

CHAPTER SIX

Predestination

The shortcomings of traditional teachings concerning Predestination have been the cause of confusion among theologians as well as among many religious and conscientious people. Predestination, in its broader sense, is a teaching that all things and events are predetermined by God toward the fulfillment of his eternal purpose. In its narrower sense, the doctrine of Predestination teaches that man's salvation or damnation is preordained solely by God and is not determined by man's own efforts.

The various theories of Predestination find their primary basis in the New Testament, especially in Chapters 8, 9, and 11 of St. Paul's letter to the Romans. In those chapters, Paul puts great emphasis on grace as the sole basis of salvation and election by God. Other passages in the Bible can also be interpreted as showing that all aspects of man's life are predestined by God, that man's personal happiness and misery and fortune and misfortune, as well as the rise and fall of nations, are all predestined by God.

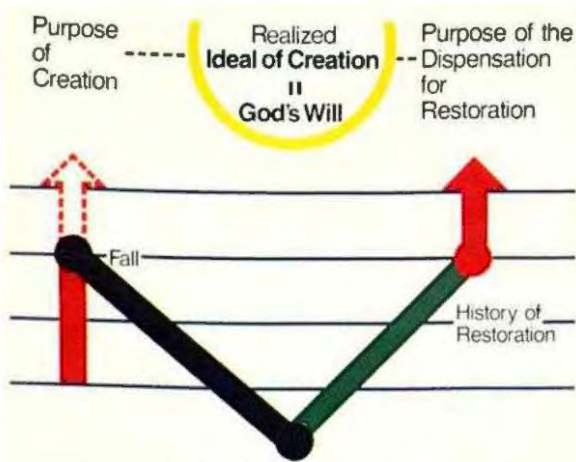
On the other hand, there are many passages that contradict this view. For example, when we see that God commanded the first man and woman not to eat of the Fruit of the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil (Gen 2:17), it is evident that man's fall was not predestined by God, but rather was the result of man's disobedience. Jesus said " . . . God so loved the world he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life' " (Jn 3:16). By using the word 'whoever', Jesus shows that salvation is open to everyone, and therefore no one could be predestined for damnation. In Matthew 7:7 Jesus says, " 'Ask, and it will be given you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. For *everyone* who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened' " (emphasis added), clearly

Bible Passages Which Appear to Support the Theory of Absolute Predestination

Romans 8: 29-30	Romans 9:15-16
Romans 9:10-13	Romans 9:21

Bible Passages which Contradict the Theory of Absolute Predestination

Genesis 2:17	Ezekial 33:11
John 3:16	Jonah 3:10
Matthew 7:7-8	Mark 5:34
Genesis 6:5-7	James 5:14-15
I Samuel 15:11	

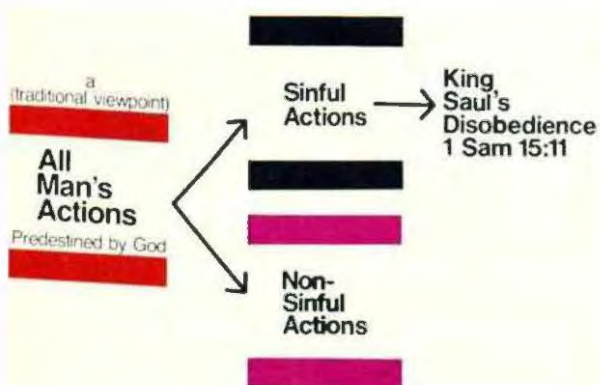


God : Good

God's Purpose of
Creation : Good

Purpose of the Dispensation
for Restoration : Good

Predestination : Only
Good



showing that human effort plays a decisive role in shaping events, that life is not determined solely by divine predestination.

If we were to accept unconditionally the traditional teachings of absolute predestination, then prayer, evangelism, charity, and all other human effort would be of no value in God's Dispensation for Restoration. After all, if everything is absolutely predestined by God, then human effort cannot possibly alter the preordained course of life. Now let us answer these questions concerning predestination based on The Principle.

I. THE PREDESTINATION OF GOD'S WILL

God's Will is to fulfill his Ideal for the Creation. As a result of man's fall, God's Will has remained unfulfilled, and God has had to work to accomplish this same Will by an alternate means: the Dispensation for Restoration. Since God is good, his original Purpose for the Creation is good. God could not possibly have predestined anything that would contradict his own Will. In this light, we can see that God could not have predestined such things as the Fall of man, sin, and the judgment and punishment of man.

