

Lesson 21 – Predestination

'As I live,' says the Lord GOD, 'I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his way and live. Turn, turn from your evil ways! For why should you die, O house of Israel?'

– Ezekiel 33:11

For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.

– John 3:16

Sometimes I'm asked, "Do you believe in Predestination?"

I reply, "Of course I do. The Bible teaches it, and as a follower of Jesus, I believe it. However, I have to say that I believe in the Predestination of the Bible, NOT the Predestination of John Calvin and his followers.

What is the difference? Calvin taught that God predestinated a small percentage of mankind to salvation and eternal life in Heaven. They also teach that God predestinated the rest of mankind to spend eternity in the torments of Hell. There is nothing they could do to change their fate, because they were predestined by the Sovereign God to go to Hell. It was His will for them not to be saved.

What's wrong with this picture? It violates John 3:16 and many other Scriptures that give God's universal desire for souls to be saved.

Reformed Theology

Sometimes this is called "Reformed Theology." It was started by Roman Catholics who were trying to reform the Catholic Church during the 16th Century. They were forced out of the Roman Church, and they continued teaching their Reformed Roman Catholic theology, under the guise of *Sola Scriptura*, or Scripture Only. The problem is, that Reformation Theology was a mixture of Scripture and Romanism.

As New Testament Christians, we have no reason to settle for Reformed Theology when we can go for the Original. All we have to do is to go to the Bible "for the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints." (Jude 3).

Augustine

One of the pet doctrines of many of the reformers was the doctrine of extreme Predestination. Although this was not taught by the mainstream Catholic Church, it was invented by one of the most influential Catholic theologians of all time, Aurelius Augustinus, otherwise known as Augustine, who lived from 354 to 430 AD.

Augustine became the bishop of Hippo, in Africa. The Catholic Church honors him as one of the 33 "Doctors of the Church." These 33 men were considered to be the most influential Catholics in history.

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Augustine was the favorite theologian of both Martin Luther and John Calvin. They built much of their theology on his Roman Catholic and predestination teachings.

Although he was a theologian, Augustine did not know Greek or Hebrew, so he had no way of understanding the teaching of the Bible in the original languages. As a leader in the emerging Catholic Church at the time, he was prone to serious theological error. Some of the errors he taught were:

1. Infant “baptism.”
2. “Baptism” by sprinkling.
3. Baptism is necessary to salvation.
4. Unbaptized infants go to Hell.
5. The Catholic Church is the one true church
6. People who teach things contrary to the Catholic Church should be persecuted. Millions of Christians and Jew would be murdered in the Inquisition by the Catholic Church in the centuries following because of Augustine’s teaching.
7. Predestination – those who would go to Heaven had been predetermined by God, and nobody could do a thing to change who would be saved and who would be damned.

Augustine’s version of Predestination was never accepted by the Catholic Church, and for the next 1,100 years, the only people who taught it were the people who read and were influenced by his writings on the subject.

Then, during the Protestant Reformation, his Predestination teaching was revived. When it resurfaced it became Protestant doctrine in the hands of Luther, Calvin and their followers.

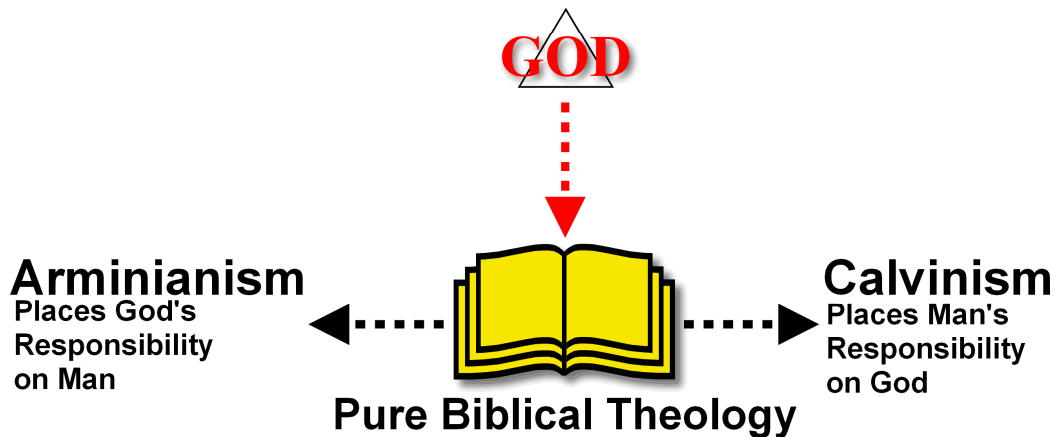
Here are the dilemmas of the followers of Calvin:

1. If this “truth” is Scriptural, why is it that nobody “discovered” it for almost 400 years?
2. Why is it that nobody else discerned or “discovered” it for another 1,100 years after Augustine?

