

# **A CAREFUL LOOK AT PREDESTINATION**

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**ROMANS 8:28-30 • TV075A**

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### **Romans 8:28-30**

*“And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose. 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.”*

I want you to give me your prayerful and thoughtful attention today. I’m going to be speaking to you on this subject: **“A CAREFUL LOOK AT PREDESTINATION.”**

Now this message will be on tape if you would like to hear it later. If you would like to have your own copy of this message, if you would like to study it further, we would be happy to hear from you.

Now, predestination is one of the most abused, misused, and misunderstood doctrines in the Word of God. And the tragic part of it is that predestination is not only misrepresented by those who hate it but also by those who claim to be its friend.

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I hear people say, “Well, predestination means that what will be will be.” Now you think about that a moment. In a sense that’s true; what God Almighty hath willed to be will be because, “*He worketh all things after the council of His own will.*”

And the Scripture says, “*He doeth according to His will in the armies of heaven and among the inhabitants of this earth.*” One would have to say “what will be, will be.” That’s true; we certainly wouldn’t be foolish enough to say that, “what will be won’t be.”

But this is not what the doctrine of predestination teaches at all. When we talk about predestination and we read the Scriptures concerning the subject predestination; we’re not talking about “what will be, will be.” So, that’s not the definition of predestination.

And then I hear other people say this; “Predestination means that before men were born that God almighty predestinated some to heaven and some to hell.” Now this is not true; this is not taught in the Word of God. Nowhere in the Word of God does it say anything of the sort that God predestinated men to heaven and men to hell. It doesn’t say that at all.

I will say this, if a man goes to heaven it’ll be because of the grace and mercy of God; that’s true. If a man is saved it’ll be by God’s grace through faith. But if a man goes to hell it’ll be because of his sin. It will be because of his unbelief. It will be because of his own rebellion.

Our Lord spoke of those who did not enter into Canaan. He said, “*They could not enter in (not because God wouldn’t let them, not because God didn’t predestinate them to enter in but they did) because of unbelief.*”

So this is not what predestination is at all. I’ve had many people say this to me; “Well, if you believe in predestination, if you believe that God predestinated some to heaven and some to hell,” this is just not true. The Bible doesn’t teach anything of the sort.

But if a man does go to heaven it will be by the grace of God. If a man goes to hell it will be because of unbelief. “*He that believeth not shall be damned.*”

All right; then I have heard people say this; “Predestination means that if a person is predestinated to be saved, he will be saved whether he ever hears the Gospel or not, whether he ever seeks the Lord, whether he ever believes on Christ;” and this is not true either!

The Scripture says; “*For by grace are you saved through faith.*” The Scripture says; “*Whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved. But how shall they call on Him in whom they’ve not believed? And how shall they believe in Him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher?*”

And our Lord told His disciples, “*To go into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved.*” He doesn’t say; “He that is

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predestinated will be saved. He that is ordained to be saved will be saved.” He said; *“He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved and he that believeth not shall be damned.”*

So predestination doesn’t mean this at all; you see; it’s abused and it’s misused and it’s misunderstood and it’s misrepresented not only by its enemies, but also by its friends.

Now, predestination is used four times (the word “*predestinate*”). It is used four times in the King James Version of the New Testament. And I want you to take your Bible and let’s see what the Bible says about predestination.

Now, it’s not, “what will be, will be.” It’s not, “a man is predestinated either to heaven or to hell before he’s born.” The Bible does not teach that at all. It’s not that a man if he’s predestinated to go to heaven will go whether he ever believes or not and even if he wants to go he can’t go if he’s not predestinated.

That’s not what God’s Word teaches at all. What does the Bible say? Are you interested enough to take your Bible now and turn first of all to **Romans chapter 8**. You get your own Bible and let’s see what God’s Word says about predestination. Let’s together take a careful look at predestination.

**First** of all in **Romans chapter 8:28-30**; now listen to God’s Word; *“And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to His purpose: For whom He did foreknow; he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of His Son. And whom He predestinated, them He also called, and whom He called, he also justified and whom He justified He also glorified.”*

Now there the word is used twice: *“Whom He foreknew He **predestinated** to be conformed to the image of His Son that He might be the firstborn among many brethren. Moreover, whom He **predestinated** He called, whom He called He justified, and whom He justified, He glorified.”* There the word is used twice. You see it in God’s Word.

All right; now turn with me to **Ephesians 1**. We’re going to read **verses 4 and 5 of Ephesians chapter 1**. You read it there along with me in your Bible. Here it is used twice in **Ephesians 1 chapter 1**.