If God had predestined man's fall, then why would he look at fallen man and say that he was sorry he had made man (Gen 6:5,6)? If all of man's actions are predestined by God, then whenever man sins or is disobedient to God, these actions must also be the result of God's predestination. And if all sins and acts of disobedience to God are predestined by God, then why would God have been displeased in the case of King Saul's disobedience, and why would he regret having made Saul king (I Sam 15:11)? Neither man's fall nor King Saul's faithlessness were predestined by God; they were the result of man's failure to fulfill his responsibility. Nor did God originally predestine the judgment and punishment of fallen man. God has no desire to see man suffer, as evidenced in the following verses: " 'Say to them, As I live, says the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his way and live; turn back, turn back from your evil ways; for why will you die, O House of Israel?' " (Ezek 33:11). Thus, when the people of Nineveh turned from their path of evil and repented of their sins, God did not fulfill his prophecy that their city would be overthrown (Jon 3:10), for as God said in Ezekiel 33:14,15, " '... though I say to the wicked, "You shall surely die," yet if he turns from his sin and does what is lawful and right, if the wicked restores the pledge, gives back what he has taken by robbery, and walks in

the statutes of life, committing no iniquity; he shall surely live, he shall not die.' ”

Then, to what extent has God predestined his Will, namely, his Purpose for the Creation and the purpose of the Dispensation for Restoration? God is absolute, eternal, and unchanging; God’s Purpose must also be absolute, eternal, and unchanging. Therefore his Will, which is to fulfill the Purpose of the Creation and the purpose of the Dispensation for Restoration, must also be absolute, eternal, and unchanging (Is 46:11). Since God’s Will is absolute and unchanging, if a person chosen by God fails to fulfill his responsibility, God goes on to fulfill His Will by selecting another person as his replacement.

II. GOD’S PREDESTINATION OF THE ACCOMPLISHMENT OF HIS WILL

As explained in “The Principle of the Creation,” the Purpose of the Creation is fulfilled only when man fulfills his responsibility, which is to live in accordance with God’s commandments. God’s will for the Dispensation for Restoration, which is to fulfill his Purpose for the Creation, is absolute, and is therefore beyond human influence. Nevertheless, the fulfillment of his Will depends on man’s fulfilling his responsibility. Then to what degree does God predestine the fulfillment of his Will? God’s Will is absolute, but the realization of his Will depends upon man’s fulfilling his responsibility. God predestines that his Will is to be accomplished—but only through the accomplishment of both God’s responsibility *and* that of the *central person*. We can say that man’s responsibility is “5 percent” and God’s is “95 percent” as a means of indicating that man’s responsibility in fulfilling God’s Will is very small compared with God’s. However, in order to accomplish this “5 percent,” man must put forth his 100 percent effort.

Thus, God predestined that his Will was to be fulfilled when Adam and Eve fulfilled their responsibility not to eat of the Fruit of the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil (Gen 2:17). In the dispensation for salvation through Jesus, God predestined that fallen man would fulfill his responsibility when he believed in Jesus as the Messiah and followed him (Jn 3:16, Mt 19:21). Yet man has rarely carried out his small portion of responsibility, and this has caused the fulfillment of God’s Dispensation for Restoration to be delayed again and again.

As the following Bible passages show, even in our day-to-day life we receive God’s saving grace only when we do our part: “. . . the prayer of faith will save the sick man. . . .” (Jas 5:15); “. . . your faith has made you well. . . .” (Mk 5:34); “For everyone who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and

- God ● Eternal, Unchanging, Absolute
- God's Purpose ● Eternal, Unchanging, Absolute
- God's Will ● To Fulfill the Purpose of Creation and the Purpose of the Dispensation for Restoration
- ● God's Will ● Eternal, Unchanging, Absolute

Accomplishment of God's Will



Accomplishment of Man's Responsibility



Accomplishment of God's Responsibility



Man's Part of the Total Responsibility for the Fulfillment of God's Will

to him who knocks it will be opened' " (Mt 7:8). Clearly, God predestines that his grace can be received only when man accomplishes his responsibility.

III. GOD'S PREDESTINATION OF THE CENTRAL PERSON

In order for God's Will to be fulfilled, God must select someone to fulfill man's responsibility (as will be explained in "Overview of the Principles of the Dispensation for Restoration"). However, the person chosen by God may either fulfill his responsibility or fail to fulfill it. Thus, God does not predestine that a person will fulfill the role (mission) that God desires him to have. Then, does God predestine man at all, and if so, to what degree?

Yes, God does predestine man. When God predestines someone for a mission, he predestines that person "95 percent." In other words, he predestines a person to the extent that when that person carries out his "5 percent" portion of responsibility, he is fully able to carry out the mission for which he was chosen. Should a person fail to fulfill his responsibility, he cannot become the person that God wanted him to be, nor can God's will to fulfill things through him be realized.

For example, on the foundation of God's "95 percent preparation," God predestined that Adam and Eve become the True Ancestors on the condition that they fully carry out their responsibility. However, because of their failure to do so, God's Will was not fulfilled. As a result of this failure, it became necessary for God to send the Messiah as the True Father for mankind. God also predestined that Judas Iscariot be Jesus' apostle on the condition that he carry out his responsibility by being loyal to Jesus. However, when Judas betrayed Jesus, God's will remained unfulfilled, and God replaced Judas with Matthias (Acts 1:15-26).

Next, let us examine the factors which qualify a person to be chosen by God as the central person in the Dispensation for Restoration.

First, the person must have been born of the central nation, the nation chosen to carry out the Dispensation for Restoration. This is because the chosen people are closest to God in heart.

