

Predestination

When we study predestination we need to include the overall will of God and the very original purpose for the creation of human beings.

Genesis 1:26-27 [NIV] *“Then God said, **“Let us make man in our image, in our likeness, and let them rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air, over the livestock, over all the earth, and over all the creatures that move along the ground.” So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.**”*

This is the original will of God.

First to create human beings in His “*image*”.

The Hebrew word translated “*image*” is “*tselm*” meaning resemblance or shadow, recognizable but **not** the real person or object.

The Hebrew word translated “*likeness*” is “*demûwth*” more than resemblance referring to manner, son, two for one, that is character, which takes a period of time and experience to create.

In the original physical creation **only** “*image*” was created **not** “*likeness*.”

2 Peter 3:9 [NIV] *“The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness. He is patient with you, **not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance.**”*

God does **not** want anyone to miss out on salvation.

Every human being has the potential and will have at some time the opportunity to be moulded into the “*likeness*” of our Creator God.

Predestination does **not** show in scripture, the Christian Bible, that a certain number of people are foreordained to salvation and others to eternal oblivion.

Such doctrine is a perversion of predestination that has been used by Satan to conspire against the glory, love and greatness of our Creator God.

Islam is a perversion of predestination as it is a perversion of Jesus Christ and of the true God.

In the doctrine of Islam all who do **not** follow the teaching of Muhammad are destined for oblivion in hell, even if they have never heard of Islam, let alone studied its doctrines.

What does the Christian Bible say about God and predestination?

Ephesians 1:11 [NIV] *“In him we were also chosen, having **been predestined according to the plan of him who works out everything in conformity with the purpose of his will,**”*

God’s self-conscious purpose and His ability to carry out His will without human aid or interference.

Notice how the New International Translation renders the Greek word “*bōulē*” as a plan. Every plan has its different stages of fulfilment.

Luke 1:37 [NIV] *“For nothing is impossible with God.”*

God as sovereign over His creation, which includes human beings, can do anything.

Isaiah 46:10 [NIV] *“I make known the end from the beginning, from ancient times, what is still to come. I say: My purpose will stand, and I will do all that I please.”*

Nothing will stop God from doing what He truly wants to do.

Romans 11:33 [NIV] *“Oh, the depth of the riches of the wisdom and knowledge of God! **How unsearchable his judgments, and his paths beyond tracing out!**”*

This is referring to the secret will of God, the knowledge He keeps to Himself until such a time He is pleased to unveil it.

Isaiah 55:8-9 [NIV] *“**For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways,**” declares the LORD. *“As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts.”**

The totality of God’s will is beyond our understanding.

Romans 11:34-36 [NIV] *“**Who has known the mind of the Lord? Or who has been his counsellor?**” *“Who has ever given to God, that God should repay him?” For from him and through him and to him are all things. To him be the glory for ever! Amen.*”*

God does **not** have to explain Himself:

Why God allows evil; why God allows good things to happen to bad people and bad things to happen to good people.

What we are seeing is that we have to let God be God

God is a being who is sovereign and has supreme power and wisdom.

We as human beings do not like such a God, and try to create a “god” we can be comfortable with.

Romans 1:18-20 [NIV] *“**The wrath of God is being revealed from heaven against all the godlessness and wickedness of men who suppress the truth by their wickedness, since what may be known about God is plain to them, because God has made it plain to them. For since the creation of the world God’s invisible qualities, his eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that men are without excuse.**”*

Through His physical creation God has made Himself known to every human being, from Adam and Eve onward.

This universe could **not** just have happened without a planning Creator God, because of its diversity and interdependency.

Romans 1:21-23 [NIV] *“**For although they knew God, they neither glorified him as God nor gave thanks to him, but their thinking became futile and their foolish hearts were darkened. Although they claimed to be wise, they became fools and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images made to look like mortal man and birds and animals and reptiles.**”*

Humans created substitute “gods” that they can handle without going out of their “comfort zone.”

Romans 1:24-25 [NIV] *“**Therefore God gave them over in the sinful desires of their hearts to sexual impurity for the degrading of their bodies with one another. They exchanged the truth of God for a lie, and worshipped and served created things rather than the Creator, who is for ever praised. Amen.**”*

God has allowed human beings to choose **not** to relate to Him as their Creator God, for them to experience what it is like without God directing their lives.

Romans 1:26-27 [NIV] *“Because of this, God gave them over to **shameful lusts**. Even their women exchanged natural relations for unnatural ones. In the same way the men also abandoned natural relations with women and were inflamed with lust for one another. Men committed indecent acts with other men, **and received in themselves the due penalty for their perversion.**”*

Sexual perversion is one of the end results of rejecting the true God.

Romans 1:28-31 [NIV] *“Furthermore, since they did not think it worth while to retain the knowledge of God, he gave them over to a depraved mind, to do what ought not to be done. They have become filled with every kind of wickedness, evil, greed and depravity. They are full of envy, murder, strife, deceit and malice. They are gossips, slanderers, God-haters, insolent, arrogant and boastful; they invent ways of doing evil; they disobey their parents; they are senseless, faithless, heartless, ruthless.”*

We cannot consider predestination without the effect that the free choice all humans have to submit to their Creator God or to reject Him.

