

## **Question: "In what way does the Scripture teach the predestination of man?"**

The subject of **predestination**, to many people, is couched in mysticism. Some religious people maintain such a radical view of predestination that they have all but eliminated the will and role of man when stressing the sovereignty of God. They confuse and equate Divine *foreknowledge* and *foreordination*.

*Foreknowledge* is simply "knowing something beforehand." To *foreordain* is to predestinate, or to mark out beforehand. The subtle difference between the words is between "knowing" and "planning." Indeed, *predestination* is a Biblical subject: Paul said to the saints in Rome, "For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son..." (Ro 8:29). He also stated to the Christians in Ephesus, "just as He chose us in Him (Christ, *bj*) before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love, having predestined us to adoption as sons by Jesus Christ..." (Ep 1:4-5).

### **Predestination as taught by man:**

"God hath decreed in himself from all eternity by the most wise and holy counsel of his own will freely and unchangeable, all things whatsoever come to pass," writes man (Philadelphia Confession of Faith, ch. 6, para. 2-4). Calvinism teaches that man is so depraved that he cannot accept God's grace without a special, irresistible working of the Holy Spirit, independent of man's will. In this vein, some teach that God decided who would be saved and who would be lost before He created all things.

### **Predestination as taught in the Bible:**

The scriptures teach the *foreknowledge* of God. God is able to "declare the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done..." (Isa 46:10). Since God's scheme of redemption was planned from before His creation, it is obvious that He knew man would sin and need forgiveness (I Pe 1:20, Ep 1:4-5, cf. Mt 25:34, Re 13:8, 17: 8). Although God knew man would sin, He did not cause this to happen. As free moral agents, men have elected or chosen to sin from the beginning (Gen 3). Man's will is also involved in salvation (Jn 3:16, Mt 11:28-30). Nevertheless, God had *foreknowledge* before the gospel was preached to individuals that some would accept it (Acts 18:9-11). Therefore, some were "ordained to eternal life" because God knew they would obey the gospel when they did hear it (Acts 13:48). This is God's *foreknowledge* of earthly events.

The scriptures also teach that God *predestinated* those whom He *foreknew* "to be conformed to the image of His Son," and to be "holy and without blame" adopted sons of God. In short, God *foreknew* that people would answer the call of the gospel to be saved, and He *predestined* them to be Christ-like. *Predestination*, in this sense, implies the power of the Holy Spirit, through the gospel message, to change man's nature from carnal to spiritual – to be like Jesus (Ro 8:29).

Biblical *predestination* speaks of God's power to change man's spiritual state. And God's *foreknowledge* is indicative of His great love for the soul of man. Study your Bible and search the Truth. Write us today for a free Bible correspondence course by mail. Thanks for reading!