

Predestination

God's Design For Those Who Choose Christ

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Contents of Brief

There are many points to consider under the topic of "Predestination". In this brief explanation I explore the following:

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Note: You may hear the phrase "I'm an 5 point Calvinist" in reference to a strong view of Predestination around the subject of salvation. Listed below are the "Five Points" in the commonly referenced acronym

5 Point Calvinism (TULIP)	Agree	Topic
Total Depravity	Yes*	1
Unconditional Election	Yes*	3-4
Limited Atonement	No	2
Irresistible Grace	No	5
Perseverance of the Saints	Yes*	

* word definitions must be clarified

This brief is designed for the layman to quickly identify key scriptures around the doctrine of Predestination. It is my prayer that God will use this as a springboard for your own study of the Scripture. All scripture quotations are from the NASB, © by The Lockman Foundation, 1977.

1. Man is dead in his sins

Genesis 2:17 *but from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat from it you shall surely die."*

Romans 3:11 *THERE IS NONE WHO UNDERSTANDS, THERE IS NONE WHO SEEKS FOR GOD;*

Ephesians 2:1 *And you were dead in your trespasses and sins,*

Ephesians 2:3 *Among them we too all formerly lived in the lusts of our flesh, indulging the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, even as the rest.*

Colossians 2:13 *And when you were dead in your transgressions and the uncircumcision of your flesh, He made you alive together with Him, having forgiven us all our transgressions,*

The unsaved person is, in their very nature (spirit), dead or separated from God. Their very nature **is** sin and under the ownership of Satan. In fact, the unsaved cannot by their own devices come to Christ (John 6:44 "No one can come to Me, unless the Father who sent Me draws him; and I will raise him up on the last day.")

2. Christ died for all mankind

John 3:16 *For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish, but have eternal life.*

John 3:17 *For God did not send the Son into the world to judge the world, but that the world should be saved through Him.*

John 12:47 *"And if anyone hears My sayings, and does not keep them, I do not judge him; for I did not come to judge the world, but to save the world."*

1 Timothy 2:4 *who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.*

Titus 2:11 *For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all men,*

2 Peter 3:9 *The Lord is not slow about His promise, as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing for any to perish but for all to come to repentance.*

1 John 2:2 *and He Himself is the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for those of the whole world.*

It is God's desire that every single person be saved...He did not just die for the sins of the believers (or "elect" / "chosen"), but for the whole world (meaning everyone) as indicated in I John 2:2. That's why He's convicting the world of sin, righteousness, and judgment in John 16:8-9. However, as we learned above (see #1), no one can come to the Father unless the Father draws them. John 12:32 tells us that **all** are being drawn unto Christ (John 12:32 "And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men to Myself."). John 1:9 tells us that "there was the true light which, coming into the world, enlightens every man." If the "drawing" of a person absolutely indicates their salvation, then we must conclude that all are saved, yet we know that all are not saved...therefore, there must be another element involved in salvation...Faith.

3. Salvation is by grace through faith alone

John 1:12 *But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in His name,*

John 3:16 *For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish, but have eternal life.*

John 3:36 *He who believes in the Son has eternal life; but he who does not obey the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him.*

Acts 4:4 *But many of those who had heard the message believed; and the number of the men came to be about five thousand.*

Romans 3:22 *even the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all those who believe; for there is no distinction;*

Romans 3:28 *For we maintain that a man is justified by faith apart from works of the Law.*

Romans 10:13 *for "WHOEVER WILL CALL UPON THE NAME OF THE LORD WILL BE SAVED."*

1 Corinthians 1:2 *to the church of God which is at Corinth, to those who have been sanctified in Christ Jesus, saints by calling, with all who in every place call upon the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, their Lord and ours:*

Galatians 2:16 *nevertheless knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the Law but through faith in Christ Jesus, even we have believed in*

Christ Jesus, that we may be justified by faith in Christ, and not by the works of the Law; since by the works of the Law shall no flesh be justified.

Ephesians 1:13 *In Him, you also, after listening to the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation-- having also believed, you were sealed in Him with the Holy Spirit of promise,*

Ephesians 2:8 *For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God;*

Ephesians 2:9 *not as a result of works, that no one should boast.*

Revelation 22:17 *And the Spirit and the bride say, "Come." And let the one who hears say, "Come." And let the one who is thirsty come; let the one who wishes take the water of life without cost.*

There are so many verses, this just scratches the surface. Salvation is dependence on Christ alone in His finished work at the cross. We don't promise to do something for Him (like commit my life, give up this, surrender that, etc.), we simply receive His grace in the person of Jesus Christ. What about this idea of making Christ "Lord and Master" in order to be saved? The idea of making Christ "Lord" of our lives is for the believer...it is a decision to be a disciple of Christ. In John 8:31, "Jesus therefore was saying to those Jews who had believed Him, 'If you abide in My word, then you are truly disciples of Mine'". Salvation is a choice to receive forgiveness and Eternal Life through the death, burial and resurrection of Christ; discipleship is a choice to surrender to Christ as Lord, Master and our very Life...they are not the same decision although they can be made simultaneously. One other question must be asked in the context of faith verses works...is faith a work if it is generated by man? No. Faith is simply a response to the grace of God. Remember, on our own we would never seek God, that's why the Father is drawing us...we simply respond.

