



*"You will say then to me, Who is yet to blame? For who has resisted his will?" (Romans 9:19)*

## IS GOD FAIR?

### PREDESTINATION

Predestination is a doctrine popularized in the teachings of John Calvin (1509-1564), a French theologian who influenced the Protestant Reformation. Many churches teach some or all of Calvin's doctrine.

The five points of Calvin's doctrine are summed up in the acronym "TULIP."

**1. Total depravity** (The curse of Adam's sin [called "original sin"] is passed down to all people. Everyone is born depraved and condemned to Hell except for a few selected by God who receive "grace" - an exemption from the curse).

**2. Unconditional election** (Before the foundation of the world God chose [elected] certain people, yet unborn, to receive "grace." At the beginning of time God determined for all time who will be "saved" or "not saved." Nothing men can do will affect or change God's "election.")

**3. Limited atonement** (God's "grace" is only for those who were predestined to be exempted from the curse.)

**4. Irresistible grace** (Those who are "pre-chosen/elected" cannot resist or refuse their call to "grace." "Salvation" cannot be resisted.)

**5. Perseverance of the saints** (Once saved, always saved. The "elect" can never "fall from grace" regardless of how they live their lives).

According to the teachings of Calvin men have no free will or choices in life. They are compelled to follow God's precise plan for them. There is no real threat of falling into temptation because men's lives are predetermined. Men cannot choose to follow or not follow God. They can only do what God has predestined them to do. Men can do nothing to affect or influence God.

Some or all of this strange belief has been adopted by most churches. Churchgoers appear to have no idea what kind of monstrous theology this is.

Think about it. If Calvin was right, and if we are unable to choose our paths - to follow or not follow God - if the option doesn't exist - then how can we be blamed and

punished for doing things that are not our choice? If man cannot resist God's will, then nothing we do is our own will. God wills every thought and action. If this is true, man has no responsibility for his thoughts and actions.

For instance, if a person was born without eyes, would it be fair to blame him for not seeing? Also, since God created man to breathe air, should he be faulted for breathing? If man has no choice in his thoughts or actions, how can he be held responsible for things he didn't choose?

And yet Calvin, and church people who adopt his precepts, seem to be comfortable with God condemning and punishing billions of people who are only doing what God causes them to do.

Is that fair? No! It is an absurd belief borrowed from pagan religions and adopted by churches.

### THE SOVEREIGNTY OF GOD

Again, this is a phrase, or concept, with huge implications. In the religious world the term is bandied about by theologians who claim to understand it. They give it a meaning that suits them, and yet it makes no sense. Pagan doctrines are the result of errant thinking by corrupt men seeking power over other people. They use terms (words) that are intentionally vague and poorly defined so they can attribute false meanings to them.

Brainwashed church people then parrot the terms, not knowing what they are saying. "God's Sovereignty" is one such term. It claims that God causes all things. But if that is so, how can He blame man for the results.

The term "sovereignty" is generally misused and abused. "Sovereignty" has a real meaning in spite of people not bothering to find it. Sovereignty refers to the highest power. A sovereign is above being questioned, and is not answerable to anyone. Sovereignty has been claimed by kings and tyrants who declare themselves to be the highest power. They take to themselves power to make their own rules. These "sovereigns" make law, break law, or ignore law. As "sovereigns" they do anything their wicked little hearts can imagine.

So, you see, that term (sovereignty), as it applies to rulers, isn't quite appropriate for God. God is the highest power, but He does not do things that are inconsistent with his character and principles. There are many things God cannot and will not do. He cannot lie (Titus 1:2). He cannot break his own law. The wages of sin is death (Romans 6:23). Sin is defined as the breaking of God's law (1 John 3:4). God cannot die so He therefore cannot break his law. Thus, He cannot sin. Also, He cannot forsake us (John 8:39). As you can see, there are things which God's character prevents Him from doing. He cannot act out of character. He cannot be unjust or ungodly.

You see, God is good, honest, and fair. He cannot be otherwise. He can only do what is right.

He can see into the future - to what extent and detail I don't know. But God allows men to make their own choices. He allows them to obey, or not obey. When men make bad choices it affects God's relationship with them.

