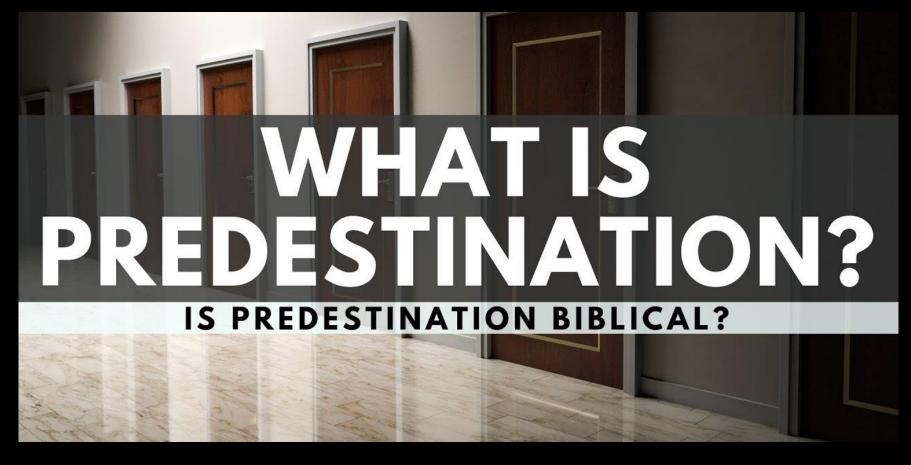
Did God Predetermine Our Salvation?



Past > Present > Future



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Enter The Ark of Hope

The Great Controversy between God and Satan is primarily over

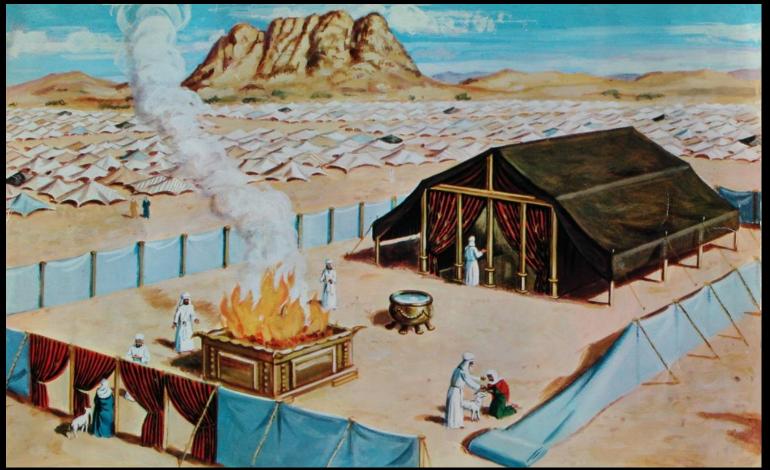
"WORSHIP"

Who will you Choose?



Get into the Ark Sanctuary





And let them make me a sanctuary; that I may dwell among them.

Exodus 25:8

Psalms 77:13



Health Snippet - Sunshine

What happens if you don't get enough sunlight?

A new study has found that almost half of London office workers only receive up to 30 minutes of sunlight a day during the winter, and two-thirds estimated they receive less than an hour of sunlight a day.

What you might not realize is that not getting enough could be bad for your health, too. It's challenging to take in some rays with the current climate of the coronavirus pandemic and urging people to stay home. Although, experts at the **Centers for Disease Control and Prevention** (CDC) say it's OK to get some fresh air as long as you are still social distancing and taking precautions like wearing face masks. You might want to head out for a walk, sit on your front steps, or sit near a sunny window if you recognize these signs you're getting too little sun.

- You're feeling moody or depressed
- You're gaining weight
- Your bones ache
- You're not sleeping well
- You're sweating excessively
- You always use sunscreen

Recommended Amount of Sun Exposure

Medium-skinned

People

Fair-skinned People







30 mins







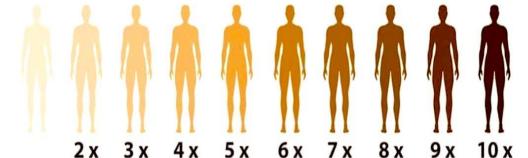
150 mins

Dark-skinned People









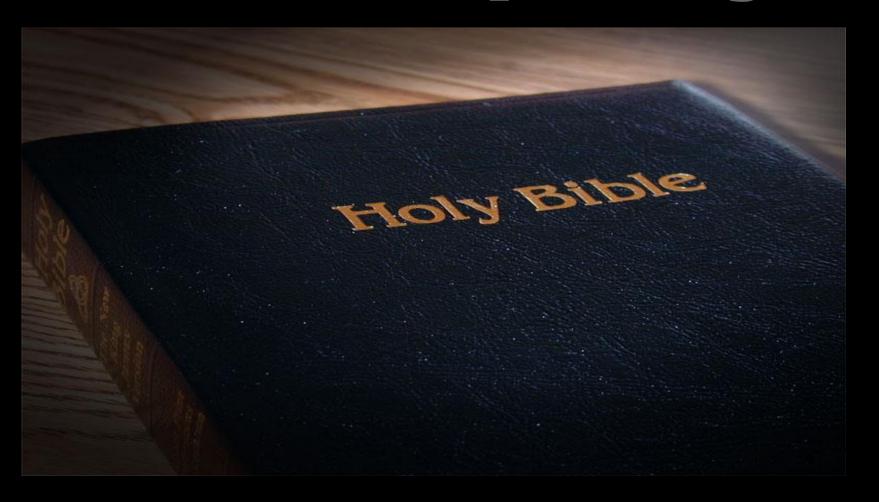
The darkest-skinned people need up to 10X more sun exposure than the fairest-skinned since darker skin absorbs fewer UV rays.

Based on exposing face, arms, legs, and back.

No sunscreen.

Must be outside. UVB does not penetrate glass.

Can We Trust Bible Prophecy?





Yes we Can!

For the sun rises with a scorching wind and withers the grass; and its flower falls off and the beauty of its appearance is destroyed so too the rich man in the midst of his pursuits will fade away.

James 1:11





Did God Predetermine Our Salvation?



Past > Present > Future



Introduction

This question is especially relevant because millions of contemporary Christians hold the once-saved-always-saved belief, based on the doctrine of double predestination. This doctrine teaches that in the eternal ages before the creation of our world God decreed that certain ones will be saved and others lost. Those predestined to be saved are the elect to whom God gives His irresistible grace. Once they have responded to this grace, which they inevitably will, they cannot fall away from a right legal relationship with God and be lost. Those who were predestined to be lost cannot respond to God's grace and be saved.

The doctrine of single predestination has the same effect but teaches slightly differently. God is supposed to have predestined only the elect to be saved. The rest are lost, not because God decreed that they should be but because He did not decree that they should be saved.

PREDESTINED ELECTED CHOSEN

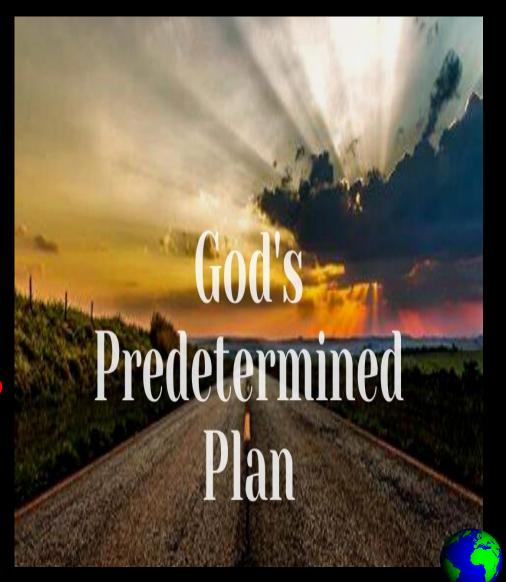
What do these Biblical terms really mean?

Introduction (cont'd)

Of course every Christian believer wishes to have a settled assurance of salvation. The Bible teaches that if we believe in Christ we enjoy the beginnings of eternal life now (John 3:36; 1 John 5:11-13).

- But does it follow from this that disobedience to God's laws does not change a person's salvation status?
- Does it follow that no matter what professed believers do they still remain saved?

Some Christians seem to have a sense of security that nothing can dispel. They regard obedience to laws as legalism. They declare that if the so-called elect want to turn away from Christ, they cannot. And temporary defection from a life of faith will inevitably be reversed. A once-saved person will most certainly be an inheritor of the eternal Kingdom of Christ.



Introduction (cont'd)

We can see at a glance that such a doctrine could produce very lax Christians who do whatever they wish and still cling to the certainty of eternal security. Does the Bible teach that God requires obedience to His law? Certainly the Bible denies that we are saved by obedience (Romans 3:20-22; Galatians 2:16).

