers are established. All scriptures have been taken from the English Standard Version.

Matt. 22:14 – For many are called, but few are **chosen**.

Matt. 24:22, 31 – And if those days had not been cut short, no human being would be saved. But for the sake of the **elect**, those days will be cut short. And he will send out his angels with a loud trumpet call, and they will gather his **elect** from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.

Luke 18:7 – And will not God give justice to his **elect**, who cry to him day and night?

Rom. 8:28-29 – And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are **called** according to his purpose. For those whom he foreknew he also **predestined** to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the firstborn among many brothers. And those whom he **predestined** he also **called** and those whom he called he also justified and those whom he justified he also glorified.

Rom. 8:33 – Who shall bring any charge against God's **elect**? It is God who justifies.

Rom. 9:11 – though they were not yet born and had done nothing either good or bad – in order that God's purpose of **election** might continue, not because of works but because of him who calls -

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Rom. 11:5 – So too at the present time there is a remnant, **chosen** by grace.

Rom. 16:13 – Greet Rufus, **chosen** in the Lord; also his mother, who has been a mother to me as well.

Eph. 1:4-5, 11 – even as he **chose** us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him. In love he **predestined** us for adoption as sons through Jesus Christ according to the purpose of His will...In him we have obtained an inheritance, having been **predestined** according to the purpose of him who works all things according to the counsel of his will,

Colossians 3:12 – Put on then, as God's **chosen** ones, holy and beloved, compassionate hearts, kindness, humility, meekness and patience,

1 Thess. 1:4 – For we know, brothers loved by God, that he has **chosen** you,

2 Thess. 2:13 – But we ought always to give thanks to God for you, brothers beloved by the Lord, because God **chose** you as the firstfruits to be saved, through sanctification by the Spirit and belief in the truth.

2 Tim. 1:9 – who saved us and **called** us to a holy calling, not because of our works but because of his own purpose and grace, which he gave us in Christ Jesus before the ages began,

2 Tim. 2:10 – Therefore I endure everything for the sake of the **elect**, that they also may obtain the salvation that is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory.

Titus 1:1 – Paul, a servant of God and an apostle of Jesus Christ, for the sake of the faith of God's **elect** and their knowledge of the truth which accords with godliness,

1 Pet. 1:1, 2 – Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ. To those who are **elect** exiles of the dispersion in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia and Bithynia, according to the **foreknowledge** of God the Father, in the sanctification of the Spirit, for obedience to Jesus Christ and for sprinkling with His blood.

1 Pet. 2:9 – But you are a **chosen** race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light.

2 John 13 – the children of your **elect** sister greet you.

Rev. 17:14 – They will make war on the Lam, and the Lamb will conquer them, for he is Lord of lords and King of kings, and those with him are **called** and **chosen** and faithful.

These passages also teach the concept of election and related concepts and terms:

Gen. 21:12. Ex. 9:16; 33:19. Deut. 10:15; 32:8. Josh 11:20. Isa. 12:22. 2 Chron. 6:6. Psalm 33:12; 65:4; 78:68; 135:4. Isa. 41:1-10. Jer. 1:5. Matt. 13:10-11. Mark 13:20. John 1:12-13; 5:21; 6:37-39, 44, 65; 15:16; 17:9. Acts 3:18; 13:48; 16:14; 17:26. Rom. 9:11, 18, 21. 1Cor. 12:3. Phil. 1:29. Eph. 2:8-10; 3:11. 1 Th. 1:4. 2 Th. 2:13. 2 Tim. 1:9; 2:25-26. Titus 1:2. Heb. 4:3. 2 Pet. 1:10. 1 Jn. 1:19.

Because of who and what He is, God is free to do as He likes. Predestination is that effective exercise of the will of God by which things before determined by Him are brought to pass. It is linked to His love, and therefore He can never be accused of anything capricious. Predestination is the exercise of divine sovereignty in the accomplishment of God's ultimate purposes in Himself. He is never influenced by external consequences.

Predestination concerns the future of believers. Predestination is the divine determining the glorious consummation of all who through faith, and surrender, become the Lord's. He has determined beforehand that each child of His will reach adoption, and be conformed to His image.

Rightly understood, this doctrine (1) exalts the majesty and absolute sovereignty of God, while it illustrates the riches of his free grace and his just displeasure with sin. (2.) It enforces upon us the essential truth that salvation is entirely of grace. That no one can either complain if passed over, or boast himself if saved. (3.) It brings the inquirer to absolute self-despair and the cordial embrace of the free offer of Christ. (4.) In the case of the believer who has the witness in himself, this doctrine at once deepens his humility and elevates his confidence to the full assurance of hope.