Calvinism and Arminianism

Jacob (James) Arminius (1560-1609) saw the error of Calvin’s Predestination, but he went too far the other way in his teachings. He taught that all Christians were saved by grace, but they have to endure to the end in order to finally make it to Heaven. Arminians don’t want to admit this, but in their theology they are saved by grace and kept by works.

Two Theological Extremes



Calvin's basic error was that he turned human responsibility over to God. We are responsible to submit to the Gospel and come to Christ for the salvation of our sins. Salvation is not of works, but no one can be saved if they don't do *something*. They have to believe. There is no merit in believing. We don't deserve God's salvation when we believe. It's just that God set up His salvation in such a way that people cannot have a right relationship with God unless they believe in the Lord Jesus Christ.

Arminius taught human responsibility in the matter of salvation. He took it too far, however, when he taught that a Christian had to continue living for Christ or he would lose his salvation.

A Misunderstanding of the Calvinists and the Arminians

Calvinists think that every Christian is either a Calvinist or an Arminian. They think that Christians who do not believe their extreme doctrines are followers of James Arminius.

Arminians, on the other hand, think that any Christian who believes in Eternal Security ("Once Saved Always Saved") is a Calvinist.

The truth is, both extreme positions are wrong, and the people who strictly follow the Word of God on these issues are neither Calvinists nor Arminians.

How they stack up:

| Bible Literalists | Calvinists | Arminians |
|--|---|--|
| Most Southern Baptists Most other Baptists in the U.S. Many independent Bible Churches Many Evangelical Free Churches Most IFCA Churches Many Conservative Congregational Ch's. | Churches with the word "Reformed" in their names Some Baptists in the U.S. Most Baptists in the U.K., Canada and Australia Most Presbyterian Churches that are not liberal So-called "Regular Baptists" | Assemblies of God Church of God Most Charismatics Nazarenes The Wesleyan Church Salvation Army Christian & Missionary Alliance Free Will Baptists |

2 Basic views of Predestination

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1. 2 Basic Views of Predestination
 - a. The Biblical view – Romans 8:29; 1 Pet. 1:2
 - i. God, Who sees all of human history as in the present tense, knew who would hear the Gospel and believe.
 - ii. He chose people on the basis of what they would do when hearing the Gospel.
 - iii. He predestinated those who would believe to become conformed to the image of Jesus.
 - b. The Calvinist view
 - i. God chose certain individuals out of the world to be saved from their sins and to go to Heaven.
 - ii. He chose to send all other people to Hell.
 - iii. Nobody could change God's determination of who would be saved and who would be lost. That was God's sovereign decision.
2. The 5 Important Words of Romans 8:29-30

²⁹For whom He foreknew, He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren. ³⁰Moreover whom He predestined, these He also called; whom He called, these He also justified; and whom He justified, these He also glorified. (Romans 8:29-30)

- a. **Foreknew** – Greek προγινώσκω *proginóskō*; to know beforehand, prognosis
 - i. He knew beforehand
 - ii. This is the word we get *prognosis* from. It means exactly that.
 - iii. The Calvinists try to make this word mean “an intimate relationship” to signify that God arbitrarily chose us and did not chose others before the foundation of the world. If you have the imagination of a Calvinist, I guess it would make sense to you.
- b. **Predestinated** – Greek προορίζω *proorízō*; to determine beforehand
 - i. Note that He *foreknew* us before He *predestinated* us.
 - ii. Predestination is not based on some arbitrary decision of God to save some and damn others. It is based on the fact that God knew how we would respond to the Gospel. He set His approval on our faith by Predestinating us...
 1. to be conformed to the image of His Son
 2. to be part of His family
 3. to live in His home for eternity
- c. **Called** – Greek καλέω *kaléō*; to call someone so that they may come or go somewhere.
 - i. He called us through preaching of the Gospel – 2 Thess. 2:14
 - ii. He called us through the conviction of the Holy Spirit – John 16:8-11
 - iii. He called us through the drawing of the Father – John 6:44
- d. **Justified** – Greek δικαίωω *dikaióō*; to justify
 - i. This is what happens when we receive Christ. We are Justified.
 - ii. We were all guilty sinners, deserving of Hell, but God imputed righteousness to us the moment of our conversion to Christ.
- e. **Glorified** – Greek δοξάζω *oxázō*; To honor, bestow honor upon, exalt in dignity, render glorious.
 - i. God is going to honor and glorify us when we get Home to Heaven