But does the Lord expect the saved soul to obey Him?

Does He plan to save us *in* our sins or *from* our sins?

And can a saved soul turn away from obeying God and be lost?

Can a once-saved person choose to reject salvation?



PREDESTINATION IN CHURCH HISTORY

The question of predestination did not become a serious issue in the Christian church until the time of Augustine (A.D. 354-430), the famous Bishop of Hippo in North Africa. Augustine opposed Pelagius, a British monk who taught that man's will can accomplish much toward his own salvation without the assistance of divine grace. Augustine argued that any change in fallen man is solely the work of God's grace. Before the fall, Adam could do good because he had the help of grace. Since the fall, man's will can choose only sin. It is not possible for him to choose God's will until grace is active in his life. God gives His grace only to the elect, the ones whom He decides should have His unmerited favour. God's grace given to the elect is irresistible. A person who is predestined by God to salvation will receive His irresistible grace and will inevitably be saved. Those who are not so chosen by God are left in their perdition and will justly receive eternal damnation. - *The History of Doctrines*, 3 vols. (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker, 1895, 1977).



Predestination in Church History (cont'd)

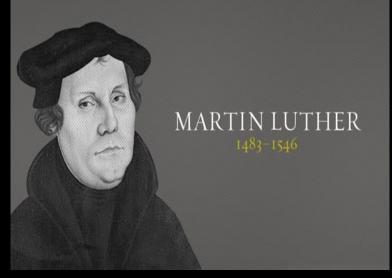
Both Luther and Calvin, the great sixteenth-century Reformers, accepted a thoroughly biblical definition of justification. Their views of predestination, however, are highly suspect. First we will consider their views; then we will turn to the Scriptures.

Augustine strongly influenced the thinking of the sixteenth-century Reformers. They substantially accepted Augustine's doctrine of predestination, modifying it and adding to it according to their own understandings. In his 1525 book, *The Bondage of the Will* Luther argued that all things that happen, whether good or evil, are the result of God's unchangeable will.

There is no such thing as free will in humans. Luther contradicted two then current ideas on the free will of man:

- 1. That human beings have the power to choose what is right.
- 2. That they have the power to put right choices into action.

Luther said that man does not choose God; he is chosen by God. God chooses only the elect whom He has predestined to eternal salvation. The rest of humanity are predestined to eternal rejection.

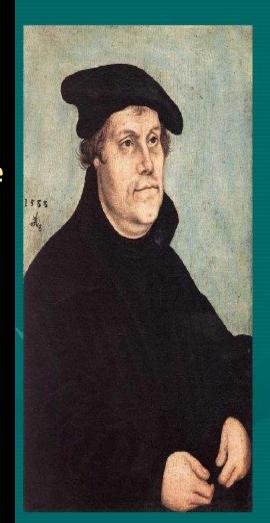




Martin Luther on Predestination

In Luther's view, everything that God foresees must occur just as He foresees it. In fact, everything that He foresees to occur will happen because He has willed it. Luther wrote: "From this it follows irrefutably that everything we do, everything that happens, even if it seems to us to happen mutably and contingently, happens in fact nonetheless necessarily and immutably, if you have regard to the will of God." Therefore, if God wills and foresees everything that happens, nothing is left to the free will of man. Even the evil in the world has been willed by God. Yet Luther argued that God is not responsible for evil. His omnipotence moves upon imperfect, fallen natures, and the result is that these natures do evil works. The evil is theirs not God's, and they are justly punished for their sins.

Even so, it is apparent that there is a contradiction in Luther's thought. If all that God foresees happens of necessity because He has willed it, in the final analysis He is responsible for evil. All Luther's attempts to resolve that problem were unavailing.



Martin Luther 1483-1541

Augustinian Monk

Faith Alone

Grace Alone

Scripture Alone

Predestination



Martin Luther on Predestination (cont'd)

Luther went so far as to suggest that Adam's fall was willed by God. He wrote: "The same must be said to those who ask why he permitted Adam to fall, and why he creates us all infected with the same sin, when he could either have preserved him or created us from another stock or from a seed which he had first purged. He is God, and for his will there is no cause or reason that can be laid down as a rule or measure for it, since there is nothing equal or superior to it, but it is itself the rule of all things."

Luther summed up his lengthy argument on the bondage of the will and divine predestination by writing as follows: "For if we believe it to be true that God foreknows and predestines all things, that he can neither be mistaken in his foreknowledge nor hindered in his predestination, and that nothing takes place but as he wills it (as reason itself is forced to admit), then on the testimony of reason itself there cannot be any free choice in man or angel or any creature."

All objections to predestination proceed from the wisdom of the flesh.

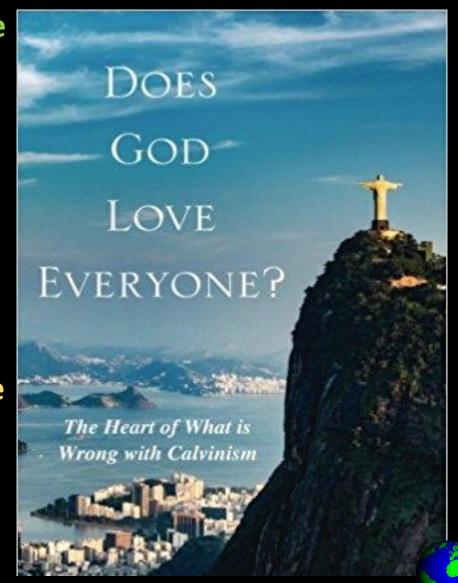
- Martin Luther



John Calvin on Predestination

John Calvin (1509-64) placed the doctrine of double predestination at the centre of his theological system. Because of Calvin's strenuous defense of the doctrine and its acceptance by leading European theologians in following centuries, it has become a standard Christian teaching for millions of Protestants.

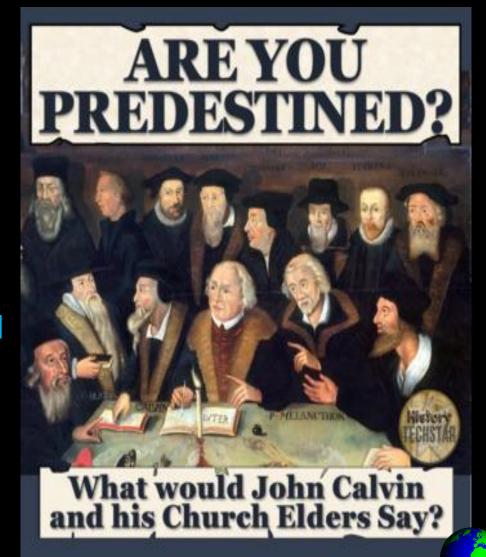
Calvin summarized his teaching in the following terms: "We say, then, that Scripture clearly proves this much, that God by his eternal and immutable counsel determined once for all those whom it was his pleasure one day to admit to salvation, and those whom, on the other hand, it was his pleasure to doom to destruction. We maintain that this counsel, as regards the elect, is founded on his free mercy, without any respect to human worth, while those whom he dooms to destruction are excluded from access to life by a just and blameless, but at the same time incomprehensible judgment."



John Calvin on Predestination (cont'd)

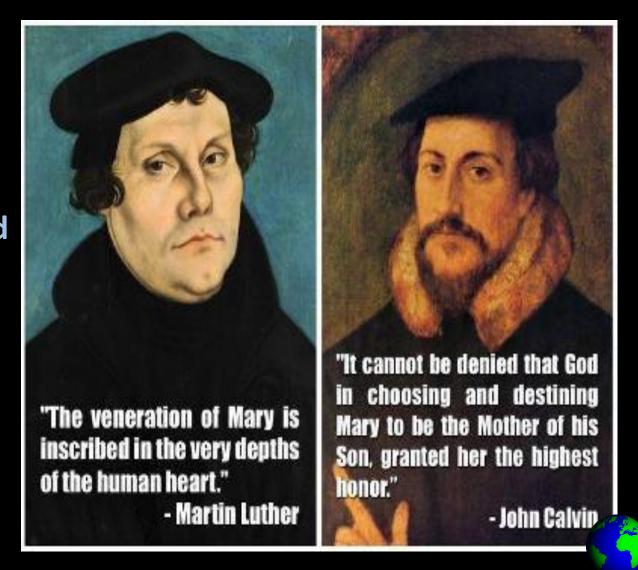
Thus Calvin taught that, in the ages before the creation of our world, God decreed that certain humans would be saved (the elect) and others would be damned. Nothing can change these decrees; man's will chooses only that which God's decrees have previously decided. The elect receive the irresistible grace of God to choose and perform His will. They are saved solely by His grace, not by their own choice.

