

Arlington Church of Christ

Wednesday Bible Study

Predestined?

Following the Scriptural Trail



The Calvinist denominations teach that God has predestined or chosen certain individuals to be saved, and others to be lost.

The doctrine says “God, before the foundation of the world, chose certain individuals from among the fallen members of Adam’s race to be the objects of his underserved favor. These and only these He purposed to save. God could have saved all men, or he could have saved none – he chose to do neither. Instead He chose to save some and exclude others. His eternal choice of salvation was not based upon any foreseen act or response on the part of those selected, but solely on his own good pleasure and sovereign will. Thus election is not determined by, or conditioned on, anything man would do, but entirely from God’s self-determined purpose.”

This teaching was part of the “Westminster Confession of Faith” which formed the basis many churches throughout Europe including the Church of England, the Church of Scotland, reformed churches of most other European countries, and has even spread to America being accepted by the Episcopalians, and even 30% of Southern Baptists.

The Calvinist ideas state that those who are among the 'predestined saved' will show their salvation by the good works they do. They are saved and nothing they do will change that – but if a person who appeared to be saved because of their actions, then changes and does evil – that shows that they were never really among the saved in the first place.

It is a doctrine based on doing good works, and while it claims that people are saved only by God's grace, those who are among the 'really predestined to be saved' will show that by all the good works that they do.

But the Bible teaches a very different picture of predestination and salvation. Scripture says that God chose Jesus as the Christ and determined that all chose to obey Him would be saved. It is therefore our choice and our reaction to the gospel of Christ that determines whether we are saved or lost!

2 Thessalonians 1:6-10

God is just: He will pay back trouble to those who trouble you ⁷ and give relief to you who are troubled, and to us as well. This will happen when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven in blazing fire with his powerful angels. ⁸ He will punish those who do not know God and do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus. ⁹ They will be punished with everlasting destruction and shut out from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of his might ¹⁰ on the day he comes to be glorified in his holy people and to be marveled at among all those who have believed. This includes you, because you believed our testimony to you.

Note that those who will be punished are those 'do not know God' and those who 'do not obey what He says' – not those who were not predestined to be saved.

1 Timothy 2:3-6

This is good, and pleases God our Savior, ⁴ **who wants all people to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth.** ⁵ For there is one God and one mediator between God and mankind, the man Christ Jesus, ⁶ **who gave himself as a ransom for all people.** This has now been witnessed to at the proper time.

2 Peter 3:9

The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness. Instead he is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance.

Note: Repentance is part of the requirement for salvation!

And God wants everyone to repent – but if some are predestined to be lost anyway – then this makes no sense.

Titus 2:11-14

For the grace of God has appeared that offers salvation to all people. ¹² It teaches us to say “No” to ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright and godly lives in this present age, ¹³ while we wait for the blessed hope—the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ, ¹⁴ who gave himself for us to redeem us from all wickedness and to purify for himself a people that are his very own, eager to do what is good.

Ezekiel 33:11

Say to them, 'As surely as I live, declares the Sovereign LORD, I take no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but rather that they turn from their ways and live. Turn! Turn from your evil ways! Why will you die, people of Israel?'

Note: God wants even the 'wicked' to repent and turn to Him for salvation. But that would make no difference if they were already predestined to be lost

Hebrews 2:9

But we do see Jesus, who was made lower than the angels for a little while, now crowned with glory and honor because he suffered death, so that by the grace of God he might taste death for everyone.

1 John 2:1-4

My dear children, I write this to you so that you will not sin. But if anybody does sin, we have an advocate with the Father—Jesus Christ, the Righteous One. ² He is the atoning sacrifice for our sins, and not only for ours but also for the sins of the whole world. ³ We know that **we have come to know him if we keep his commands.** ⁴ Whoever says, “I know him,” but does not do what he commands is a liar, and the truth is not in that person.

Revelation 22:17

The Spirit and the bride say, “Come!” And let the one who hears say, “Come!” **Let the one who is thirsty come; and let the one who wishes take the free gift of the water of life.**

The Bible consistently states that anyone who is seeking salvation can come – but this would not be true if nothing one does can affect their salvation.

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The Spirit and the bride say, “Come!” And let the one who hears say, “Come!” Let the one who is thirsty come; **and let the one who wishes take the free gift of the water of life.**

Matthew 11:28-30

“Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. ²⁹ Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. ³⁰ For my yoke is easy and my burden is light.”