4. Everyone has the ability to believe

John 1:12 *But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in His name,*

John 3:16 *For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish, but have eternal life.*

John 6:40 *"For this is the will of My Father, that everyone who beholds the Son and believes in Him, may have eternal life; and I Myself will raise him up on the last day."*

Romans 10:13 *for "WHOEVER WILL CALL UPON THE NAME OF THE LORD WILL BE SAVED."*

Many who hold to a strong predestination view suggest that one is unable to believe unless God chooses them for salvation. My question is, "Why would God command everyone to believe if some were unable to comply?"...that doesn't make sense. Faith is our decision of the will to believe God for salvation; it is our response to His calling.

5. God's grace can be resisted

Luke 10:16 *"The one who listens to you listens to Me, and the one who rejects you rejects Me; and he who rejects Me rejects the One who sent Me."*

John 12:48 *"He who rejects Me, and does not receive My sayings, has one who judges him; the word I spoke is what will judge him at the last day."*

Titus 2:11 *For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all men,*

Matthew 23:37 *O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, who kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to her! How often I wanted to gather your children together, the way a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, and you were unwilling.*

1 Thessalonians 5:19 *Do not quench the Spirit;*

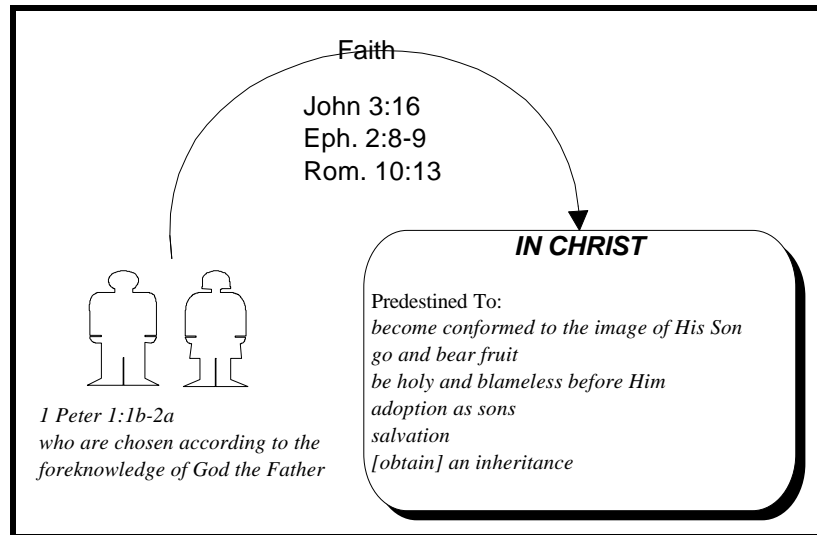
Acts 7:51 *You men who are stiff-necked and uncircumcised in heart and ears are always resisting the Holy Spirit; you are doing just as your fathers did.*

2 Timothy 3:8 *And just as Jannes and Jambres opposed Moses, so these men also oppose the truth, men of depraved mind, rejected as regards the faith.*

If God's grace was irresistible, everyone should be saved according to Titus 2:11. Also, if God's grace is irresistible and He desires all to be saved (see #2), what's the problem?...why isn't everyone saved? In fact, it would be absurd (to me) for God to desire all to be saved but only choose to save a few.

6. Biblical Predestination

Many folks focus on predestination of a “person” when often times in the New Testament (N.T.), that is not the case. The N.T. focus of predestination is often found in the context of “believers” who are predestined for a particular purpose (Ephesians 1:11 “having been predestined according to His purpose who works all things after the counsel of His will”). As believers in the Lord Jesus Christ, we are predestined and/or chosen for a number of things...for example, we are predestined/chosen to (look for **bold** type):



Romans 8:28-29

And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose.