Second, that person must be descended from ancestors who have a history of righteousness. It is natural that for the fulfillment of the Dispensation for Restoration God would choose those who have a long line of distinguished ancestors who have accumulated merit through their sacrifice and service for the good of their fellow men.

Third, that person must be endowed with a natural dis-

Qualifications for Being a Central Person in God's Dispensation for Restoration

- 1** Chosen Nation
- 2** Good Ancestors
- 3** Appropriate Disposition
- 4** Necessary Experience
- 5** Right Time and Place

position suited to the mission in question.

Fourth, that person must have acquired the proper education, training, and experience necessary to accomplish the mission.

Fifth, that person must have been born at the right time and place to carry out God's Will.

However, even though a person may have all of these qualifications *and* be predestined by God for a particular mission, whether or not he fulfills that mission is not predestined by God. Attaining and maintaining his role is determined by his fulfilling his responsibility.

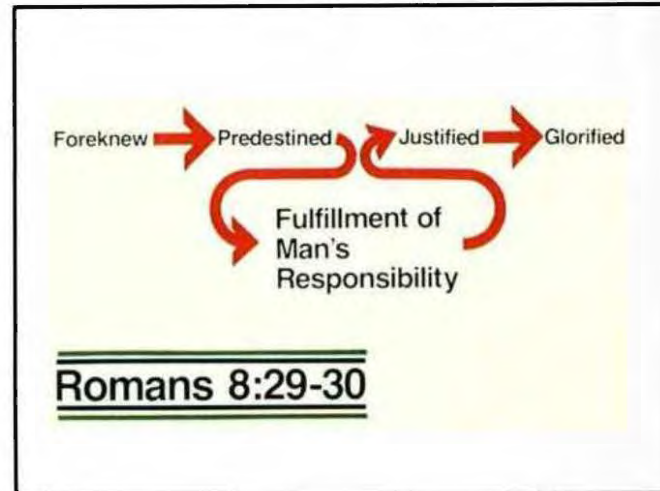
IV. CLARIFICATION OF BIBLICAL PASSAGES WHICH APPEAR TO SUPPORT THE DOCTRINE OF ABSOLUTE PREDESTINATION

How are we to interpret those Bible passages which appear to show that man's election and salvation are strictly predestined? For instance, how are we to understand Romans 8:29,30: "For those whom he foreknew he also predestined. . . . and those whom he predestined he also called; and those whom he called he also justified; and those whom he justified he also glorified."?

Since God is omniscient, he knows who is qualified to be chosen as the central person in the Dispensation for Restoration. For the fulfillment of the Dispensation for Restoration, God predestines and calls a person. However, the person called is not predestined to be justified and glorified automatically. In order to be justified, he must fulfill his responsibility. Only after he is thus justified can he enjoy glory from God. This passage from Romans appears to support the view of absolute predestination only because in this case the Bible does not specifically mention man's responsibility.

Romans 9:15,16 says, "I will have mercy on whom I have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I have compassion." So it depends not upon man's will or exertion, but upon God's mercy." This passage seems to show that man's desires, hopes, prayers, and efforts are to no avail and that man must depend solely upon God's grace. However, let us look more deeply into this.

Based on his foreknowledge, God alone chooses the person best suited for the fulfillment of the Dispensation for Restoration, and man's will or exertion cannot affect those decisions by God. For example, no one can decide to be born of a particular nation, or as a descendant of a particular family; no one can decide where or when he will be born; no one can



decide that he will be born with particular abilities; nor can anyone decide any other matters of this nature. However, once a person is chosen, that person's desires, hopes, prayers, and efforts determine whether God can actually use him. The purpose of these Bible passages is to emphasize the power and grace of God, to emphasize that God's criteria for election and what he decides to do with man are not man's concern; its purpose is not to deny the role of man's responsibility.

Romans 9:21 says, "Has the potter no right over the clay, to make out of the same lump one vessel for beauty and another for menial use?" Man, as a creation of God, should not protest the Will of his Creator under any circumstance. Therefore, fallen man, who has become devoid of value, is certainly in no position to complain about any treatment by God, who is the very source of his salvation.

In Romans 9:10-13 we read that God loved Jacob and hated Esau, even while they were in their mother's womb, and that Esau, the elder, was to serve his younger brother, Jacob. As will be explained in greater detail in "Abraham's Family in the Dispensation for Restoration," God was working a special will through these brothers. The fact that Jacob was "loved" by God does not mean that he could receive God's grace unconditionally. In order to actually receive God's love, he had to accomplish his responsibility. Even though Esau was "hated" by God (for a special dispensational reason, which will be explained later), if he had accomplished his responsibility, he too would have received the blessing of God's love.

Belief in absolute predestination results from a lack of understanding concerning the relationship between man's responsibility and God's responsibility in fulfilling God's Will for the Dispensation for Restoration. This misunderstanding has led to the belief that God's Will is realized by God's action alone and to the failure to appreciate the vast importance of man's responsibility.