

Predestination

Romans 8:29-30 & Ephesians 1:5, 11-12

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Introduction: Just what is predestination? What does it mean? Has God pre-determined some people to go to heaven & others to go to hell? Calvin defines predestination as “the eternal decree of God, by which some are preordained to eternal life, others to eternal damnation. Those, therefore, whom God passes by He reprobates, & that for no other cause but because He is pleased to exclude them from the inheritance which He predestines to His children.” Is that what the Bible teaches? C. I. Scofield's definition given in his note on Ephesians 1:5, says, "Predestination is that effective exercise of the will of God by which things before determined by Him are brought to pass."

The word itself is composed of the prefix "*pro*" (meaning “before” or “prior”) & the word "*horizo*", from which we get our English word, "horizon". This word means “to mark out or bound, to appoint, decree, or specify”. It carries the idea 'to limit in advance, predetermine, or ordain'. The study of this doctrine must include analyzing each verse where the word is used. But we must also compare this word to the word "*foreknow*" which is made up of the same prefix, "*pro*" & the word "*ginosko*" (to know); hence “to know beforehand, to foresee.” Calvinists usually define these terms the same way. MacArthur says, “Foreknowledge means that God planned before, not that He observed before. Thus, God pre-thought & pre-determined or predestined each Christian's salvation” (Study Bible, 1997). Yet the Bible distinguishes these words, they are not synonymous. Let us consider each of the passages where the word "*predestinate*" or "*predestinated*" is used. Note with me the plan of predestination, the purpose of predestination, & the pattern of predestination.

- I. The **plan** of predestination - Ephesians 1:5 (note the word "adoption")
 - A. The rights of sonship (we are placed as God's son or child)
 1. God's **promise** - eternal life
 - a. John 1:12
 - b. I John 5:10-13
 2. God's **protection** - secured life
 - a. John 10:27-29
 - b. I Peter 1:4-5
 3. God's **provision** - abundant life
 - a. Psalm 37:4-5, 23-25
 - b. John 10:10
 - B. The realization of sonship (we are presented with God's Spirit)
 1. We have **assurance** - Ephesians 1:13-14 (& cf. Rom. 8:14-17)
 2. We have **acceptance** - Ephesians 1:6
 3. We have **access** - Ephesians 2:18 (& cf. Heb. 4:16)
 - C. The redemption of sonship (we are prepared for God's presence)
 1. The **promise** of a new body - II Corinthians 5:1-4
 2. The **pattern** of a new body - Philippians 3:20-21
 3. The **procuring** of a new body - I Corinthians 15:51-53

II. The **purpose** of predestination - Ephesians 1:11-12 ("To God be the glory")

- A. We are to be trophies of His **grace**.
 - 1. Ephesians 1:5-6, 12 & 14
 - 2. II Corinthians 2:14
- B. We are to be trustees of His **greatness**.
 - 1. Matthew 5:16
 - 2. Galatians 1:23-24Example: see Nehemiah 6:15-16
- C. We are to be testifiers of His **glory**.
 - 1. Psalm 96:1-8
 - 2. Psalm 103:1-2

III. The **pattern** of predestination - Romans 8:29 (Conformity to Christ)

Luke 2:52 gives 4 areas of growth in the life of our Lord:

- A. "*Wisdom*" > intellectually
 - 1. II Timothy 2:15
 - 2. Proverbs 1:7 & 9:10
- B. "*Stature*" > physically
 - 1. I Corinthians 6:19-20
 - 2. I Timothy 4:8[Honor for God's temple, our bodies (I Cor. 6:19-20)? (1) Personal hygiene: what we do to it? (2) Physical fitness: what we put in it? (3) Proper dress: what we put on it?]
- C. "*Favour with God*" > spiritually
 - 1. John 8:29
 - 2. I Thessalonians 4:1 (& cf. Hebrews 11:6)[“Only 2 choices on the shelf, pleasing God or pleasing self” (Ken Collier).]
- D. "*Favour with man*" > socially
 - 1. Colossians 4:5-6
 - 2. Proverbs 16:7

Conclusion: We have seen that predestination does **not** mean God is pre-determining people to heaven or hell, but rather that God is dealing with those who have already trusted Christ as their Savior (those whom He foreknew would be saved). God's plan is for the believer to be placed in the family of God as a son, presented with His Spirit, & prepared ultimately for His presence (the redemption of the body). That sonship is realized in the blessings of our assurance, our acceptance, & our access to the very throne room of God. The clear purpose of God in our predestination is that we bring glory to Him. We do so as the trophies of His grace, the trustees of His greatness, & the testifiers of His glory. Conformity to Christ is the pattern for predestination. We are to grow in Christ-likeness intellectually, physically, spiritually & socially. May our desire be that expressed by God's Son, Who said, "...I do always those things that please Him". How about you here this evening? Have you trusted Christ as your personal Savior? If so, are you maturing in the faith & growing in Christ-likeness? Can you sing from your heart, "I would be like Jesus" & "O to be like Thee"?