

What Does the Bible Teach About Predestination?

Are we locked into a life plan developed by the foreknowledge of God, or are we free to make spiritual choices that will impact our lives and our eternal future?

Conclusion

Bible References To Election And Predestination

- People are elect according to the will of God.
 - Eph. 1:5, 11 - We are predestined according to His will or purpose. (Rom. 8:28; 2Tim. 1:9; 1Cor. 2:7)
- Calvinists assume God wills to elect or choose each individual unconditionally. But where is the scripture that states this?
- The will of God regarding our salvation is revealed in the Scriptures. It is God's will to offer salvation to all, and then to let each individual choose whether he will respond.

Bible References To Election And Predestination

- People are elect in Christ - Eph. 1:4 - God chose us “in Him” (Christ).
- But how does an individual come into Christ?
- We are baptized into Christ - Gal. 3:26-27; Rom. 6:3-4.
- Again, salvation is conditional.

Bible References To Election And Predestination

- People are elect in Christ's spiritual body, the church.
- Eph. 1:3-14 - Clearly the church is the elect, those destined to be saved.
- But how does one enter the church?
- By meeting the conditions established by God.
1Cor. 12:13; Acts 2:38, 41, 47

Bible References To Election And Predestination

- From eternity, God knew there would be people willing to obey Him.
- He purposed to establish the church (Eph. 3:10-11) as the body that would contain all saved people (5:23-25).
- These would be His special people, the elect (1:3-14).
- He decreed this body be destined for eternal glory (1:3-14).
- However, each individual has been given by God the power to choose to meet the conditions to enter that body or not.
- Once in the body, each has the power to continue faithful and receive the reward or to fall away and be lost (these will be removed from the body before it enters glory) - Matt. 13:41-43; Rev. 17:14; 2Peter 1:10.

Bible References To Election And Predestination

- The New Testament unquestionably refers to election and predestination.
- Calvinists often quote these passages as though the mere mention of the words proves their particular interpretation of predestination.
- We all agree that God has chosen (elected) certain people, and that the elect have been foreordained to eternal life. The question is: What does God mean when He uses these words in His book?

Bible References To Election And Predestination

- The Bible doctrine of predestination teaches that God has chosen the body of obedient believers to be saved, but each individual has the power to choose whether or not to be in that body.
- God's elect is just another name for the faithful members of the church. God predestined the faithful obedient to be saved, but each individual decides whether or not he will be among the faithful obedient.

God Does Not Fore-Ordinate The Future Of Any Person

- It has been established from the scriptures that God does not fore-ordinate the eternal destination of anyone, but that He has granted to humankind the choice to accept or reject His grace.
- If God does not choose for us in the vital matter of salvation, then also He does not choose for us in lesser matters of life.

God Does Not Fore-Ordinate The Future Of Any Person

- We want to believe that we are victims of the circumstances of an inevitable and inexorable plan that we are incapable of resisting, tossed about like a leaf driven by powerful winds.
- It helps us to explain and bear with the unfair nature of life under the sun in a fallen world.
- While we may not have power over the circumstances of our lives, we have always had the power to choose how we will react to and what we will do with those circumstances.

God Does Not Fore-Ordinate The Future Of Any Person

- Isa. 10:5-7 - “Woe to Assyria, the rod of My anger And the staff in whose hand is My indignation. 6 I will send him against an ungodly nation, And against the people of My wrath I will give him charge, To seize the spoil, to take the prey, And to tread them down like the mire of the streets. 7 Yet he does not mean so, Nor does his heart think so; But it is in his heart to destroy, And cut off not a few nations.”
- Isa. 66:3 - “He who kills a bull is as if he slays a man; He who sacrifices a lamb, as if he breaks a dog’s neck; He who offers a grain offering, as if he offers swine’s blood; He who burns incense, as if he blesses an idol. Just as they have chosen their own ways, And their soul delights in their abominations.”

God Does Not Fore-Ordinate The Future Of Any Person

- 2Sam. 24:12 - “Go and tell David, ‘Thus says the LORD: I offer you three things; choose one of them for yourself, that I may do it to you.’”
- Phil. 1:21-26 - “For to me, to live is Christ, and to die is gain. 22 But if I live on in the flesh, this will mean fruit from my labor; yet what I shall choose I cannot tell. 23 For I am hard pressed between the two, having a desire to depart and be with Christ, which is far better. 24 Nevertheless to remain in the flesh is more needful for you. 25 And being confident of this, I know that I shall remain and continue with you all for your progress and joy of faith, 26 that your rejoicing for me may be more abundant in Jesus Christ by my coming to you again.”

God Does Not Fore-Ordinate The Future Of Any Person

- 1Sam. 8:18 - “And you will cry out in that day because of your king whom you have chosen for yourselves, and the LORD will not hear you in that day.”
- 1Sam. 12:13 - “Now therefore, here is the king whom you have chosen and whom you have desired. And take note, the LORD has set a king over you.”
- Psalm 119:30, 173 - “I have chosen the way of truth; Your judgments I have laid before me... 173 Let Your hand become my help, For I have chosen Your precepts.”
- Prov. 22:1 - “A good name is to be chosen rather than great riches, Loving favor rather than silver and gold.”