*For whom He foreknew, He also predestined to **become conformed to the image of His Son**, that He might be the first-born among many brethren;*

John 15:16

*“You did not choose Me, but I chose you, and appointed you, that you should **go and bear fruit, and that your fruit should remain**, that whatever you ask of the Father in My name, He may give to you.”*

Ephesians 1:4-5

*just 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 **to adoption as sons** through Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the kind intention of His will,*

Ephesians 1:11

*also we have obtained **an inheritance**, having been predestined according to His purpose who works all things after the counsel of His will,*

God predestined the work of salvation before the world was ever formed:

1 Corinthians 2:7-8 *but we speak God's wisdom in a mystery, the hidden wisdom, which God predestined before the ages to our glory; the wisdom which none of the rulers of this age has understood; for if they had understood it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory; but just as it is written, "THINGS WHICH EYE HAS NOT SEEN AND EAR HAS NOT HEARD, AND which HAVE NOT ENTERED THE HEART OF MAN, ALL THAT GOD HAS PREPARED FOR THOSE WHO LOVE HIM."*

When the N.T. speaks of "persons" being chosen, what does that mean? Does God choose some for heaven and some for hell? With the scripture we have examined so far, I don't think so. Below are some verses that might provide some insight on how God "chooses" without contradicting what He has already revealed in His word.

Romans 8:29 *For whom He foreknew, He also predestined...*

Ephesians 1:4 *just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world...*

John 6:37 *"All that the Father gives Me shall come to Me, and the one who comes to Me I will certainly not cast out."*

John 6:39 *"And this is the will of Him who sent Me, that of all that He has given Me I lose nothing, but raise it up on the last day."*

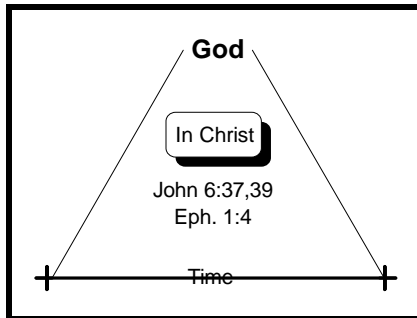
Colossians 3:12 *And so, as those who have been chosen of God, holy and beloved, put on a heart of compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience;*

2 Thessalonians 2:13 *But we should always give thanks to God for you, brethren beloved by the Lord, because God has chosen you from the beginning for salvation through sanctification by the Spirit and faith in the truth.*

2 Timothy 2:10 *For this reason I endure all things for the sake of those who are chosen, that they also may obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus and with it eternal glory.*

1 Peter 1:1-2

Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, to those who reside as aliens, scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia, who are chosen according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, by the sanctifying work of the Spirit, that you may obey Jesus Christ and be sprinkled with His blood: May grace and peace be yours in fullest measure.



God's "choosing" is linked to His foreknowledge; His foreknowledge is due to His not being limited by time. God is the great "I AM"; always present tense. He is above time as we understand it, viewing what we see as past, present and future all at the same moment. With this understanding, let's look at the above verses.

What is the gift that God the Father is giving God the Son in John 6:37,39 above? I believe the gift is all those who are "in Christ". We are chosen "in Him" (Ephesians 1:4) before the foundation of the world. Another interesting twist, according to John 6:37, is that all those the Father has given the Son "shall come to [Him]". But isn't that forcing them against their will? Of course not! Those whom God sees as "in Christ" through the end of time will, from our earthly perspective, eventually trust Christ as Savior by a choice of their will (just because God knows it will happen does not imply that he forced the issue). God sees from the beginning to the end of time all who will trust Christ...trusting Him is our response to His grace whereby we are translated (sanctification of the Spirit) from the kingdom of darkness to the kingdom of light or from "in Adam" to "in Christ." We are chosen "in Him"...that's the key. How do we get "in Him"? We respond to the Holy Spirit Who is drawing us (and the whole world) in faith, believing that Christ has paid our sin-debt in full and receive His free gift of eternal life. When we make that decision, we are placed "in Christ"; of course, from God's perspective, He saw me "in Christ" before I was ever born or, for that matter, before the world was ever created (Ephesians 1:4).

7. "But What About Romans 9-11?"

Romans 9-11 seem to be a sticking point for many believers. Let's look at these verses in their immediate context (Please follow along in your Bible as you go through this explanation). Paul begins in the first few verses sharing his heart for "kinsman." He wants to see them trust Christ, even if it means his separation from Christ (Romans 9:1-3). He then describes who the true "children of God" are in relation to Abraham's descendants (Romans 9:4-8). Paul then makes some interesting statements in Romans 9:10-29.

{10} And not only this, but there was Rebekah also, when she had conceived twins by one man, our father Isaac; {11} for though the twins were not yet born, and had not done anything good or bad, in order that God's purpose according to His choice might stand, not because of works, but because of Him who calls, {12} it

was said to her, "THE OLDER WILL SERVE THE YOUNGER." {13} Just as it is written, "JACOB I LOVED, BUT ESAU I HATED."