Without God giving humans the choice we would only be robots **not** children created in His “likeness.”

When we consider those who are predestined to know the true God at this time we must resist thinking of those **not** predestined.

Because all human beings will have the chance to become created children of God in His Kingdom [a family that has grown large].

John 6:44 [NIV] *“No-one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him, and I will raise him up at the last day.”*

This is putting a limit on who are going to be called in each generation until Christ’s return.

Romans 8:22-23 [NIV] *“We know that the whole creation has been groaning as in the pains of childbirth right up to the present time. Not only so, but **we ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit**, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for our adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies.”*

“We” that is Christians in Paul’s time are referred to as “firstfruits.”

What is indicated by the use of this word “firstfruits”?

1 Corinthians 10:11 [NIV] *“These things happened to them as examples and were written down as warnings for us, on whom the fulfilment of the ages has come.”*

We need to apply this scriptural principle.

What happened to the Israelites and what they were commanded to observe are for our education.

Leviticus 23:9-12 [NIV] *“The LORD said to Moses, “Speak to the Israelites and say to them: ‘When you enter the land I am going to give you and you reap its harvest, **bring to the priest a sheaf of the first grain you harvest**. He is to wave the sheaf before the LORD so it will be accepted on your behalf; the priest is to wave it on the day after the Sabbath. On the day you wave the sheaf, **you must sacrifice as a burnt offering to the LORD a lamb a year old without defect,**”*

What was being illustrated in the commanded offering?

This was the “firstfruits of the early harvest of grain in Palestine, even the very first sheaf of corn.

1 Corinthians 15:20-23 [NIV] *“But Christ has indeed been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep. For since death came through a man, the resurrection of the dead comes also through a man. For as in Adam all die, so in Christ all will be made alive. But each in his own turn: Christ, the firstfruits; then, when he comes, those who belong to him.”*

The sheaf depicted Jesus Christ the first of the “firstfruits.”

The rest of those who are resurrected at His return the rest of the early harvest.

If Christ and these people are the “firstfruits” then these must be those who are **not** the “firstfruits” but part of a later harvest.

The main harvest of grain and other fruits in Palestine was in the autumn.

Revelation 14:1-5 [NIV] *“Then I looked, and there before me was the Lamb, standing on Mount Zion, and with him 144,000 who had his name and his Father’s name written on their foreheads. And I heard a sound from heaven like the roar of rushing waters and like a loud peal of thunder. The sound I heard was like that of harpists playing their harps. And they sang a new song before the throne and before the four living creatures and the elders. No-one could learn the song except the 144,000 who had been redeemed from the earth. These are those who did not defile themselves with women, for they kept themselves pure. They follow the Lamb wherever he goes. **They were purchased from among men and offered as firstfruits to God and the Lamb.** No lie was found in their mouths; they are blameless.”*

Here are a group who are referred to as the “firstfruits.”

James 1:18 [NIV] *“He chose to give us birth through the word of truth, that we might be a kind of firstfruits of all he created.”*

“Firstfruits” that would be followed by an un-numbered group who would eventually be created in the “likeness”, the character of God.

Revelation 20:6 [NIV] *“Blessed and holy are those who have part in the first resurrection. The second death has no power over them, but they will be priests of God and of Christ and will reign with him for a thousand years.”*

Those in this first resurrection, the “firstfruits” will reign with Jesus Christ for 1,000 years.

Revelation 20:12-13 [NIV] *“And I saw the dead, great and small, standing before the throne, and books were opened. Another book was opened, which is the book of life. The dead were judged according to what they had done as recorded in the books. The sea gave up the dead that were in it, and death and Hades gave up the dead that were in them, and each person was judged according to what he had done.”*

Another resurrection of all who had died without knowing the Christian Bible or Jesus Christ as the only Saviour of humanity.

The “books” that were opened refers to the books of the Christian Bible.

Opened to their understanding for the first time.

The “book of life” lists those who were qualified, by their acceptance of Jesus Christ as their Saviour, to have their names written in this book, allowing them to receive the gift of eternal life.

All of this is what God had predestined to happen

I like to compare all that God has predestined to happen, as God's "*family planning*." Where God is allowing the older children in His family, the "*firstfruits*" to be involved in the education of all who are resurrected back to life to have their chance to enter into the created family of God.

When understood, predestination is **not** something to be feared or if you feel you are among the "*elect*" something to be proud about.

Predestination shows God's great love for all humanity, and how He truly fulfils His promises.

John 3:16-18 [NIV] *"For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him. Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe stands condemned already because he has not believed in the name of God's one and only Son."*

God in His great love has predestined that every human being who has ever existed will have an opportunity to accept this promise and make Jesus Christ their Saviour.