God Does Not Fore-Ordinate The Future Of Any Person

- 1Kings 18:21 - “And Elijah came to all the people, and said, ‘How long will you falter between two opinions? If the LORD is God, follow Him; but if Baal, follow him.’ But the people answered him not a word.”
- Joshua 24:22 - “So Joshua said to the people, ‘You are witnesses against yourselves that you have chosen the LORD for yourselves, to serve Him.’ And they said, ‘We are witnesses!’”
- Acts 9:4-6 - “Then he fell to the ground, and heard a voice saying to him, ‘Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me?’ 5 And he said, ‘Who are You, Lord?’ Then the Lord said, ‘I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting. It is hard for you to kick against the goads.’ 6 So he, trembling and astonished, said, ‘Lord, what do You want me to do?’ Then the Lord said to him, ‘Arise and go into the city, and you will be told what you must do.’”

“Does God Know Everything I Am Going To Do Before I Do It?”

- God does not force people against their will to be good or bad, but He can foreknow what choices they will make.
- Judas was already evil before He betrayed Jesus - John 12:6.
- Pharaoh was evil before God hardened his heart - Ex. 8:15, 32, 9:12
- God did not make these men evil. He simply foreknew what choice they would make; then, He used them accordingly.

“Does God Know Everything I Am Going To Do Before I Do It?”

- If foreknowing and prophesying a thing means that God decreed it must be so such that men have no choice, then since the men sinned, it must be that God decreed them to commit sin.
- This violates His righteous character.
 - James 1:13 - “Let no one say when he is tempted, ‘I am tempted by God’; for God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does He Himself tempt anyone.”

“Does God Know Everything I Am Going To Do Before I Do It?”

- Jesus’ death was also foreknown and prophesied.
 - Isa. 53; John 3:14; 12:27; Matt. 16:21
- Nevertheless, Matthew 26:53 shows that Jesus had the power to stop it. He had a choice in spite of the fact the matter had been prophesied.
 - Matt. 26:53 - “Or do you think that I cannot now pray to My Father, and He will provide Me with more than twelve legions of angels?”

“Does God Know Everything I Am Going To Do Before I Do It?”

- God foreordained that Jesus would die.
 - 1Peter 1:20; Acts 2:23, 4:28; Luke 22:22
- This involved sins committed by those who killed Him.
- If this means it was decreed so that men had no choice, then again God decreed that men must commit sin.

“Does God Know Everything I Am Going To Do Before I Do It?”

- Though God foreknew what some would do, that does not prove that He foreknows all the acts of everyone.
- God has power to foreknow all things, but at times He chooses not to exercise that power. His power to foreknow is based on His power to do all things. But He does not do everything He has power to do.
- I may have the power to carry a 100 lb. feed sack on my back, but I choose not to exercise that power.
- God may choose to know your future, but you must prove that He always chooses to exercise that power, because scriptures do not.

“Does God Know Everything I Am Going To Do Before I Do It?”

- Gen. 11:5-6 - “But the LORD came down to see the city and the tower which the sons of men had built. 6 And the LORD said, ‘Indeed the people are one and they all have one language, and this is what they begin to do; now nothing that they propose to do will be withheld from them.’”
- Gen. 18:20-21 - “And the LORD said, ‘Because the outcry against Sodom and Gomorrah is great, and because their sin is very grave, 21 I will go down now and see whether they have done altogether according to the outcry against it that has come to Me; and if not, I will know.’”
- Gen. 22:12 - “And He said, ‘Do not lay your hand on the lad, or do anything to him; for now I know that you fear God, since you have not withheld your son, your only son, from Me.’”

“Does God Know Everything I Am Going To Do Before I Do It?”

- 2Kings 19:16, 20, 28 - “Incline Your ear, O LORD, and hear; open Your eyes, O LORD, and see; and hear the words of Sennacherib, which he has sent to reproach the living God... 20 Then Isaiah the son of Amoz sent to Hezekiah, saying, ‘Thus says the LORD God of Israel: Because you have prayed to Me against Sennacherib king of Assyria, I have heard...’ 28 ‘Because your rage against Me and your tumult Have come up to My ears, Therefore I will put My hook in your nose And My bridle in your lips, And I will turn you back By the way which you came.’”
- Psalm 14:2 - “The LORD looks down from heaven upon the children of men, To see if there are any who understand, who seek God.”

“Does God Know Everything I Am Going To Do Before I Do It?”

- Isa. 59:1-2 - “Behold, the LORD'S hand is not shortened, That it cannot save; Nor His ear heavy, That it cannot hear. 2 But your iniquities have separated you from your God; And your sins have hidden His face from you, So that He will not hear.”
- Micah 3:4 - “Then they will cry to the LORD, But He will not hear them; He will even hide His face from them at that time, Because they have been evil in their deeds.”
- Zech. 7:12-13 - “Therefore it happened, that just as He proclaimed and they would not hear, ‘So they called out and I would not listen,’ says the LORD of hosts.”

What Does the Bible Teach About Predestination?

- Salvation is offered to all of humankind, so any one can receive it. But each individual must choose for himself whether or not to respond, and each one is capable of so choosing.
- Illustration: Suppose a man is drowning, but a sailor throws him a life preserver attached to a rope. The drowning man by himself is powerless to be saved. The sailor is his savior. But the man still has to choose to take hold and grip tightly until he is in the boat.
- So God is the source and provider of salvation. Salvation is by God's grace. But He has decreed that each individual must choose for Himself whether or not to accept the grace of salvation offered, and remain saved after obeying the Gospel by living faithfully.