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- ii. At the Rapture, when we go up, we will receive glorified bodies – 1 John 3:2
 - f. Note that all 5 of these words are in past tense
 - i. Some people have not been called or justified yet – they are still described in the past tense.
 - ii. We have not been glorified yet – our glorification is in the past tense.
 - iii. Because of the fact that God foreknew we would receive Christ, He declared our total salvation – from start to glorious finish – a done deal!
- 3. Objections to Calvinism
 - a. It teaches Salvation by Luck
 - i. The lucky ones who got picked get to go to Heaven
 - ii. The unlucky ones who didn't get picked spend eternity in Hell
 - b. It takes away from the Biblical teaching of the Love of God
 - i. God so loved the WORLD – John 3:16
 - ii. Jesus died for EVERYBODY – 1 John 2:2
 - iii. God desires EVERYBODY to come to Christ – 1 Tim. 2:4; 2 Pet. 3:9
 - c. It is inconsistent of God's revelation of Himself as not being a respecter of persons – Acts 10:34
 - d. It kills evangelism and deadens churches
 - i. The story of William Carey in 1792
 - 1. God called him to India as a missionary
 - 2. Even though Carey was a Calvinist himself, he was not as affected by its logical outcome as some of his Calvinist brethren. He had a burning passion to win the lost to Christ.
 - 3. When he spoke of his burden for foreign missions at a minister's meeting, he was told, "Sit down, young man. When God decides to save the heathen, He will do it without your help."
 - ii. Most Calvinist churches do not have a passion for winning the lost to Christ. There are some exceptions. Most of the exceptions do not place a big emphasis on their Calvinism. (Some of the members of some of these churches don't even know what Calvinism is).
 - iii. Example of the logical effect of Calvinism
 - 1. England and Canada are much more Calvinistic than the U.S.
 - 2. They are much worse off than we are spiritually today
 - e. It takes away from human responsibility.
 - i. If I have been chosen by God, I don't have to worry about getting saved. It will happen in God's time, because He has decreed it to be so.
 - ii. If I have not been chosen by God, I will be better off to forget about religion entirely and get everything I can out of this life, because this life is all I will have before I go to Hell.
 - iii. As a Christian, I don't have to worry about winning the lost to Christ, because the Elect will be saved regardless of what I do, and the non-Elect will go to Hell whether I witness to them or not. So it doesn't matter. Although some Calvinists have a passion for winning the lost to Christ, they are a decided minority.
 - f. It gives a view of God that is almost blasphemous
 - i. The God of the Calvinist arbitrarily chose to send people to Hell, giving them no choice in the matter. He gave them no remedy for their sin.
 - ii. Calvinists seem to think that God is glorified by sending people to Hell.
 - g. It makes God a liar.
 - If Calvinism is true, then . . .**

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- i. God didn't so love the world – John 3:16
- ii. Jesus didn't have compassion on the multitudes – Matt. 9:36
- iii. it IS the will of God that some of the little ones should perish – Matt. 18:14
- iv. John the Baptist DIDN'T come to bear witness of the Light, that all men through him might believe. – John 1:7
- v. Jesus is the true Light who DIDN'T light every man who came into the world – John 1:9
- vi. John 1:29 is false when it said that Jesus came to take away the sin of the world.
- vii. Jesus didn't come to save the world – John 3:17
- viii. The elect were condemned before they got saved – John 3:17
- ix. Jesus was mistaken when He said, And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me. – John 12:32
- x. Christ didn't die for the ungodly; only for the elect – Romans 5:6
- xi. Jesus DIDN'T taste death for every man – Heb. 2:9
- xii. Jesus DIDN'T give Himself a ransom for all – 1 Tim. 2:6
- xiii. The grace of God that brings salvation DIDN'T appear to all men – Titus 2:11
- xiv. The Father DIDN'T send the Son to be the Savior of the world – 1 John 4:14
- xv. The invitation of God is wrong when it says “whosoever will” – Rev. 22:17