

SUMMARY: A doctrine cannot be true if it violates the free moral agency of man, his free will to believe or not to believe in God and Jesus and be judged for his actions. Contemporary understanding of the word predestination is that people are irrevocably called to salvation before birth and will go to Heaven irrespective of the "quality" of their earthly life. This understanding conflicts with other scriptures.

CONTEMPORARY DEFINITIONS

PREDESTINATION: That a person's eternal destiny is determined by God before the person is born and is irrevocable irrespective of the goodness or badness of the earthly life he lives.

FREE MORAL AGENCY: The concept that a person is free to make moral choices in this life and that the person's eternal fate is conditional upon the choices which the person makes. The term "free moral agency" is not found in the Bible.

DISCUSSION:

Before reading this lesson, the reader should review the verses included on the third page.

The Bible clearly teaches the concept of free moral agency and predestination as the verses in this lesson indicate. Our understanding of the scriptures cannot be that we choose which verses to believe, our understanding must take all scriptures into account. God is not the author of the confusion which would (and does) result by different groups choosing which verses to accept in their teachings. (I Cor. 14:33)

FACTS:

The following are facts which are easy to document in the New Testament, and are documented in the attached verses:

1. Predestination is a scriptural concept
2. All are called to repentance.
3. Jesus died for us all, not just a select few.
4. God's calling is irrevocable.
5. We are able to fall from grace, so our calling is not irrevocable in some sense.

WHAT DOES THE WORD PREDESTINATION MEAN?

As we stated before the contemporary understanding of the word predestination is that a person's eternal destiny is determined by God before the person is born and is irrevocable irrespective of the goodness or badness of the earthly life he lives. Contemporary usage of the word "baptism" means a variety of acts from immersion to sprinkling of babies with a few

drops of water. Scholars universally accept that the word "baptism" in the first century meant immersion, so scriptural baptism would be by the example of immersion. Has the word "predestination" undergone a similar change?

Let us suggest alternate meanings of the word predestination:

1. That a person's eternal destiny is determined by God before the person is born and is irrevocable irrespective of the goodness or badness of the earthly life he lives.
2. All are predestined to be called (invited), there is room for all in Heaven, but you must accept the invitation to be saved.

Clearly the first definition of predestination conflicts with the need for a universal call to repentance, the need for Jesus to die for all, and the ability of Christians to fall from grace. The definition must be modified in some way to make it compatible with the remainder of the scriptures.

The second definition basically teaches that the calling is predestined and that Jesus would die for our sins was predestined from the beginning of time. That definition would be in harmony with the other scriptures, although a new discussion arises as to how all are called. It is a whole different discussion, however, Romans 1:18-20 and Romans 2:14 indicate that God's creation teaches about God and all have a chance to believe in God. Each will be judged based upon his response to whatever opportunity he or she has.

Where did the contemporary definition of predestination come from? It appears to be basically originated and/or promoted by John Calvin in the 16th century during the Protestant Reformation. John Calvin and others did wonders in breaking away from the Catholicism which had gripped the world for several centuries. In some cases in situation such as he faced, some new doctrines become reactions to Catholicism, rather than a return to pure New Testament Christianity. Predestination to salvation rather than predestination to the call to salvation appears to be one of these situations.

VERSES WHICH SUPPORT PREDESTINATION

1. Romans 8:28-30 "whom He predestined, these He also called;..justified..glorified" (past tense?)
2. Romans 11:29 "for the gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable."
3. Ephesians 1:4-5 "He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world....He predestined us to adoption...."
4. Ephesians 1:11 "having been predestined according to His purpose...."

VERSES INDICATING THAT ONLY A PORTION ARE CALLED

1. John 6:37: "All that the Father gives to Me shall come to Me; and the one who comes to Me I will certainly not cast out."
2. Matt 22:14 "For many are called, but few are chosen."

VERSES INDICATING THAT JESUS DIED FOR ALL

1. Romans 8:32 "but delivered Him up for us all,"
2. Hebrews 2:9 "...that He might taste of death for every one."

VERSES INDICATING THAT ALL ARE CALLED

1. Matthew 28:19 "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations,"
2. Mark 16:15-16 "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to all creation."
3. Acts 2:38 "let each of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of sins...." (to a large audience)
4. Romans 10:9 "if you confess with your mouth....you shall be saved"
5. Romans 10:21 "All the day long I have stretched out my hands to a disobedient and obstinate people." God offered, people refused (could not be predestined according to current definition of the word or the people wouldn't have the option to refuse.)

VERSES INDICATING THAT SALVATION IS CONDITIONAL ON YOUR ACTIONS

1. Mark 16:15-16 "He who has believed and has been baptized shall be saved;"
2. Acts 2:38 "let each of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of sins...."

VERSES INDICATING THAT YOU CAN FALL FROM GRACE (A SAVED STATE)

1. Matthew 13:41 "and they will gather out of His kingdom all stumbling blocks...."
2. I Cor. 9:27 "I buffet my body....lest possibly, after I have preached to others, I myself should be disqualified." (Paul himself was concerned about going to Hell.)
3. I Cor. 10:12 "Therefore let him who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall." (You cannot fall from salvation if you are not there.)
4. Gal. 5:4 "you have fallen from grace."
5. I Tim. 4:1 "some will fall away from the faith,"
6. Hebrews 4:12 "in falling away from the living God."

TOPICAL STUDIES

PREDESTINATION VS FREE MORAL AGENCY



7. James 5:19-20 "in any among you strays from the truth, and one turns him back, let him know that he who turns a sinner from the error of his way will save his soul from death, and will cover a multitude of sins."
8. II Peter 2:20-22 "escaped the defilements of the world by the knowledge of the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, they are again entangled...."

Surely the word predestination in the Bible means something other than the conventional understanding of irrevocable calling.