There are things which, in order to exist, require the ability to make choices. Take, for instance, love. Love must be a choice in order to be real. Men can choose to love or not love. This choice affects man's relationship with God. Likewise, sin cannot exist without choice. Men must choose to sin. Sin, in order to be real, must be a choice. Otherwise it cannot be real sin.

There are four places in the KJV New Testament where the word "predestinate" appears: Ephesians 1:5, 11; and Romans 8:29-30. The correct translation should be "pre-plan." God preplans, but that is different than predestinating. We can preplan a road trip. It doesn't mean that every detail is set in stone and cannot vary. Such planning is tentative and flexible because circumstances vary.

Mysterious doctrines, like predestination, are things of pure speculation and nonsense - like the theological debate about "how many angels can dance on the head of a pin" (a quandary that occupied the church hierarchy for years). Such religious chicanery serve to confuse people and provide evasive answers used by con men. The term "God's sovereignty" is a tool of expediency to facilitate mystery instead of sensibility and logic. Theologians want God to be mysterious, unknowable, unpredictable, capricious, and fickle - like the gods of the Roman Pantheon.

The doctrine of predestination essentially teaches that God predetermines everything that happens. It makes man into an automaton.

## SELF-EVIDENT TRUTH

While it is obvious that God can predict future things, and can know the thoughts of men's hearts ... still it is a cardinal truth that **God can love**. But love is not real unless it is by choice. Love cannot be forced.

10. *Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that He loves us and sends his Son, a kindness for our sins.*

19. *We love him, because He first loves us.*

1 John 4:10, 14

John, speaks here of agapé love - the highest form of

love. See also 1 Corinthians 13:1-13 where "agapé" ("love") is translated "charity." This love is not possible unless it is by choice. Love is an emotion of choice. Anything called "love" that is not by choice, is by definition not real love.

Consider also disobedience. It is a choice. If it is not by choice it cannot be real sin. Thus, if God predestinates (causes) all things, including love and sin, then they are not by choice, and cannot be real love or real sin. Love and sin cannot exist except as the result of free choice.

Who does James say is responsible for sin?

13. *Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God can not be tempted with evil, neither tempts He any man.*

14. *But every man is tempted when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed.*

15. *Then when lust has conceived, it produces sin: and sin, when it is finished, brings forth death.*

16. *Be not deceived my beloved brethren.*

James. 1:13-16

Obviously God can predict future events and reveals some to his prophets and spokesmen. He foresaw the birth of Isaac and told it to Abraham. God also can see what is in the hearts of men. He can perceive man's thoughts.

But what does this imply? It doesn't tell us the extent and reach of what God can see, or chooses to see. Does He choose to know everything past, present, and future?

Here's the point. If God knows every little detail past, present, and future, it means that He controls it all and can never be surprised. To know all things is to control/cause all things. All thoughts, all actions, all events - including sin.

It's not a question of what He can do. It is a question of what He chooses to do. Obviously, I am unable to quantify the extent of God's knowledge. But logic demands clarity. If God chooses to control and cause all things, that would include every thought (good and bad), every action (good and bad), every sin, every ignorance, every emotion (love and hate), and all things both good and wicked. It would mean that He knows, controls, and causes every good thing as well as every bad thing. If this is the case, it means that nothing at all occurs that God does not know, control, and cause in advance. Every action and every idea are His actions and ideas - not ours. Everything that has happened, is happening, and will happen are God's choices - not ours. Also, it means that there can never be a new idea or a change of mind - not for man, nor for God. Everything has been predetermined and is unchangeable.

## WHAT ABOUT OBEDIENCE?

Obedience is not possible without choice. A robot is not obedient. It simply moves by remote control. Are we mere robots? Puppets on strings? Or do we think and move by our own volition?

How can man be tempted if he has no choice? Can a robot be tempted? Well, Adam was tempted wasn't he?

Was Adam's temptation merely a farce? How about Jesus? Was Jesus tempted? Really tempted?

Calvinism's predestination doctrine would have us believe it was all preset by God who knew ahead of time and controlled it all. If that is true, then there was no real temptation because Adam could do only what God was causing him to do. According to Calvin's doctrine, Adam had no choice. He was only acting by remote control, obeying God's program. In that case Adam did not disobey. He only did God's bidding.

