

We Are Predestined! . . .?

An age long discussion has been whether God has called us, before we were born, to be Christians. In our history men such as Augustine (354-430 A.D.) and John Calvin (1509-1564) have developed the teaching that God predestines His select few and rejects all others. Passages such as (Romans 8:28,29) and (Ephesians 1:4,5) have been cited as proof texts for the doctrine of election. Are God's elect foreordained by His choice, or has God given a plan of redemption that is designed for the potential of salvation for all men? As in all things let us allow the Scriptures to decide.

All Men Need Salvation.

Since sin came into the world man has needed an avenue through which he could return to God. All men are affected by sin's devastation. "For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God," (Romans 3:23). All men deserve to die through their sinfulness. "For the wages of sin is death. . ." (Romans 6:23a). Man's number one cause of spiritual fatality is sin. All men need something that can relieve them of this problem.

What is man's relief? Jesus Christ. Jesus has provided a way for man to have peace with God (see Rom. 5:1). He has removed the barrier that keeps all men from being eternally separated from God. "In whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins," (Colossians 1:14), "and through Him to reconcile to Himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, making peace by the blood of his cross," (Colossians 1:20).

God's Attitude Toward All The Guilty

God wants all men to be saved. "This is good, and it is pleasing in the sight of God our Savior, who desires all people to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth," 1 Timothy 2:3,4. God's plan of redemption was to provide salvation for all men through Jesus Christ. "My little children, I am writing these things to you so that you may not sin. But if anyone does sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous. He is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the sins of the whole world," (1 John 2:1,2). Jesus appeased the wrath of God in His sacrifice at Calvary on behalf of everyone.

Finally Peter sums up the mind of God toward the salvation of all men by saying, "The Lord is not slow to fulfill His promise as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing that any should perish, but that all should reach repentance," (2 Peter 3:9). It is plain to see how God feels toward all men about salvation.

Who Are The Foreordained And Predestined Of God?

Though salvation has been offered through Christ it has never been an avenue through which God forced anyone to be saved. Man's free moral agency gives him the right to accept or reject God. Salvation is offered to all men who choose to partake of it. An unwilling person will never be saved. Salvation is for the obedient.

"Truly, truly, I say to you, if anyone keeps my word, he will never see death," (John 8:51). Jesus is saying that if any man should choose to keep the will of God he will avoid eternal death. "But he said, "Blessed rather are those who hear the word of God and keep it!" (Luke 11:28). Here Jesus emphasizes that all men who hear the word of God and keep it are men who are blessed. Once again Peter sums up the responsibility of every man by saying, "Therefore, brothers, be all the more diligent to make your calling

and election sure, for if you practice these qualities you will never fall," (2 Peter 1:10). Making one's calling and election sure depends on the person doing certain things.

Who then are the foreordained and predestined of God? Simply, all those who choose of themselves to follow God. Those who decide to follow Jesus and accept His salvation. On one occasion Jesus said, "Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest," (Matthew 11:28). Though Christ commanded all to come to Him, only those who chose to come to Him received the rest that He offered.

We need not be afraid of the doctrines of men, but be willing to confront them with the Word of God. We need never be afraid of any passage that our religious friends use to uphold their doctrines. All Scripture is inspired of God, and given the use of proper rules of interpretation, truth can be obtained and defended.

-Scott