

WHAT IS PREDESTINATION?

By Elder Buddy Abernathy

Many people do not understand the meaning of “predestination”. Some people have never studied what is written about it in the Bible. Others assume they know what it means based on what they have heard other people say about it. It is easy to learn about “predestination” because the word is only used four times in the Bible (*Rom. 8:29-30 and Eph. 1:5 & 11*) and the concept itself is not difficult to understand. Oftentimes, the problem is not one’s inability to understand the subject but one’s unwillingness to believe it.

By definition, “predestinate” means “to foreordain, decree from eternity, predetermine, or appoint beforehand.” Let’s use the word “predetermine” as we consider the subject. If I predetermine to do something, that means I plan to do it. If I plan to do something, I may or may not accomplish it due to various reasons. However, I think most Christians will agree that if God plans to do something, he will accomplish it. Now with that understanding in mind, let’s look at “predestination” in the Bible.

*"For whom he did foreknow, he also did **predestinate** to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren. Moreover whom he did **predestinate**, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified." (Romans 8:29-30 KJV)*

*"Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ: According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love: Having **predestinated** us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will, ...In whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being **predestinated** according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will:" (Ephesians 1:3-5, 11 KJV)*

In reading these verses we learn that before the beginning of time, God foreknew or chose some people. How many? No one knows but the Bible teaches that it includes people “...out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation;” (*Rev. 5:9*). Obviously, it is more than we could ever imagine. He predetermined that these chosen people would be “conformed to the image of his Son” (*1 Cor. 15:50-54, 1 Thes. 4:13-17, Php. 3:20-21, Col. 3:4*). God predetermined that these chosen people will eternally live with him in heaven after the end of time. He has given them this inheritance because it pleased him to do so. Isn’t that great?! (continued on back)

You may ask the question, “How do I know if I’m one of those he chose?” Notice that the ones he chose are also “called”. To be called means to be born of the Spirit, born from above, or made a “new creature” (2 Tim. 1:9, 2 Cor. 5:17). Before someone is called, they are described as being spiritually dead (Eph. 2:1). A physically dead person has no awareness or sense of anything done to his body because he is dead. In the same way, a spiritually dead person has no awareness or sense of anything spiritual because he is spiritually dead (1 Cor. 2:14). That’s why there are people in the world who can commit horrendous evil without any remorse. Think of it this way. Radio waves are being broadcast almost everywhere you go but you will have no awareness of the radio waves without a radio receiver. In like manner, unless God has put his Spirit in you, you will have no awareness of spiritual things. However, if you feel like you are a sinner, love God, pray to God, and try to live right; that is proof that you are not spiritually dead. God has placed his Spirit inside of you (Php. 1:6). You have been born of his Spirit because he chose you before the world began and predestinated you to be with him in heaven.

You may then say, “But I don’t deserve God’s favor.” That’s exactly right. None of us deserve it. The good news is that the same people he “foreknew”, “predestinated”, and “called” have also been “justified”. When Jesus died on the cross and then rose from the dead, he justified us (Rom. 3:24 & 5:9). That means he made everything right between us and God. Jesus offered himself to God as a sacrifice for our sins and God accepted his offering (Heb. 10:14, Eph. 1:6). God is satisfied with what Jesus did to save you. You are going to heaven because God chose you, predestinated you to be with him, sent Jesus to save you, and then gave you spiritual life. One day Jesus will return and take you to heaven where you will have indescribable joy forever!