By the same token, if everything is predestinated then Jesus could not have been really tempted. Nor could He have resisted. So what shall we say? Was it merely a farce? What did Jesus mean when He replied, "You shall not tempt the Lord your God?"

For Scripture to make sense it cannot be true that God has always made all decisions for all men.

Consider Moses who said to the Children of Israel:

15. *See, I have set before you this day life and good, and death and evil. In that I command you this day to love Yahweh your God to walk in his ways to keep his commandments, and his statutes, and his judgments, that you may live and multiply and Yahweh your God shall bless you in the land where you go to possess it.*

19. *I call the heaven and the land to record this day against you, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing: therefore **choose** life, that both you and your seed may live.*

Deuteronomy 30:15-16

Moses laid before the Israelites two "CHOICES" - obedience and disobedience. Life and death. That instruction would have made no sense unless they were able to choose. If God had already made the choice for them it would have been a cruel joke. If God knows, controls, and causes all things, then nothing that man thinks or does is by his own volition. If that is the case it would make God's laws pointless and meaningless. In order to obey or disobey God man must make choices.

If everything is predestined there can be no choices, no new ideas. Neither God, nor man, could have a new idea. All ideas would be preset. There could be no repentance because that would require a change of heart.

There could be no options, no obedience, no rebellion, no new decisions, no surprises, no disappointments of any kind. All things, good or bad, would be preset in concrete. No alterations or changes could ever occur. There could be nothing new or unplanned.

And yet, God desires love from us. He is jealous over us ... because He worries that He could lose our love.

5. *... for I Yahweh your God am a jealous God, visiting the guilt of the fathers upon the sons to the third and fourth generation of them that hate Me;*

6. *But showing kindness to thousands of them that love Me, and keep my commandments.*

Exodus 20:5-6

Those are meaningless scriptures if we have no choice. If rebellion against God is predestined by Him, how could it worry or disappoint Him? And why does He command men to repent of their sins if our sins are not our own choices? Repentance is not possible unless we choose it.

I think you must be seeing the immense implications and problems of this pagan concept of predestination. Also you can see how the church world has adopted paganism that corrupts and confuses people. In spite of this, God is a God of logic and truth. He gives us answers - ones that actually make sense. Religions and churches have given us confusion. But God offers us truth and sanity.

## COME, LET US REASON TOGETHER

Preachers, theologians, and religious folks offer elaborate explanations that sound like they know what they are talking about- but they don't. They might say, "Its above our heads." Or, "It makes perfect sense to God." Or, "It is true even if we cannot understand it." These are typical responses designed to dodge questions they cannot answer - like questions about the so-called "Trinity" doctrine. We're talking about nonsense teachings derived from paganism and used by churches.

But Yahweh is not a god of confusion and contradiction. Rather, He is a God of truth and logic. And He gave us his Holy Scriptures, his law, his prophets, and his Son (the Logos) to communicate truths to us to help know our God, and help us make good choices in life.

## DOES GOD HAVE EMOTIONS?

Love is an emotion. Concern is an emotion. Anger is an emotion. Who would argue that God has no emotions? And yet these emotions could not happen to a god that knows all, controls all, and causes all. How could God be angry, or pleased, or surprised, or displeased if He knows and causes all things? How can He be upset with us if we are only doing what He causes us to do? How could Yahweh be angry with Moses and the Israelites in Deuteronomy 1:37, and in 4:21, for disobeying Him if their acts were predestinated? It wouldn't be fair or sensible for God to blame them, be angry at them, or judge them for something He made them do.

## OBJECTIONS?

What about Malachi 3:6?

6. *For I am Yahweh, I change not;*

This does not imply that God never changes his mind. Rather it means God's character doesn't change, neither does his judgment, love, patience, and goodwill to mankind - as explained in the verses preceding and following 3:6.

Didn't Moses predict the future?

27. *For I know (perceive) your rebellion, and your stiff neck: behold, while I am yet alive with you this day, you*



have been rebellious against Yahweh; and how much more after my death?