**Ephesians 1:4**, *“According, as He hath chosen us in Him, (in Christ) 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 according to the good pleasure of His own will.”*

Now look at **verse 11**: *“In whom we have obtained an inheritance, being **predestinated** according to the purpose of Him who worketh all things after the council of His own will.”*

Now, if a man says, “I do not believe in predestination;” he is foolish, he is denying the Word of God. Here the word is used four times in these four or five verses. So, we’ve got to find out what it means. We’ve got to find out what it refers to in God’s Word.

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Here it is plainly taught in the Word of God. And if we have a thoughtful mind and a hearing ear and an open heart to what the Spirit of God teaches then God will reveal to us what He's saying here.

Now there are four words I believe that will give you the key to the doctrine of predestination; there are four words:

**First of all:** The first word is this, the word "*He!*"

It says in **Romans chapter 8:29:** "*Whom **He** foreknew, **He** also did predestinate. And whom **He** predestinated **He** also called.*" What are we saying? We are saying that salvation is of the Lord from beginning to end. Salvation is of the Lord, from Alpha to Omega, salvation is of the Lord.

Salvation is of the Lord in its eternal planning. It's of the Lord in its execution. It's of the Lord in its application. It's of the Lord in its sustaining power. It's of the Lord in its ultimate perfection. "*The gift of God is eternal life.*"

Salvation is not by works. Salvation is not by the will of man, it's not by the will of the flesh; it is of God. Salvation is of the Lord. David said that twice in his writings; he said, "*The salvation of the righteous is of the Lord.*"

One great old hymn writer wrote years ago:

**"It's not that I did choose thee  
For Lord that could not be  
If thou had not chosen me  
I'd have never chosen thee."**

I want you to answer three questions very carefully now. Think about these three questions. This is what we're saying that, "*Salvation is of the Lord.*" All the work of redemption is by God's grace, by God's power, by God's mercy and for God's glory.

And I want you to consider three questions and answer them from God's Word.

The first question is this; did you choose God or did God choose you? Now answer that question from God's Word. Did He choose you or did you choose Him?

You know, our Lord was talking to His disciples in **John chapter 15** and He said this to them, "*You have not chosen me but I have chosen you.*" He said, "*You will not come to me that you might have life.*"

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*“This is condemnation that light has come into this world.”* We know that; Christ is come into this world. *“We have beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.”*

*“The Word was made flesh and dwelt among us.”* But He was hated, despised; He was rejected. *“He had no form, no comeliness, and no beauty that we should desire Him.”* In **Romans chapter 3**, Paul says, *“There’s none that seek God. There’s none that understandeth.”*

One day He stood looking over the city of Jerusalem and He said; *“O Jerusalem, Jerusalem; how oft I would have gathered you unto myself as a hen doth gathereth her brood but you would not.”*

So men by nature will not come to God. They love darkness and they love sin so God must come to them. Men will not choose God so God must choose them.

Left to ourselves we would never bow to the Lordship of Christ. Left to ourselves we would never seek the Lord. Left to ourselves we would never believe on Christ. Left to ourselves we would never embrace the Son of God.

So an answer to that question; did you choose God or did God choose you; the answer has to come, *“according as He chose us in Christ before the foundation of the world.”* That’s true; that’s what the Gospel says: *“He chose us.”*

Secondly: When did God choose you?

Now you’ve answered the first one from God’s Word. You didn’t choose God. Left to yourself you would never come to God. You ran and God caught you. You sinned and God saved you. You continued in darkness and God arrested you by His power and by His grace.

*“Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord.”* Abraham was called out of a land of idolatry. The apostle Paul wasn’t on his way to a prayer meeting on the Damascus road; he was on his way to kill Christians and God arrested him. God stopped him. God Almighty called him. It was God who called Paul, not Paul who called God.

When did God choose you? The Scripture says definitely that He chose us; we didn’t choose Him. *“We love Him because He loved us.”* We choose Him because He chose us. We seek Him because He sought us.

When did He choose us? Well listen to God’s Word. *“He chose us in Christ before the foundation of the world.”* And if you’ll turn to the book of **2 Thessalonians chapter 2:13** you will read this; Paul says: *“Beloved, I thank God for you because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the spirit and belief of the truth.”*

*“From the beginning;”* when is the beginning? *“In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God and the Word was God*

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*and all things were made by Him.” Yes, “Known unto God are all His works from the beginning.”*

But when did God choose us, “*from the beginning, before the foundation of the world?*” I can account for that; I’m just telling you what God’s Word says.

