

**"Tell me nothing but the truth in the name of the LORD?"-1King 22:16**

**Do I Have A Choice in The Matter?**

Ephesians 1:3-6 reads as follows <sup>3</sup> *“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ, <sup>4</sup> just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love, <sup>5</sup> having predestined us to adoption as sons by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will, <sup>6</sup> to the praise of the glory of His grace, by which He made us accepted in the Beloved.”*

Within the religious world many believe that the above passage of scripture supports the doctrine of predestination. What is the doctrine of predestination, and does the book of Ephesians support such teaching? In order to answer these questions, let us first define the doctrine.

John Calvin (1509-64) was a religious reformer and theologian. The basic premise of his theology was the absolute sovereignty (right to reign) of God, out of which evolved his misguided theory of “predestination.” The Swiss reformer believed that human “free will” was destroyed by man’s “original sin;” thus, the innate power to yield to the will of God was lost forever.

Nonetheless, Calvin contended that God, by virtue of His sovereign will, **predetermined** to save some, whom he called the “elect,” but condemned others—the “non-elect.” In his famous work, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, the reformer wrote: “No one who wishes to be thought religious dares outright to deny predestination, by which God chooses some for the hope of life, and condemns others to eternal death” (1975, III.xxi).

Later this ideology was incorporated into the *Westminster Confession of Faith* (1643). Note the following (Article III):

*God from all eternity did, by the most wise and holy counsel of His own will, freely and unchangeably ordains whatsoever comes to pass. . . . By the decree of God, for the manifestation of His glory, some men and angels are predestined unto everlasting life, and others foreordained to everlasting death (Bettenson 1947, 347, Calvinism and the Great Commission by Wayne Jackson The Christian carrier).*

According to the above quote the doctrine of predestination teaches basically, that God has from the beginning elected a certain portion of humanity to be eternally saved and has elected a certain portion to be eternally condemned. If you are among the saved then there is no sin which you could commit that would cause you to fall, and if you are among the reprobate (the lost), there is nothing that you could do to be saved, i.e. respond to the call of the gospel.

If the doctrine of predestination is true, then we serve a God that is partial, but a brief examination of the Scriptures teaches otherwise.

*“Then Peter opened his mouth and said: “In truth I perceive that God shows no partiality. But in every nation whoever fears Him and works righteousness is accepted by Him” (Acts 10:34-35).*

*“For there is no partiality with God” (Romans 2:11).*

*...”your own Master also is in heaven, and there is no partiality with Him” (Ephesians 6:9).*

*“But he who does wrong be repaid for what he has done, and there is no partiality” (Colossians 3:25).*

*“And if you call on the Father, who without partiality judges according to each one’s work, conduct yourselves throughout the time of your stay here in fear;” (1 Peter 1:17).*

God’s desire that all men *“be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth” (1 Timothy 2:4).* This proves that God has not fore-ordained,

**HAVE YOU STUDIED YOUR BIBLE TODAY?**

or unchangeably fixed some to be saved and some to be condemned. It is true that God from the beginning has chosen to save man (**Ephesians 1:3-6**); the salvation which is provided is to be found in Christ. Those who are in Christ will be saved and those outside of Christ will be eternally lost. Whether I submit to the teachings of Christ and be found in Him is entirely up to me (**Hebrews 5:9; Galatians 3:27**).

According to **Matthew 11:28** and **Revelation 22:17**, we learn that all are invited to come to Jesus, but many fail to accept the invitation, which is not God's fault.

If it is true that God has from the beginning elected a certain portion of humanity to be eternally saved, a certain portion to be eternally condemned, and that man has no choice in the matter, then the death of Jesus was only for a select few. On the contrary the Bible teaches that Jesus "*taste death for everyone*" (**Hebrews 2:9**). Those who responded to the call of the gospel, by believing, repenting, confessing Jesus as the Christ and being baptized for the remission of sins, become Christians (**2 Thessalonians 2:13-14; Acts 8:36-38; Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38; 22:16**). John said that Jesus is, "the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the whole world" (**1 John 2:2**), thus making salvation possible for all of humanity.

If man is going to be lost, he will be lost not because God has chosen him to be, but because man has chosen not to obey God, "*in flaming fire taking vengeance on those who do not know God, and on those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ*" (**2 Thessalonians 1:8**).

You do have a choice in the matter. Will you respond to God's invitation? "*And the Spirit and the bride say, 'Come!' And let him who hears say, 'Come!' And let him who thirsts come. Whoever desires, let him take the water of life freely" (**Revelation 22:17**). -Fred Singleton*

**Question: Does the Bible apply to ourtime?**

**Answer:** Never before in thirty plus years of preaching have I witnessed such blatant disregard for God and the Bible. Not only has much of America turned its back on biblical teaching but also organized religion has increasingly come to believe the Bible is not an authoritative book.

**The authority of the Bible.** Individuals and religions which scoff at God's Book being authoritative are in rebellion to God! We are commanded to "speak as the oracles of God," understand the will of God, and handle aright God's word (I Pet. 4: 11, Eph. 5: 17, 2 Tim. 2: 15). God's word is the means of determining whom the Christian fellowships (2 Jn. 9-11).

**The applicability of the scriptures is seen in their completeness.** The one faith, the gospel system, has been once for all delivered (Jude 3, Eph. 4: 4). The scriptures are "profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: that the man of God may be perfect, throughly furnished unto all good works" (2 Tim. 3: 16, 17). Every human creed is condemned and constitutes vain worship (Mk. 7: 1 ff.).

What the Bible says is right, is right **today** and what the Bible pronounces is wrong, is wrong **today**. For instance, the Bible teaches pure speech, putting spiritual things first, and living a holy life (Eph. 4: 29, Matt. 6: 33, 2 Cor. 7: 1). Lying, stealing, and fornication are just as wrong today as they were in the First Century (Rev. 21: 8, Eph. 4: 28, I Cor. 6: 18). God's moral pronouncements are not dispensational. "The way of transgressors is hard," the wise man wrote (Prov. 13: 15). Man desperately needs guidance because man cannot guide himself (Jere. 10: 23). Furthermore, we shall be judged by Jesus' words (the scriptures, Jn. 12: 48). Yes, the Bible applies to our day! - Don Martin

HAVE YOU STUDIED YOUR BIBLE TODAY?