29. For I know that after my death you will utterly corrupt yourselves, and turn aside from the way which I have commanded you; and evil will befall you in the latter days; because you will do evil in the sight of Yahweh, to provoke him to anger through the work of your hands.

Deuteronomy 31:27-29

Moses didn't have a crystal ball. But he knew the rebellious spirit of the Israelites. Based on their known traits he could, using logic, predict what they would do.

What about us? With eyes to see and ears to hear we also can perceive the spirit of men and logically deduce the future - to some degree. It is just common sense.

But back to the issue of man's relationship to God. Can man really provoke God to anger? Would that make sense if we can only do what God causes us to do? You see, if God causes man to disobey Him, why should He feel betrayed by them, or be angry? They are only doing his will - in essence obeying Him.

The fact is, God's anger can burn against men:

14. And the anger of Yahweh was kindled against Moses ...

Exodus 4:14

1. And when the people complained, it displeased Yahweh: and Yahweh heard it; and his anger was kindled; and the fire of Yahweh burnt among them, and consumed them that were in the uttermost parts of the camp.

Numbers 11:1

3. And Israel was joined to Baalpeor: and the anger of Yahweh was kindled against Israel.

Numbers 25:3

There are many more examples of God's anger. But this makes no sense if He causes it all himself?

And what about love? How can God love us, and how can we really love Him, if there are no options? What is the meaning of love? If we cannot choose to love, would that please God? And why would He feel disappointed and betrayed if it is He who prevents us from loving Him?

But Scripture says God truly loves us, and He wants us to truly love Him. That requires the ability to choose.

5. And you shall love Yahweh your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your might. (a choice?)

12. And now, Israel, what does Yahweh your God require of you, but to fear Yahweh your God, to walk in all his ways, and to love Him, and to serve Yahweh your God with all your heart and with all your soul,

Deuteronomy 6:5, 10:12

Scripture also tells us that God can change his mind.

19. ... Did he (Judah) not fear Yahweh and entreat the favor of Yahweh, and Yahweh changed His mind about the misfortune which He had pronounced against them? ...

Jeremiah 26:19

14. So Yahweh repented of the evil which He thought to do to His people.

Exodus 32:14

3. Yahweh repented for this: It shall not be, says Yahweh.

Amos 7:3

These examples are only a few of the many passages where God repented or changed his mind. He also "repented" of his plan to destroy Nineveh (Jonah 3:9-10).

So, did God harden Pharaoh's heart leading up to the Exodus? Yes, but how? He did it by playing on Pharaoh's pride which was already there. God told Moses to make bold demands and threaten Pharaoh. It stirred up Pharaoh's anger (his heart) so he reacted against God's demands.

It wasn't as though Pharaoh's heart had been soft and God had to harden it. All God did was insult Pharaoh. That's all it took. It was not supernatural. It was merely common sense. God knew how Pharaoh would react when provoked.

But didn't God hate Esau before he was born - as it says in Romans 9:13?

No! He didn't hate Esau BEFORE he was born. He hated him later for his faithless spirit. The KJV translation is misleading. The Greek verb "emisea" is mistranslated as "hated" (past tense). This Greek verb is aorist active tense, not perfect tense (i.e. past tense). Aorist verbs have no time designation. It is neither past, present, nor future. Aorist action is not set in time. In this case it means that God's preference is not Esau's way of life.

This Greek word, "miseo" (translated "hate"), is a comparative verb used when comparing between two or more things. It doesn't mean to outright "despise" or "abhor" as it is normally used today. The Greek term is comparing between Esau and Jacob. God cared less for Esau.

The word "miseo" ("hate") is used many times in this way. Do your own word search. For instance, Jesus said:

26. If any man come to me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple.

Luke 14:26

Obviously, Jesus does not want us to despise our family. Just the opposite! Again, the word "miseo" (translated "hate") is comparative. In other words, Jesus was saying we need to hold Him in higher esteem compared to our family.

The pagan doctrine of predestination doesn't make sense. God is fair! He lets us choose to obey or disobey. Otherwise love, obedience, sin, and repentance are meaningless. God wants us to make choices.

God wants us to choose Him. It pleases God when we opt to love Him. Love binds us together.

*Ben Williams*