The divine decree that others are lost is equally unchangeable. Even the fall of Adam was decreed by God. "The decree, I admit, is dreadful; and yet it is impossible to deny that God foreknew what the end of man was to be before he made him, and foreknew, because he had so ordained by his decree. . . . Nor ought it to seem absurd when I say, that God not only foresaw the fall of the first man, and in him the ruin of his posterity; but also at his own pleasure arranged it."



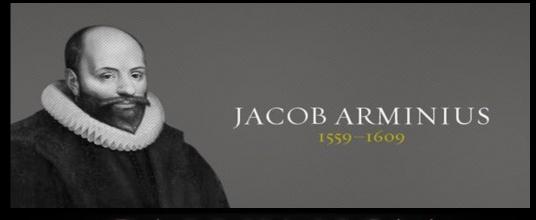
Luther & Calvin on Predestination

When people responded to Luther and Calvin by pointing out the injustice of punishing the wicked who are as they are because of God's decree, they responded by arguing inconsistently that the lost are punished justly because of their own choice to sin. They said that we can never understand the hidden mystery of God's will. Our part is to believe in Him despite our inability to understand why He arbitrarily chooses some to salvation and others to damnation. Both Reformers argued strenuously against the teaching that God's decrees are based on His foreknowledge of human choice. To them, God predetermined man's choice; He did not foresee anything that He does not cause.



Jacob Arminius on Predestination

Jacobus Arminius (1560-1609), the celebrated Dutch Reformed theologian, strenuously opposed the earlier Reformers' doctrine of predestination. He taught that God foresaw who would receive Christ and who would not. Each individual has been given the power to choose or to reject Christ. Those whom God foresaw would exercise their free choice by receiving Christ as Lord and Saviour were predestined to salvation. Those whom He foresaw would reject Christ were predestined to eternal rejection. God does not will all things that happen. He had nothing to do with the origin of evil in the universe or in our world, and He does not will the sins of human beings. Nor does He will that anyone should be lost. His grace is given to those who choose to believe, and it is kept from those who choose not to believe.



CALVINISM VS ARMINIANISM PREDESTINATION VS FREE WILL



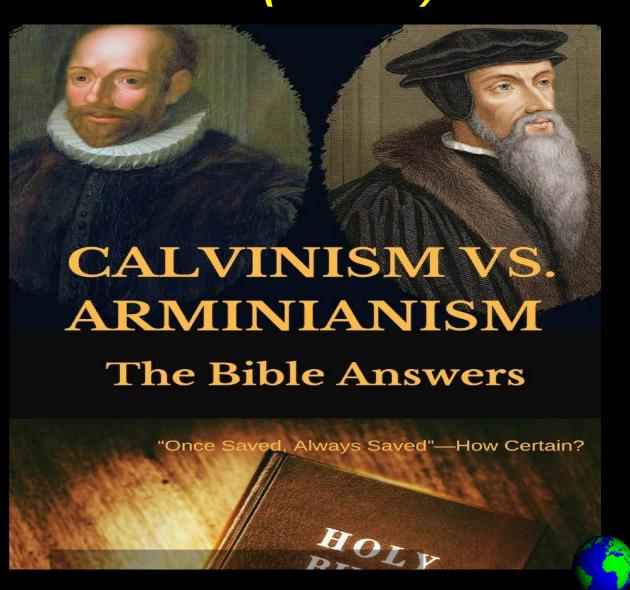


Jacob Arminius on Predestination (cont'd)

In opposition to the Arminians, the Synod of Dort convened by the Dutch Reformed Church in 1618-19 decided in favour of the Calvinistic doctrine of predestination, and the Arminians were then persecuted.

The English Westminster Assembly (1643-49), which produced the "Confession" that gave official expression to the Presbyterian faith, also accepted Calvinistic predestination, but without the teaching that Adam's fall was decreed by God.

Since then Calvinistic predestination in one form or another has been very influential in many Protestant churches, even though Arminianism is more acceptable to many others.



GOD DOES NOT WILL ALL THAT HE FORESEES

If God willed all that He foresaw would happen, as the Reformers taught, ultimately He would be responsible for all the evil in our world. It is true that He foresaw everything that would occur. He declared "the end from the beginning and from ancient times things not yet done" (Isaiah 46:10). But He did not will or cause humanity's sin, suffering, and misery.

Even though God has always foreseen the destruction of the wicked at the end of the world, it has never been His will that they should be lost. Peter wrote that God is "not wanting any to perish, but all to come to repentance" (2 Peter 3:9). Because our world is finally to be destroyed by fire, Peter urges all to lead "lives of holiness and godliness" (verse 11). So concerned was Peter that the believers to whom he was writing should be saved at the Second Advent, he urged that they beware of falling away into sin and of being lost at last (verse 17). Only God could foresee who would be true till the end and who would fall away, but He did not will that anyone should be lost. The point is that God's foreknowledge is not equivalent to His will for mankind.

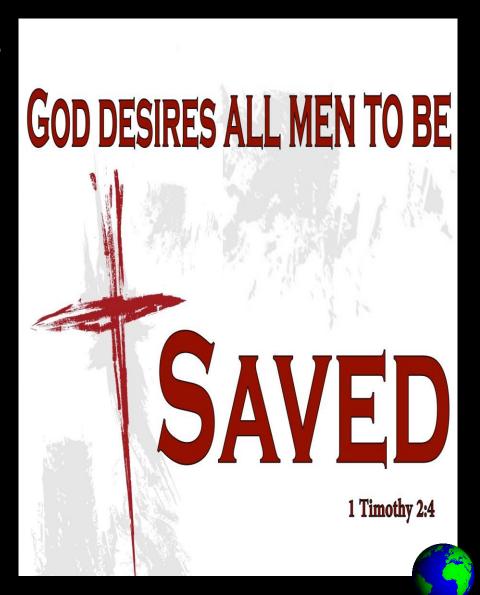


God does not will all that He foresees (cont'd)

Paul emphasized the same message: God's design is that all humanity should be saved. He "desires everyone to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth" (1 Timothy 2:4). The Lord knows that, because not all will choose Christ as Saviour and Lord, not all will be saved. Only those who "receive the abundance of grace and the free gift of righteousness" will have "life through the one man, Jesus Christ." (Romans 5:17). But God wishes that all would receive, and He does all that an infinitely loving God can do to make it so.

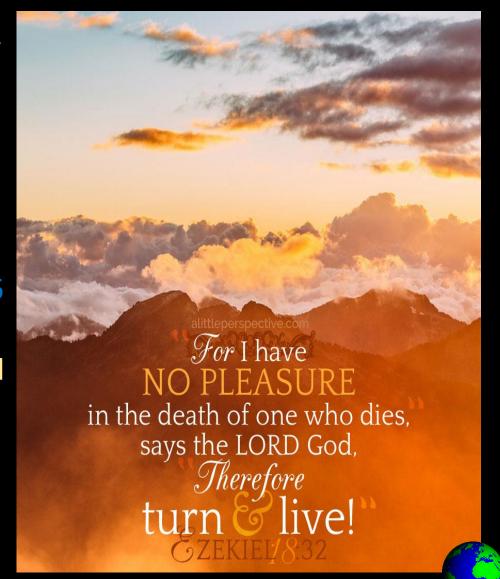
"For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men" (Titus 2:11). God's grace has not been made available only to those whom He has predestined to salvation; it is readily available to all.

As Jesus so beautifully explained it, "God so loved the world" that He planned for "the world" to be saved through Christ (John 3:16, 17). His grace and love were not reserved for a select class, while the rest were left untouched and unmoved. God has no favourites in respect to salvation. All people are His children, and He wishes to save them all.



God does not will all that He foresees (cont'd)

This truth was forcefully proclaimed by the prophet **Ezekiel.** The ancient Israelites were urged to put away their sins and turn to the Lord precisely because God has "no pleasure in the death of him that dieth" (Ezekiel 18:31, 32). There is no suggestion in Ezekiel's discussion that God's will in regard to humanity is fixed, with the righteous being arbitrarily chosen and the wicked irrevocably rejected. Quite the contrary, the Lord pled with His people on the basis of His willingness to forgive their sins and grant them eternal life if only they would repent. Ezekiel 33:11-16 teaches that if a righteous person turns away from the Lord and lives in sin again, he will be lost. But the repenting sinner will be saved. God most certainly did not will that some would be lost because He foresaw that it would be so. Despite God's foreknowledge of the ultimate damnation of the wicked (2 Thessalonians 1:7-10; Revelation 21:27), He moves upon their hearts with earnest entreaties. In fact, He foresaw and rejoiced that some wicked people would respond to His pleas and finally be saved.



God does not will all that He foresees (cont'd) Some Questions

Isn't it a terrible insult to the Deity to argue, as the predestinarians do, that all God foresees is His will for humanity? Did God will that Adam would fall into sin, that pre-Flood mankind would live in moral degradation and ultimately be destroyed, that the inhabitants of Sodom and Gomorrah would become so debased that He would have to rain fire and brimstone upon them, that the Jews would reject Christ's love and subject Him to merciless torture, and that the history of our world would be filled with the record of hatred, violence, disease, and death?

To credit all that to the will of God is preposterous in the extreme! Such a doctrine drives people away from Christ because they cannot believe that a loving God would will such evil.

What God foresees will happen in the future is often not His will but the will of Satan and of those who reject Christ.





CHRIST DIED FOR ALL MANKIND, NOT ONLY FOR THE ELECT

The predestinarians often teach that Christ died only for those whom He had decreed to save. He bore their guilt on the cross but did not bear the guilt of those whom He had decreed to damn. This is quite contrary to Bible teaching.

The beloved apostle John contended strongly that Christ died for all humanity. "He is the atoning sacrifice for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the sins of the whole world" (1 John 2:2). John had heard the Baptist announce that Christ is "the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world" (John 1:29). Even though God cannot finally remove the guilt of those who reject Christ, His loving purpose in having Christ die for all was that all should be saved.

"And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for our's only, but also for the sins of the whole world." It is finished!

Christ died for all mankind, not only for the elect (cont'd)

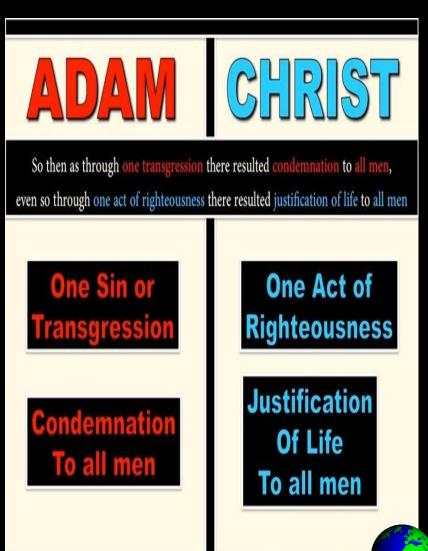
Paul underscored the same thrilling message: He wrote that because "one has died for all; therefore all have died. And he died for all, so that those who live might live no longer for themselves, but for him who died and was raised for them" (2 Corinthians 5:14, 15). In other words, Christ died for all, hoping that all would accept Him and be saved from sin. In this sense, "in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself" (verse 19). He foresaw that He would not be able to save all, because not all would accept Christ and repent of their sins (Revelation 2:21; 9:20, 21; 16:9, 11). Nevertheless, God provided all with the same wonderful opportunity by atoning for their sins and giving them the ability to choose Christ as their Substitute (see 2 Corinthians 5:20, 21).



Christ died for all mankind, not only for the elect (cont'd)

Paul announced that Christ's sacrifice made justification available for all humanity (Romans 5:18), so that everyone willing to receive can have life (verse 17). Rejection of Christ is the greatest of sins because His infinite love led Him to suffer our eternal loss on Calvary. As those who are ultimately lost face the judgment throne of God at the end of time (Revelation 20:11-15), they can never argue that Christ did not love them, die for them, or make justification available to them. They can never claim that they were predestined to be damned and had no choice in the matter. Christ offers Himself as the Saviour of the whole world (1 John 4:14; John 6:51; 12:47), not as a discriminating judge who, apart from human decisions, chooses some to life and the rest to eternal destruction.

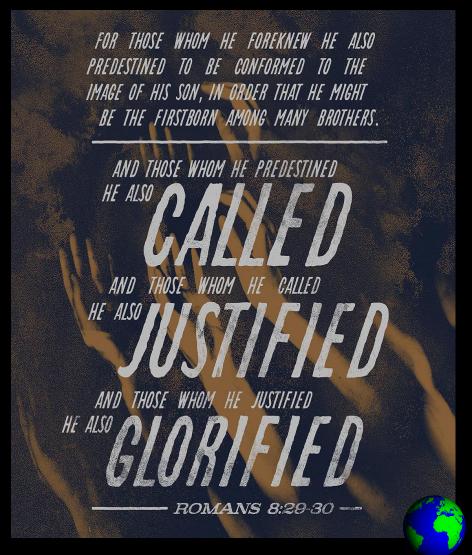
Praise the Lord, all classes, races, and nationalities have a Saviour from sin and destruction. Whoever you are, Christ offers you eternal life. Every provision has already been made that you might be saved. The only ingredient that the Lord awaits is your acceptance of His free offer of grace.



GOD'S PREDESTINATION IS BASED ON HIS FOREKNOWLEDGE OF HUMAN CHOICE

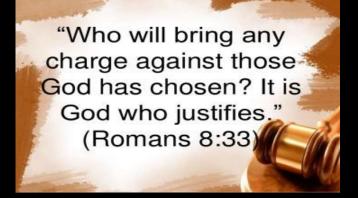
The Bible teaches that God first foresaw how people would decide; then He predestined to salvation those whom He knew would accept Christ. God did not impose arbitrary decrees upon humanity. He did not decide that some would be saved and others lost, irrespective of their personal choice. And He did not make it impossible for some to reject His grace and just as impossible for others to accept His grace.

Paul taught that those who were predestined to salvation were those whom God foreknew. "For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his son" (Romans 8:29). The statement obviously means that divine foreknowledge of the individual came before divine predestination. Because in the ages before creation of our world God foresaw that certain ones would submit to Christ's loving authority, He predetermined that He would save them from sin, give them the new birth experience, and invest them with the glory of Christ's character (verse 30). These are the "elect" (verse 33) or the chosen ones.



Because they have been justified by faith, no one can bring a charge against them that carries any weight with God. "It is God who justifies" (Romans 8:33). The reason that they are God's choice ones, His chosen, select ones is precisely that they have responded by faith to His conviction and have received His justification. God predestined them to salvation because he foresaw their faith response to His love.

Peter reiterates Paul's teaching. He introduced his first epistle by writing: "Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ to the elect (chosen) exiles of the dispersion of Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia, according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, by sanctification of the Spirit, for obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ" (1 Peter 1:1, 2). The "elect (chosen) exiles" (verse 1) were chosen "according to the foreknowledge of God the Father" (verse 2). God foresaw their genuine faith (verse 7). He did not choose them because He foresaw their good works. Faith is not a work. God foresaw that they would respond in heart to the drawing, convicting ministry of the Holy Spirit. On the basis of this foreknowledge, God chose them for holiness, spiritual cleansing, and obedience to Jesus Christ.





God's predestination and the children of Israel

In Romans, chapter 11, Paul discussed God's foreknowledge of the decisions of His people. When Paul wrote that "God has not rejected his people whom he foreknew" (Romans 11:2), he did not mean that the whole Israelite nation was still God's chosen people. This is very clear from the context. The ones God "foreknew" were like the seven thousand in the time of Elijah who had not bowed the knee to Baal (verse 4). They were the "remnant according to the election of grace" (verse 5). Even though the nation Israel generally was blind, the elect remnant had received God's blessing (verse 7).

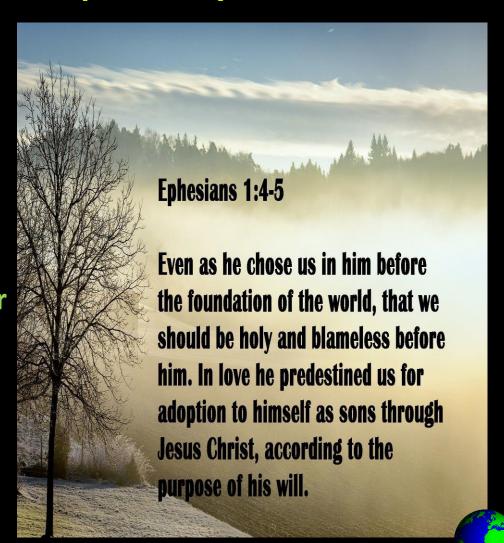
The greater part of Israel was rejected by God because of unbelief (verse 20). They would be accepted again, as the Christian Gentiles were accepted, if they would believe in Christ (verse 23). Therefore, the remnant of Israel who were accepted by the Lord were those who had retained their faith. They were elect or predestined to salvation because God foresaw that, unlike the majority of their fellow Israelites, they would be faithful to Him. God's predetermination that the remnant should be saved was based on His foreknowledge of their belief in Christ.



Ephesians, chapter 1 must be interpreted in the light of what we have already discovered. Paul did not contradict his message to the Romans by what he wrote to the Ephesians. The earlier verses of this chapter are often taken in isolation from the later ones. God chose His people "before the foundation of the world" (verse 4). They were predestined to be His children (verse 5). But these verses do not say that God's choice of His people before the creation of the world was based upon His purely arbitrary decision, quite apart from His foreknowledge of their faith. Verse 11 repeats the point that Christians were "predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will".

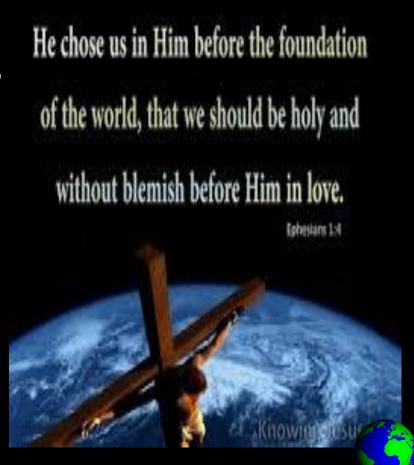
But what was God's will? The next verse says it very simply: "That we should be to the praise of his glory, who first trusted in Christ" (verse 12).

It was God's will to make holy those whom He foresaw would trust in Christ.

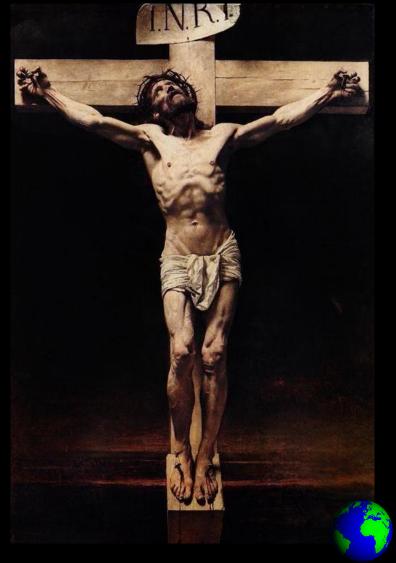


The Ephesian Christians trusted in Him after they had heard the preaching of the Gospel (verse 13). Then they were sealed by the Holy Spirit. They received the Holy Spirit only when they believed. It was then that God's predetermined will could be carried out in their lives. The passage does not say that God predestined their belief. He foresaw their belief, and, in view of it predestined them to an eternal inheritance.

Ephesians 1:19 speaks of "the immeasurable greatness of his power for us who believe." And the next chapter underlines the point. "For by grace you have been saved through faith, and this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God" (Ephesians 2:8). Salvation is a gift of God's grace, but it must be received by faith (compare Romans 5:17). Faith does not earn grace; it responds to it and receives it. There is no salvation for an individual unless he chooses to receive God's grace. God does not urge His grace upon us so forcibly that we cannot resist receiving it. This teaching of Augustine and the Reformers was unbiblical. We must choose to receive grace; and that choice is faith! Because God foresaw that choice He predestined us to salvation.



Peter wrote of Christ as "having been foreknown before the foundation of the world, but revealed in the last times for you" 1 Peter 1:20; compare 1 Corinthians 2:2, 7, 8; Revelation 13:8). Some interpreters have argued that Christ could not have failed in His divine mission by choosing to sin because He was predestined to succeed. This interpretation ignores the significance of the temptations confronting Jesus (Hebrews 4:15). Unless there was a possibility of failure, there was no contest, and the fact of His victorious sinlessness would have no significance for us in our battle with sin. Peter also wrote that Christ is our "example, so that you should follow his steps" (1 Peter 2:21). Christ overcame in the same way that we may overcome (Revelation 3:21). We are instructed to "walk just as he walked" (1 John 2:6). Christ was "foreknown before the foundation of the world" (1 $\overline{\text{Peter 1:20}}$) in the sense that God foresaw that He would not choose to sin. God did not foreordain that Christ could not fail; He foresaw His victory. Christ was foreordained to be our Saviour because God foresaw that He would succeed in His mission, that because of the depth of His love He would prevail.



GOD GIVES EVERYONE THE POWER TO CHOOSE CHRIST

The predestinarians argue that the only ones who can choose Christ are the elect to whom God has given irresistible grace. In the final analysis, they are saved because God chooses them, not because they choose Him. The rest of humanity have no ability to choose Christ and salvation.

But what does the Bible teach?

The many Old Testament calls for God's people to choose Him and put away their sin imply that they had the power of choice. The blessings and curses that God put before Israel would have been meaningless unless the people possessed the ability to choose Him (Deuteronomy 30:19; compare chapters 28, 29). Joshua's command to Israel, "Choose this day whom you will serve" (Joshua 24:15) would have been quite irrelevant if they had lacked the power to choose. The people chose God, He came into their lives, and they then had the power to obey. Of course, God's grace, in the form of divine conviction, engendered their choice in the first place. But His grace was available to all because all the people were invited to choose.



God gives everyone the power to choose Christ (cont'd)

The book of Proverbs reminds us that failing to "choose the fear [reverence] of the Lord" results in rejection by God. If we turn away from God, rejecting His counsel and leading in our lives, we cannot expect Him to answer us in time of need (Proverbs 1:28-30). But if we choose Him and walk in His way we will be blessed. The wise man added, "but those who listen to me will be secure and will live at ease, without dread of disaster" (verse 33). Such a promise would be meaningless if the predestinarians were correct in maintaining that human beings have no ability to choose God.

Isaiah completely shatters the idea that only the elect are called by God. "Therefore will I number you to the sword, and ye shall all bow down to the slaughter: because when I called, ye did not answer; when I spake, ye did not hear; but did evil before mine eyes, and did choose that wherein I delighted not." (Isaiah 65:12). God's grace led Him to call these people, but they chose evil rather than God's will. His grace was by no means irresistible! They resisted God's call, and He rejected them.



God gives everyone the power to choose Christ (cont'd)

The Lord has taught us through the apostle Paul that "the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ" is "for all who believe" (Romans 3:22). We are not left in doubt about how many are offered this gift, for Paul adds, "for there is no distinction, since all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God" (verses 22, 23). The "all" who have sinned are offered without distinction the gift of Christ's righteousness if they will believe and submit to His love. The passage means nothing unless all sinners have the ability to choose to believe in Christ.

Before his conversion, Paul had the capacity to choose what was right but not the capacity to put into action the right choices he had made (Romans 7:18). Only when he invited Christ to come into his heart was he able to be an overcomer (Romans 7:24, 25). When he chose the righteous presence of Christ by the presence of the Holy Spirit in his heart, he had spiritual power and victory over sin (Romans 8:9-14).

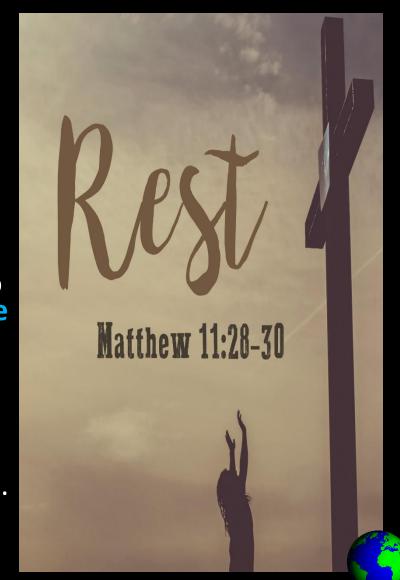


God gives everyone the power to choose Christ (cont'd)

Jesus said that after His death He would "draw all people" to Himself (John 12:32). Jesus also said, "No one can come to me unless drawn by the Father who sent me" (John 6:44). But He draws all to Himself! That being so, all have the ability to come to Him by their own choice. That is why Jesus' very comforting invitation to burdened souls is given to all humanity (Matthew 11:28-30).

John the Baptist testified "that all might believe through him" (John 1:7). Jesus is "the true light, which enlightens everyone" (verse 9). Those who respond to the light are given "power to become children of God" (John 1:12). Isaiah had presented the same truth. He extended God's loving invitation to all. "Turn to me and be saved, all the ends of the earth!" (Isaiah 45:22).

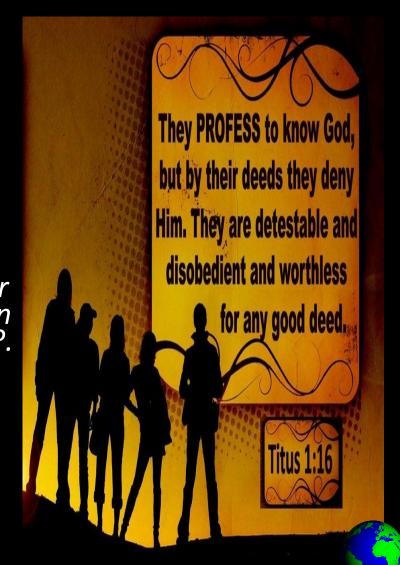
It is not Christ's will that only an elect group of arbitrarily chosen people should believe in Him. He wants the whole world to believe, for He says, "Let everyone who wishes take the water of life as a gift" (Revelation 22:17). Jesus prayed, "... so that the world may believe that you have sent me" (John 17:21; compare verse 23). His prayer implies that the whole world has the ability to believe.



ONCE SAVED BELIEVERS CAN FALL AWAY AND BE LOST

The warning is all through the Bible that it is possible for believers to apostatize and be lost. This is why we are constantly admonished to watch, pray, study the Word, and daily surrender to Christ's loving will.

What did Paul mean by saying that he brought his fallen self into subjection lest, having preached to others, he himself should become a "castaway" (1 Corinthians 9:27)? What is a castaway? The Greek word is adokimos. It means "not standing the test . . . unqualified, worthless, base." It is the word used in 2 Corinthians 13:5: "Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves. Know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates?. People who have lost the presence of Christ in their hearts are castaways or reprobates. The same word is used in Titus 1:16: "They profess that they know God; but in works they deny him, being abominablé, and disobédient, and unto évery good work reprobate.". This is the kind of person Paul did not want to become. He knew it was a very real possibility if he did not keep his fallen nature under the control of the Holy Spirit by daily yielding his will to Christ's loving authority.

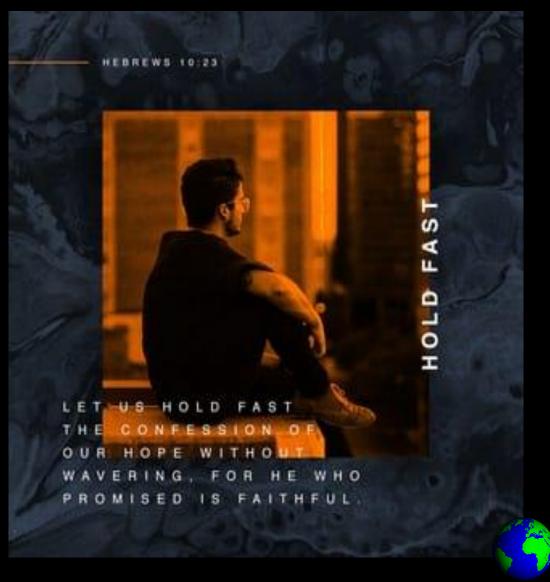


For it is impossible, in the case of those...enlightened...
tasted the heavenly gift...shared in the Holy Spirit...
tasted...the word of God and the powers of the age to come,
and then have fallen away,
to restore them again to repentance...

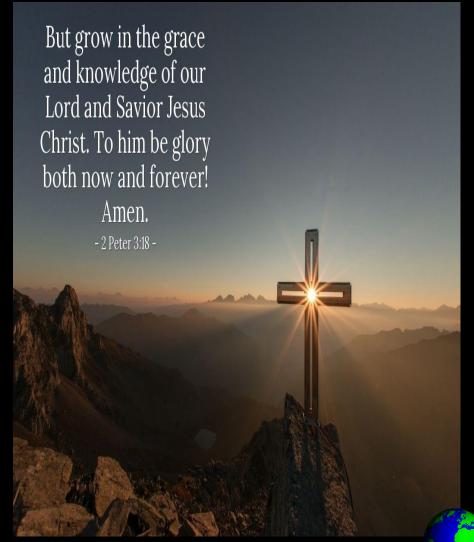
Hebrews 6:4-6, Apostasy & Calvinism

Hebrews 6:4-6 does not mean that there is no hope for backsliders. It means that backsliders cannot be renewed again to repentance "while (as long as) they are crucifying to themselves the Son of God, and exposing Him to public disgrace." The relevant point for our study is that people who "have once been enlightened, and have tasted the heavenly gift, and have shared in the Holy Spirit, and have tasted the goodness of the word of God and the powers of the age to come" can fall away and be lost. Unless they cease crucifying Christ by lives of sin, they cannot be renewed unto repentance and be saved. Once saved people can be lost in sin, and backsliders can be saved only if they repent by accepting Jesus as Lord of their lives.

Hebrews 10:23-38 makes a similar point. We are instructed to cling to our faith "without wavering" (verse 23) because if we waver and choose to live in sin again, there is nothing more the Lord can do for us. "For if we sin wilfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins, But a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries." (verses 26, 27). Toward the end of the chapter comes the very clear statement: "Now the just shall live by faith: but if any man draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him." (verse 38). Such people who revert to a life of sin "are lost"; they "draw back unto perdition".
Then it is very possible for a once saved soul to fall away and be lost by rejecting Christ's repeated overtures of love.



Peter, who knew what falling is all about, warned born-again believers of the danger of lapsing into lives of sin. "For if after they have escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, they are again entangled therein, and overcome, the latter end is worse with them than the beginning. For it had been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than, after they have known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered unto them. But it is happened unto them according to the true proverb, The dog is turned to his own vomit again; and the sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire." (2 Peter 2:20-22). Hence the instruction: "Ye therefore, beloved, seeing ye know these things before, beware lest ye also, being led away with the error of the wicked, fall from your own stedfastness." (2 Peter 3:17). By dependence upon Christ, we can constantly "But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. To him be glory both now and for ever. Amen." (verse 18).



In the parable of the sower, Jesus spoke of some seed falling on rocky ground. He illustrated the case of those who "in a time of testing fall away" (Luke 8:13) because they lack a wholehearted relationship with Christ.

The faithful servant of Christ who turns away from his faithfulness and reverts to a life of sin will be eternally rejected unless he repents. "The lord of that servant will come in a day when he looketh not for him, and at an hour when he is not aware, and will cut him in sunder, and will appoint him his portion with the unbelievers." (Luke 12:46).

Jesus' parable of the unforgiving servant (Matthew 18:23-35) illustrates the fact that when God forgives our sins, he expects us to forgive others. If we refuse to forgive, He will revoke His forgiveness of our sins. The unforgiving debtor was severely punished. "So likewise shall my heavenly Father do also unto you, if ye from your hearts forgive not every one his brother their trespasses." (verse 35).



The Parable
Of The
Unmerciful
Servant

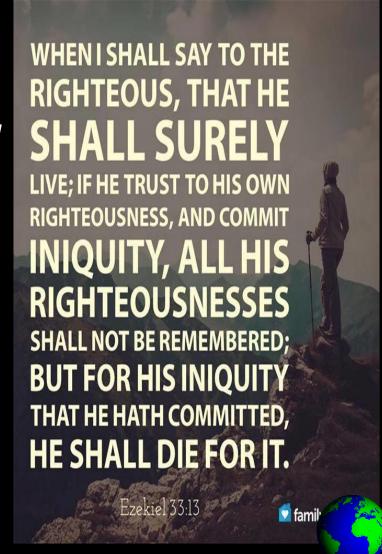
Matthew 18:23-35



Ezekiel 33:13, 18 specifically states that the Lord will reject and put to death people who once knew Him, if they turn away from a life of righteousness.

The Bible predicts that towards the end of world history "that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils;" (1 Timothy 4:1). Some former believers will be lost "because they have cast off their first faith" (1 Timothy 5:12). This is exactly the message of Revelation 2:4, 5. Believers who have lost their first love and have fallen into sin have rejected God. With tears of sorrow, God turns away, both rejected and dejected.

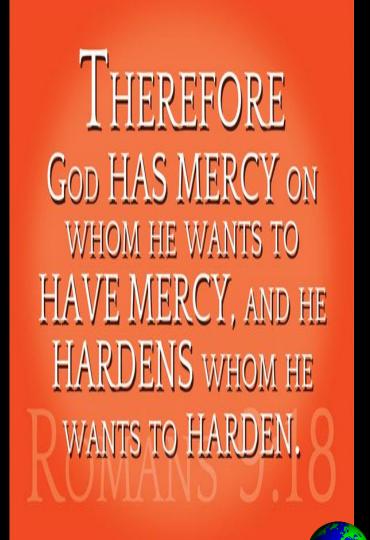
King Saul was once filled with the Spirit of God (1 Samuel 10:6, 9). But he fell into sin, refused to repent, and died a suicide (1 Samuel 31:4). His experience proves conclusively that once-saved believers can apostatize and be lost. Apostate believers are not always restored to their former position of favour with God. Only as they respond anew to Christ's love, turning to Him for forgiveness and spiritual power can they have salvation again.



THE MEANING OF ROMANS, CHAPTER 9

Predestinarians use this chapter in an attempt to establish their view that, quite apart from any human choice, God decreed who should have mercy and who should be lost. Is this what the chapter really teaches?

What is meant by the statement of the Lord, "It is through Isaac that descendants shall be named for you" (Romans 9:7, Genesis 21:12). In speaking thus to Abraham, the Lord did not mean that He had chosen Isaac for salvation and Ishmael for damnation. He meant that He had selected Isaac as the father of the chosen nation and the forefather of the Messiah. God promised to make a nation of Ishmael's descendants also, and He took care of Hagar and Ishmael in a miraculous way (Genesis 21:13-20). But Sarah was Abraham's true wife, and Isaac's birth when Abraham was a hundred years old and Sarah was ninety was a miracle. Therefore the Lord insisted that Isaac should be the one to have the birthright, making him the patriarch of the chosen people. Abraham had prayed that Ishmael might be the one chosen by God to inherit His special promises, but the Lord declared otherwise (Genesis 17:17-21). Even so, the Lord assured Abraham that He would make special provision for Ishmael (Genesis 17:20)--a promise that He kept.



The point is that Paul's use of this story in Romans 9 was not intended to establish that Isaac was predestined to be saved and Ishmael to be damned. Because Isaac was a child of promise, conceived miraculously in a manner quite contrary to normal physical possibilities, he is used in Scripture as a symbol of salvation by faith. God promised Isaac to Abraham and Sarah, they trusted Him implicitly, and God fulfilled the promise. Hence, Isaac is used by Paul as an analogy of those who rely upon faith in Christ for salvation. Many of the Jews tried to earn salvation by their works, as Abraham had tried to fulfil God's promise of a son by taking Hagar in place of Sarah. Therefore, Paul uses Ishmael, the child of human works, as an illustration of those who depend on works for salvation (compare Galatians 4:22-24, 29-31). A remnant of the Jews, as well as the Gentile Christians accepted salvation by faith in Christ. It is these that Paul represents by his reference to Isaac compare Galatians 4:27, 28; 3:28, 29 .

For This Was How The

Promise Was Stated: "At

The Appointed Time I Will

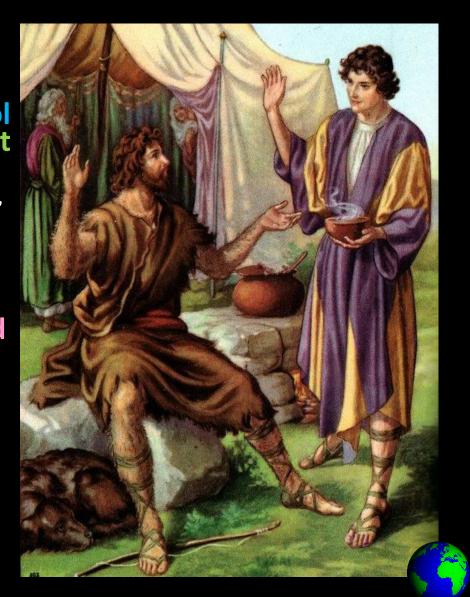
Return, And Sarah Will

Have A Son."

Romans 9-9



Paul uses a second illustration to explain salvation by faith/grace by contrast with salvation by works. Jacob, like Isaac, is used as the symbol of those who are saved by grace, not by their own works. And Esau is the symbol of those who are rejected by God. Paul's point is not that God arbitrarily gave salvation to Jacob and denied it to Esau. The statement to Rebekah at the birth of the boys, "the elder shall serve the younger" (Genesis 25:23), meant that God had chosen Jacob to have the spiritual birthright and to be the patriarch of the family. Both brothers would be guilty of serious sins (see Genesis 25:27-34; 27:1-41). Jacob repented and by faith accepted God's salvation, but Esau persisted in his rebellious way of life. Jacob was not chosen by God because of his future good works, but because the Lord foresaw (Romans 8:29) that he would be a genuine believer who would receive the free gift of grace. Esau was rejected because God foresaw that he would not choose to receive divine saving grace. God offered salvation to both men (compare Isaiah 45:22); one responded to the invitation, the other did not.



The passage does not teach that God's pre-election of Jacob was independent of Jacob's choice of grace; it teaches that God's predestination was independent of Jacob's good works (verse 11). Faith is not a work that saves us; it is a response to divine grace. We are not saved by our own wills (verse 16), but by God's grace. Even so, we must will to receive His saving grace (compare Romans 5:17). Esau could have made the same response as did Jacob, but he chose not to. God did not "haté" him (verse 13) in the modern sense of the term. The Greek word (miseo) is sometimes used in the New Testament in the sense of "to love less," or "to put to one side" (see Luke 14:26; John 12:25; Matthew 6:24; compare Malachi 1:2-4).

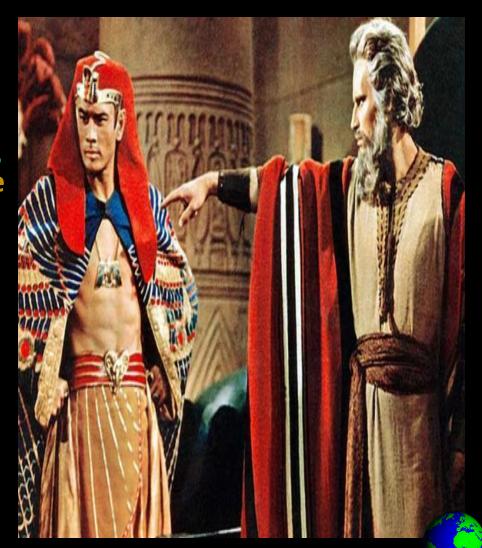


The reference to Pharaoh (Romans 9:17-21) is interpreted by some to mean that God deliberately hardened Pharaoh's heart because he was predestined to be lost. Our study has revealed that the ones upon whom the Lord chooses to have mercy (verse 18) are those who believe in Him. Pharaoh chose to defy God's warnings. He refused to believe God or to acknowledge His loving authority. Certainly God is often said to have hardened Pharaoh's heart (Exodus 4:21; 7:3; 8:15 etc.), but Pharaoh is also said to have hardened his own heart (Exodus 8:32; 9:34; 1 Samuel 6:6).

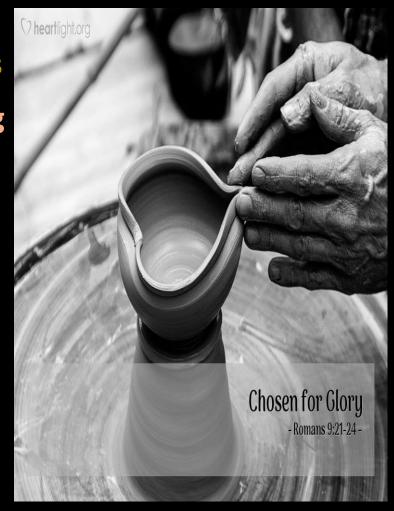
The paradox is explained by two facts:

- (1) In Scripture God is often said to cause that which He allows, even though the real cause is the devil;
- (2) God's loving appeals will soften one heart and increasingly harden another because one will choose to accept them and another will not.

Appeals rejected result in deepening alienation from the Lord.



Romans 9:17 quotes Exodus 9:16. God said that he had raised up Pharaoh, "to show you my power, and to make my name resound through all the earth." In context, God's statement is part of His rebuke for Pharaoh's tenacious unwillingness to respond to His appeals. The Lord added: "You are still exalting yourself against my people, and will not let them go" (verse 17). A little later Pharaoh admitted that God is righteous and that he and his people had sinned (verse 27). The divine purpose would have been fulfilled however Pharaoh had reacted to God's appeals. If Pharaoh had responded positively surely God's name would have been exalted in the earth. When Pharaoh chose to reject God, he separated himself from the source of life and was destroyed. The Lord's name was exalted because of His miraculous deliverance of His people from Pharaoh's power. There is, however, no suggestion that because Pharaoh was predestined to be lost, he had no choice but to react negatively to God's appeals.
God wills to have mercy upon believers, and wills to reject unbelievers. The vessel made for honour (verse 21) is the one who chooses to believe; the vessel made for dishonour is the one who chooses not be believe.





Conclusion on Romans 9

The ones chosen for wrath (Romans 9:22) are those who, like the ancient Israelites, sought righteousness by works instead of by faith (verses 31-33). The ones chosen for mercy are the ones who, like the Christian Gentiles, attained to righteousness by faith (Romans 9:30). Verses 30-33 provide the punch line of the whole chapter. The elect are those who have faith in Christ; the damned are those who do not have faith.

Romans 9 must be interpreted in the light of the overall teaching of Scripture on the question of human choice and divine predestination. The message throughout the Bible is that God hoped all would accept His love but in sorrow predestined to salvation only those whom He foresaw would accept Him. He has given light and the power to choose to every human soul. People are not lost who accept Christ and allow His Spirit to reign in their hearts.

Have you chosen Christ as your Lord of your life? There is forgiveness, power to become like Jesus, and eternal life with Christ available for you if you receive Him as Saviour and Lord.



Summary

GOD'S ETERNAL PURPOSE:

- 1. God's purpose in creation. <u>Isaiah 45:18</u>; 46:10.
- 2. Man given dominion over earth. Genesis 1:26.
- 3. God's original plan marred by sin. Romans 8:19-22; 6:23.
- 4. Man's lost dominion restored through Christ. Micah 4:8; Ephesians 1:9-I1.
- 5. A new creature and a new creation. 2 Corinthians. 5:17; Revelation 21:1, 5.

GOD'S DIVINE FOREKNOWLEDGE:

- 1. Infinite wisdom foreknows all things. Isaiah 40:28; I Corinthians 2:7.
- 2. Jesus and Holy Spirit also have foreknowledge. <u>John 2:24</u>, <u>25</u>; <u>1 Corinthians 2</u>:14
- 3. God foresaw man and all his human problems. Psalms 139:13-24; Romans 4:17.
- 4. Despite man's inherent weakness God planned to save him. Romans
 5:20; Hebrews 7:25.
- 5. Man's election by God's foreknowledge. 1 Peter 1:2; 1 Thessalonians 1:4.



Summary (cont'd)

THE HUMAN WILL IN ELECTION:

- 1. Man's fall gave him two masters. 1 John 3:8.
- 2. He must will to obey God. <u>John 9:31</u>; <u>7:17</u>.
- 3. Importance of the human will in salvation. Revelation 22:17.

MANY CALLED, BUT FEW CHOSEN:

- 1. Not all who are called are chosen. Matthew 22:14.
- 2. God's call and foreordination. Titus 1:2.
- 3. Jesus' parable teaches man's calling and election. Matthew 22:1-14.
- 4. Elect to feast wore wedding garment. Revelation 19:7-9.
- 5. Peter admonishes, make calling and election sure. 2 Peter 1:10.



Summary (cont'd)

ELECT ARE CALLED, CHOSEN, FAITHFUL: Revelation 17:14.

- 1. Examples:
 - a. Paul. Galatians 1:15, 16; Acts 9:15; 2 Timothy 4:6-8.
 - b. Judas. Luke 6:13-16; John 6:70, 71; Acts 1:25.
- 2. Characterized by sanctified obedience. Peter 1:2; Revelation 14:12.
- 3. Faithful unto death. Colossians 1:22, 23; Revelation 2:10.
- 4. Jesus, author and finisher of our faith. Hebrews 12:2.

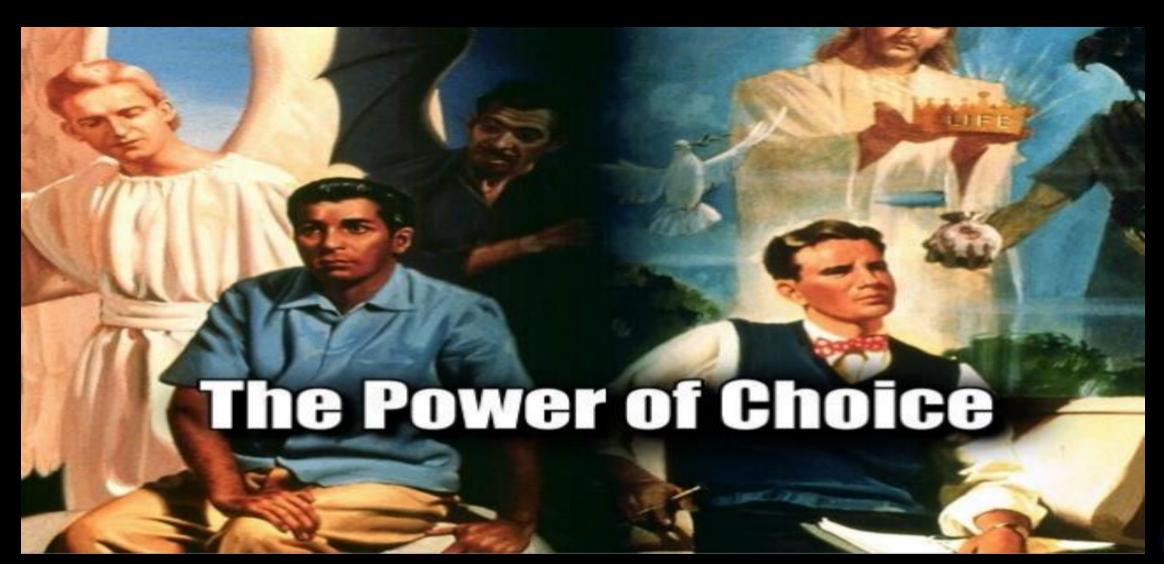
CONCLUSION:

- 1. Jesus, Lamb slain from foundation of earth. Revelation 13:8.
- 2. He called, predestinated, justified, and glorified the elect in His divine foreknowledge. Romans 8:28-30, 33.
- 3. God predestinated all who will obtain an eternal inheritance.

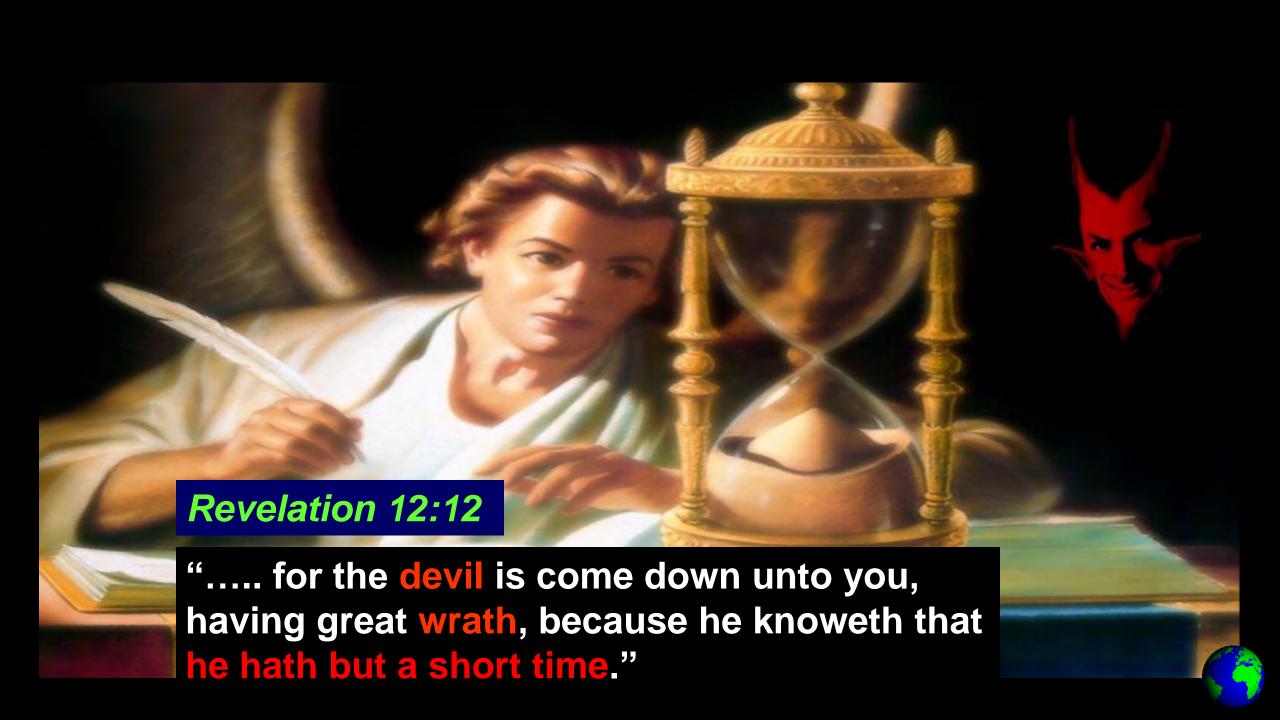
Ephesians 1:4-6, 11.



God has given all:







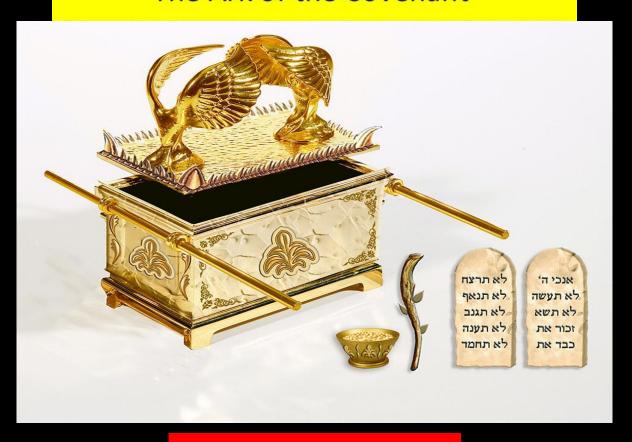
Enter The Ark of Hope

And other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice; and there shall be one fold, and one shepherd.

- John 10:16



The Ark of the Covenant



Psalms 77:13

Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me. -Revelation 3:20