God made a choice before these twins were born that the older would serve the younger. God is sovereign; He can do what ever He desires (we have already seen that He desires all to be saved). But don't we have a free will? Yes we do... **a limited free will**. Our free will is limited to the boundaries God has sovereignly chosen (ex. choosing salvation). Of course, Paul anticipated the question, "What shall we say then? There is no injustice with God, is there? May it never be!" (Romans 9:14). He goes on to say that God can do whatever He chooses to do...He is God (Romans 9:15-17). Remember, He works for His purposes, not ours (Romans 5:17).

As we begin to focus on Romans 9:18-21, it must be in the context of what was just discussed.

{18} So then He has mercy on whom He desires, and He hardens whom He desires. {19} You will say to me then, "Why does He still find fault? For who resists His will?" {20} On the contrary, who are you, O man, who answers back to God? The thing molded will not say to the molder, "Why did you make me like this," will it? {21} Or does not the potter have a right over the clay, to make from the same lump one vessel for honorable use, and another for common use?

He does have mercy on who He desires and hardens who he desires according to His purpose (we already know what His desire is for the world in reference to salvation - see #2). I'm glad that Romans 11:32 shows us that "[He] has shut up all in disobedience that He might show mercy to all" in the context of salvation. God does not ask or need our permission to do anything.

Romans 9:24-29 transitions to the issue of Gentiles versus Israel in reference to salvation. The Lord has chosen to "CALL THOSE WHO WERE NOT MY PEOPLE, 'MY PEOPLE,' AND HER WHO WAS NOT BELOVED, 'BELOVED'" (Romans 9:25). In light of this fact, Paul asks an interesting question in verses 30-33. How did the Gentiles attain righteousness who didn't pursue it and Israel, who pursued it by Law never attain it? The answer is in verse 32. Israel did not pursue it by faith! They stumbled over the law and did not receive Christ by faith. It is not that God said "You cannot be saved...I choose the Gentiles" but rather "You would not believe and therefore could not be saved."

Paul continues (Romans 10:1-13) this line of thinking sharing his personal desire for Israel to be saved. He explains their stumbling at the law and how "Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes" (Romans 10:4). He continues pounding at the heart of the matter...their willingness to believe. He tells them that "whoever believes in Him," "all who call upon Him," and "whoever will call upon the name of the Lord will be saved" (Romans 10:11-13). That's the key.

Since "faith comes from hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ" (Romans 10:17), the question is raised "surely they have never heard, have they?" (Romans 10:18). Yes they have, but they have rejected the Savior (Romans 10:18-21).

So I guess God has rejected Israel since they rejected Him, right? Oh no, Romans 11 assures us that God has not rejected Israel (Romans 11:1). God foreknew exactly what was going to happen

(Romans 11:2) and He sovereignly kept a remnant safe “in the same way” (Romans 11:5a) he protected 7,000 men who had not bowed down to Baal along with Elijah. God is in control. Just like Israel followed after idols (except for the 7,000), Israel has followed after the idol of the Law, misunderstanding its purpose, but God has protected a remnant who have accepted Christ and attained righteousness. Israel is seeking for righteousness the wrong way (by Law), but only the chosen (according to His foreknowledge) attained it “in Christ”; the rest were hardened (Romans 11:6-10). Hardened? Yes, referring specifically to Israel here, the Lord hardened their hearts even more than what they originally chosen in rejecting Christ. Does this mean God made it impossible for any of them to believe. Of course not. They already made that choice. Remember, God longs for all to accept Christ and He knows who will make that decision...period. He knew they would not accept Christ and hardened their hearts even more to work on the Gentiles and in turn, make them jealous and hopefully see more of Israel saved (Romans 11:8-15). To illustrate, Paul uses the example of the olive tree (Romans 11:16-24). Israel was “broken off” and the Gentiles were “grafted in” (Romans 11:17). Why was Israel broken off? Romans 11:20-23 answers

{20} Quite right, they were broken off for their unbelief, but you stand by your faith. Do not be conceited, but fear; {21} for if God did not spare the natural branches, neither will He spare you. {22} Behold then the kindness and severity of God; to those who fell, severity, but to you, God's kindness, if you continue in His kindness; otherwise you also will be cut off. {23} And they also, if they do not continue in their unbelief, will be grafted in; for God is able to graft them in again.

What is the major issue here? Whether or not they believe. If they believe, they are grafted back in to the tree. The Lord is very clear. The issue is our decision to believe the claims of Christ and receive Him for salvation. Romans 11:30-32:

*{30} For just as you once were disobedient to God, but now have been shown mercy because of their disobedience, {31} so these also now have been disobedient, in order that because of the mercy shown to you they also may now be shown mercy. {32} **For God has shut up all in disobedience that He might show mercy to all.***