In light of these verses, why would someone teach 'predestination' no matter what they did ?

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- Could be simply deceived by Satan's lies**
- A misunderstanding of the scriptures, based on man's 'interpretation' of what God 'meant'.**
- Gives a feeling of superiority to those who feel 'chosen'**
- Allows those who are 'saved' to avoid consequences for their failures (they are saved anyway)**
- Is based on outward 'good' acts which would be easier to determine for people.**
- Gives people the freedom to control things in their life and do things their way – (they are saved or lost anyway)**

1 Peter 1:18-20

For you know that it was not with perishable things such as silver or gold that you were redeemed from the empty way of life handed down to you from your ancestors, ¹⁹ but with the precious blood of Christ, a lamb without blemish or defect. ²⁰ He was chosen before the creation of the world, but was revealed in these last times for your sake.



The one who was 'chosen', 'predestined' was not the individual, but Christ ! He was chosen beforehand as the way for people to be saved !

Ephesians 1:4-14

For he chose us in him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight. In love ⁵ he predestined us for adoption to sonship through Jesus Christ, in accordance with his pleasure and will— ⁶ to the praise of his glorious grace, which he has freely given us in the One he loves. ⁷ In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, in accordance with the riches of God's grace ⁸ that he lavished on us. With all wisdom and understanding, ⁹ he made known to us the mystery of his will according to his good pleasure, which he purposed in Christ, ¹⁰ to be put into effect when the times reach their fulfillment—to bring unity to all things in heaven and on earth under Christ.....

¹¹ In him we were also chosen, having been **predestined** according to the plan of him who works out everything in conformity with the purpose of his will, ¹² in order that we, who were the first to put our hope in Christ, might be for the praise of his glory. ¹³ And you also were included in Christ when you heard the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation. When you believed, you were marked in him with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit, ¹⁴ who is a deposit guaranteeing our inheritance until the redemption of those who are God's possession—to the praise of his glory.

The teaching of these verses is that those who accept and obey Jesus will be saved – that fact is what was predetermined before the world began !

Romans 8:28-30

And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose. ²⁹ **For those God foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son**, that he might be the firstborn among many brothers and sisters. ³⁰ **And those he predestined, he also called; those he called, he also justified; those he justified, he also glorified.**

God has predetermined the destiny or the future of each obedient believer, a glorious future in which he or she will be like Christ, conformed to the image of His Son!

Colossians 3:10

and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge in the image of its Creator.

Romans 12:2 Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will.

2 Corinthians 3:18

And we all, who with unveiled faces contemplate the Lord's glory, are being transformed into his image with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit.

Galatians 3:26-27

So in Christ Jesus you are all children of God through faith, ²⁷ for all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ.

We are conformed to the image of Christ when we obey the gospel, are baptized, transform our minds, and follow the scriptures rather than the world.

Romans 8:28-30

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Having determined the destiny of those who would obey Christ ahead of time, he called us to himself and transferred his perfect righteousness to everyone who obeyed the call. And those who possess his perfect righteousness he co-glorified with his Son!



If one can be saved regardless of what they do or do not do, if it is strictly by God's choice, then why did Jesus have to die for sins?

The 'predestination' taught in the Bible is that the plan of God for Jesus to come and die on the cross to pay the price for sins was set in place before God even created the world.

Consider the love for us that God had – he knew that we would sin, He knew that His Son would have to suffer and die on the cross to pay the price for us, and yet He went ahead and created the world and gave us freewill anyway.

Romans 5:6-10 You see, at just the right time, when we were still powerless, Christ died for the ungodly. ⁷ Very rarely will anyone die for a righteous person, though for a good person someone might possibly dare to die. ⁸ But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.⁹ Since we have now been justified by his blood, how much more shall we be saved from God's wrath through him! ¹⁰ For if, while we were God's enemies, we were reconciled to him through the death of his Son, how much more, having been reconciled, shall we be saved through his life!

Also consider – if what we do has no effect on whether we are saved or lost – then what would be the purpose of ‘Judgment Day’?

Our fate would have already been determined long before we were even born.

**What does the Bible say about Judgment Day?
Will we really not know our fate until then - and what do the scriptures mean by ‘laying up treasures in heaven’? Does what we do here have any effect on what will happen when we stand before our Creator? This is our next lesson -**