Thirdly: Has God chosen you? You didn’t choose God. Your love is in response to His. Your call is in response to His and He chose you before the world began to be His own.

Fourthly: Why did He choose you and why did He choose me? Can you answer that? Was it because that He’s also forgiven you? Was it because that He saw something in us that He didn’t see in other people? Was it because God needed us? Was that the reason?

Was it because you’re not as bad of a sinner maybe as other people are? “*All have sinned and come short of God’s glory. All we like sheep have gone astray. There’s none that doeth good, no not one.*”

What does the Bible say? “*According as He chose us in Christ before the foundation of the world, according to the good pleasure of His own will.*”

The reason for our election is found not in us but in God, not in us, but in God, not in our merit, but in His mercy, not in our goodness but in His grace. That’s where it’s found. That’s the reason. The Lord Jesus Christ saved us, “*For His name’s sake.*”

Our Lord one day was preaching in **Matthew chapter 11**. And in the middle of His message He lifted His eyes to heaven and He said “*Father; I thank thee Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent and thou hast revealed them unto babes.*”

He foreknew us. He predestinated us. He called us. He justified us. He glorified us. “*Salvation’s of the Lord. We love Him because He first loved us.*” This thing of salvation is not by human works or my human will but it’s by God’s divine purpose and God’s divine providence.

The words of men today when they talk about salvation are mainly about what they’re doing for God. Have you noticed that? I hear people talking about their religion and about their beliefs and about their profession and their experiences.

And I listen carefully to them and most of them are talking about what they’ve done for God, not what God has done for them. But when I hear the apostles talk about salvation; I hear them saying, “*By the grace of God I am what I am.*”

I hear Paul saying, “*I’ve obtained mercy. I was a persecutor; I was injurious. I was a blasphemer but I obtained mercy.*”

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I listen to people talk about what they're doing for God. They talk about: "They've accepted Jesus and they believed on God, and they're serving the Lord, and they are doing this, that, and the other."

Now think about the people in **Matthew 7** who said; "*Lord, we've preached in your name and cast out devils and did many wonderful works in your name.*" And He said: "*I never knew you.*"

I believe that what we need to talk about is not what we're doing for God but what God is doing for us because God was getting along all right before we came along. God was sufficient in Himself before we came along. I don't believe God needs any of us but we need Him.

So this thing of predestination starts with, "**He** predestinated us."

**Second:** Now, that brings me to the second word and that is the word "us." "*He predestinated us.*"

I cannot find in any of these verses; now you check them over yourself in **Romans 8 and Ephesians 1**; I cannot find in any of these verses one mention of the unbeliever. I hear people say; "Well, predestination means that God predestinated some to heaven and some to hell."

Now, I read all four Scriptures where that is used in the Bible and it didn't say that at all. There wasn't any reference at all to the unbeliever. The unbeliever wasn't connected in any way to predestination was it?

In all of these verses it talks about "*He predestinated us.*" Who are the "us" here? Whatever predestination affords, whatever it brings, whatever it accomplishes; it has to do with the believer.

It has to do with the same people, "*whom He foreknew.*" It has to do with the same people whom He called. It has to do with the same people whom He justified. It has to do with the same people whom He glorified.

Now, if you want to talk about reprobation; that's another subject. "*Judas was the son of perdition from the beginning.*" Pharaoh, "*God hardened his heart.*"

If you want to talk about spiritual hardness of heart and reprobation and judicial blindness, now that's another subject but today we are talking about predestination and predestination has nothing to do with the unbeliever, not one thing in this world.

Predestination; every time it's used in God's Word refers only to the believer. "*He predestinated us.*" You read it carefully: "*He predestinated us: Whom He knew He predestinated.*"

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He said to that bunch in **Matthew 7**: “*I never knew you.*” So, “*Whom He foreknew He predestinated and whom He predestinated He called and whom He called He justified and whom He justified He glorified.*”

God said: “*Let’s us make man in our own image*” and man was made in the image of God. But by sin we have lost that image. We are born into the world not in the image of God; we are born into the world in the image of fallen Adam. We are born of flesh and, “*That which is flesh is flesh. And we are children of wrath, even as others.*”

But God in His eternal grace, God in His sovereign mercy has purposed and predestinated and planned to have a people, a company of people “*which no man can number.*” He said: “*As the stars of the heavens, as the sands of the seashore, out of every tongue, tribe, kindred, nation and tongue under heaven.*” God has predestinated that He will have a people in glory.

When all this is over, when the world is destroyed and “*the new heavens and the new earth have been made, wherein dwelleth righteousness;*” God has predestinated and predetermined that He’s going to have a people and those people are going to be just like His Son.

That’s what predestination is all about: “*Whom God foreknew He predestinated to be conformed to the image of His Son. As we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall bear the image of the heavenlies.*” Christ has restored that divine image.

Now, God has predestinated the end. The end is that we will be like Christ. Every believer, every blood bought son, every born again, regenerated believer; God has predestinated them to be like Christ. They are going to be like His Son.

Now, when you tell me that you don’t believe in predestination you are saying that you don’t want to be like Christ because that’s what it’s all about. He’s the sovereign Lord and has predestinated, he has determined the means, and he has determined the end that we will be like Christ, just like His Son and that’s what predestination’s about.

Now, election is the choice of a people but predestination is the end or the object that God Almighty has set out to make those people like His Son.

Now, He’s predestinated the means to bring us to that end. He chose us in Christ. He made Christ our Surety, our Representative. That’s right; Christ is our Representative. He is our Surety, the surety of an eternal covenant.

And in time He sent His Son down here into this world, “*made in the likeness of flesh, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were born under the law.*”

You see, in order to save us God has to be true not only to His mercy but to His righteousness, not only to His love, but to His truth. He’s got to be just and justifier. So, He sent Christ down here as a man in the flesh, the God-man, and he met the law and obeyed it. He went to the cross and died for our sins. “*It pleased the Lord to bruise Him.*”

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Oh I know wicked men crucified Him with wicked hands but, *“they did what God predetermined to be done, what God predestinated to be done.”* They carried out the will of God.

You see, this world, what’s going on today is no accident. Everything’s on God’s timetable. Everything’s on schedule. He is an Almighty God. And our lives are either ruled by blind faith or by an all-seeing God, either by luck, or the living God. Which will it be? It cannot be both.

God Almighty chose us, made Christ our Surety, sent His Son into the world to be our Representative, our Redeemer, and bruised Him on the tree. *“It pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe.”*

*“It pleased God that in Christ that all fullness dwell.”* It pleased God one day to stop you on your Damascus Road to destruction and reveal Christ to you. It pleased God to grant you repentance and faith and one of these days it will please God to raise you from the dead, to raise you from the dead.

That’s what predestination is: *“He, whom He foreknew, He predestinated to be conformed to the image of His Son.”* He, the living God, the sovereign God, and the Almighty God has set out to make a people like His Son.

And everyone whom He saves, everyone whom He redeems is going to be like Christ.

**Third:** Why? All right; here’s the last word, the third word, *“He predestinated us to be conformed to the image of His Son that He might be the first born among many brethren.”*

Here’s the key word, *“That He (that He) might be the first born, that He might have the preeminence, that He might show the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us through Christ Jesus.”*

Everything God does for you is for His glory. Yes it’s for your good, it’s for your enjoyment, it’s for your blessings but it’s ultimately for His glory, *“That He.”* God’s going to have a people that love what Christ loves, that enjoy what Christ enjoys, *“that He might be the first born among many brethren.”*

*“That He might have the preeminence, that He might show the exceeding riches of His grace toward us in Christ Jesus and that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow in heaven, in earth, and under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that He is Lord to the glory of God the Father.”*

What does it mean to be conformed to His image? Well that work has already begun, it’s already begun. We are conformed to His nature in regeneration. That’s right! It says: *“We’re born of God.”* We are conformed to Christ in His relationship; we are sons of God.

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He is the only begotten; the well-beloved Son of God, but we are sons of God too: *“To as many as received Him, to them gave He the right to become sons of God.”* We’re like Him not only in nature and relationship but we are like Him to a degree in character.

He says, *“You are not of this world even as I’m not of this world.”* We are of another world. We’re of another kingdom. We’re conformed to Him in His inheritance. *“We are joint-heirs with Jesus Christ.”* He’s the heir of God and in Him we are the heirs of God and we are joint-heirs with Jesus Christ.

Now one day we are going to be like Him in His glory for the Scripture says, *“Beloved now are we sons of God. It doth not yet appear to what we shall be. But when He shall appear we shall see Him and be just like Him, like Him in His glory.”*

That’s a careful look at predestination. Almighty God has ordained that every believer shall be just like His Son Jesus Christ. And He’s ordained the means to bring it to pass and this is one of those means, the preaching of the truth, not just crying, “believe, believe, believe” but telling men whom to believe, *“I know whom I have believed!”*