C.H. Spurgeon also said when talking about the mysteries of God: "I have long ago given up any desire to understand this great mystery, for I am perfectly satisfied that, if I could understand it, it would not be true, because God, from the very nature of things, must be incomprehensible."

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Other interesting quotes:

J.I. Packer "Texts from Paul are waved like banners; the words 'Calvinist' and 'Arminian' fly like bullets; people blink and go red; everyone ends up flustered and hot under the collar. Sometimes looking back on these unhappy exchanges, we find ourselves resenting the very existence of the doctrine which occasions such high feelings."

John Mahon "Election is part of the five points of Calvinism, which are the five points of Paul, which are....the points of the Bible."

Luther "The treatment of this doctrine cannot be unprofitable or unnecessary, much less offensive or harmful....No one should ignore or reject this teaching of the divine Word just because some have misused and misunderstood it. Instead....we must explain the proper understanding on the basis of Scripture."

John McArthur "As straightforward as scripture is, people have a great difficulty in accepting this doctrine. One reason is that we allow our preconceived notions of how God should act (based on our human notion of fairness) to override the truth of His sovereignty as laid out in the scriptures."

C.H. Spurgeon "I am not sure that in heaven we shall be able to know where the free agency of man and the sovereignty of God meet, but both are great truths."

John McArthur "The truth of the matter is that the only reason to believe in election is because it is in the Bible. No man can originate this doctrine. Like any other doctrine it must be embraced with simple and unquestioning faith. If you have a Bible and believe it, you simply have no other options than to accept what it teaches."

C.H. Spurgeon "I am so glad that God chose me before the foundation of the world, because he never would have chosen me after I was born!"

Luther "Here bounds are fixed with regard to how one should deal with election. There are many frivolous spirits who have not felt faith deeply. They rush in, attack the matter at the top, and concern themselves with it for the first time. They want to ascertain with their reason whether they are elected, in order that they may be sure of where they stand. But desist from this quickly. It is not the proper method. But if you want to be sure, you must adopt the method St. Peter suggests here. If you choose any other way, you have already failed. Your own experience must teach you this. If your faith is well exercised and applied, you will finally gain assurance, and this will keep you from failing, as it is clear from what follows: For if you do this you will never fall. That is, you will stand firm and not stumble or sin; but you will proceed properly and confidently and everything will turn out well. Otherwise, if you undertake to accomplish this with your own notions, the devil will soon cast you into despair and into hatred of God."

Luther "Against such illusions and ideas we must lay the following clear, certain and unerring foundation. Because 'all Scripture is inspired by God' to serve not as a basis for security and impertinence but rather for 'reproof, for correction for improvement, and because all that has been written for us in God's word was written not that it might drive us into despair, but rather 'that by patience and by encouragement of the Scripture we might have hope' (Rom. 15:4)"

Therefore, let us enter into a full acceptance and understanding of this precious doctrine into our own lives. Believe that God is a merciful, loving God, and that His purposes and designs are so much greater and better than anything mere man can imagine or understand.

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Applications for the believer.

1. In our worship experience. We should fall on our knees in worship and praise for Him in thanksgiving for His compassionate election of us. None of us would ever be chosen by our works or merit!
2. In our evangelism and witness. We are called to be witnesses to the world. This doctrine frees us from the burden of results-based evangelism. Our duty is to share. God's job is to do the rest.
3. In our personal ministry. This doctrine frees us from compulsions to minister at every opportunity, it frees us from the "numbers game". We are not guilty before God for the actions of those in our ministries.
4. In our family. Understanding of this doctrine frees us from worries and guilt regarding our children, spouse or other family members.
5. In leading a well-balanced life. We can give proper time to each of our responsibilities and delivers us from having to weigh every decision in life vs ministry.
6. In the assurance of our calling. God is sovereign and in control. His good purposes will be accomplished.

Deut. 29:29 - The secret things belong to the Lord our God, but the things that are revealed belong to us and to our children forever, that we may do all the words of this law.

Isa. 40:13-14 – Who has measured the Spirit of the Lord, or what man shows him his counsel? Whom did he consult, and who made him understand? Who taught him the path of justice and taught him knowledge, and showed him the way of understanding?

Isa. 55:8-9 – For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, declares the Lord. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts