

# Daily View

July 7, 2021

## Predestination

In our Ephesians class, we'll discuss Paul's view of predestination. Hopefully these notes will answer some of the questions that come up when discussing how Calvinists misuse these texts to support their view of predestination or "unconditional election."

### Predestination According to John Calvin

"By predestination we mean the eternal decree of God, by which he determined with himself whatever he wished to happen with regard to every man. All are not created on equal terms, but some are preordained to eternal life, others to eternal damnation; and, accordingly, as each has been created for one or other of these ends, we say that he has been predestinated to life or to death."

— John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, 3.21.5.

### Problems

- Stumbles over the great texts of scripture (such as John 3:16)
- Impugns the goodness of God (God summarily assigns people to hell before their birth?)
- Morally, raises serious doubts about the justice of God

If God has chosen only a certain number of people out of the race of men, we have to conclude either that the texts do not say what they seem to say or that God has two wills: one which is well disposed to all sinners and another *secret will* in which his purpose is to be gracious to only a few.

Calvinists call this God's *preceptive will* (what God wants men to do) and *directive will* (what God actually does). Logically, that is self-contradictory. Our argument is not with what God **can** do but whether we can use language to describe him without the language breaking down. Calvinistic language breaks down at every turn. Also logically untenable is the idea that God can cause evil and suffering (by not choosing some to be saved) and yet not be responsible for it.

Biblical doctrine... There **is** a doctrine of Predestination (Pre-determining). God predetermined that a certain kind of person would be saved. That seems clear from a large number of texts as well as common sense and the fact that the gospel was preached to everyone.

Using the formula "**Identity + Purpose = Destiny**" we can also explain predestination this way:

- A person who takes on a **certain identity** is predestined to be saved (Romans 8:29; I John 3:1-3)
- A person who views his life from the standpoint of a **certain purpose** is predestined to be saved (Romans 8:28)
- A person who aims for a **certain eternal destiny** is predestined to be saved (Hebrews 11:13-16; Colossians 3:1-3).

### Conclusion

The following conclusions may be scripturally drawn regarding predestination and foreordination (from — *The Biblical Doctrine of Predestination*, by F. Furman Kearley, Ph.D.)

1. The general teaching of God's Word is: that God wants all men to be saved; that Christ died as a ransom for all; that the invitation and call is extended to all; and that whosoever wills may drink of the water of life freely.
2. Therefore, the verses under consideration must be understood and interpreted harmoniously with the general teaching of the Bible.
3. The proper model for understanding these verses is that God predetermined, preplanned, and foreordained that all individuals who corresponded to certain characteristics of holy and unblemished lives of faith and obedience would be those whom He would elect, justify, and ultimately, glorify.

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