

“Is Any Part of Our Lives Predestined?”

By Paul R. Blake

Introduction:

- A. People are fascinated by this subject for a number of reasons:
 - 1. Religion in America is saturated with it
 - 2. It is comforting to believe in this chaotic world that we are part of a larger tapestry developed by a master weaver
 - 3. It is soothing believe that we are victims of purposes and forces outside of our own ability to choose and act
 - 4. We long for an explanation of the whys and hows of the conditions and circumstances, problems and positions of our lives
- B. If we can answer the matter by saying we were fated, destined, ordained, then the unexplainable becomes tolerable
 - 1. The stars, the runes, the bones, fortune, fate were the answers of the ancients and pagans; Christians use predestination, a doctrine no more valid than the stars are crossed
 - 2. The short answer is this: God created man and made him a free moral agent; get used to it
 - 3. The concept of predestination that includes parts of your life predetermined and unchangeable is not Biblical; it is entirely denominational
- C. In point of fact, when you are born there are only two things you are predestined to do: die and be judged - Heb. 9:27
 - 1. Everything else depends entirely on the following:
 - a. Your choices - Joshua 24:15 - good or bad
 - b. The choices of others - Matt. 18:6 - good or bad
 - c. Time and chance - Ecc. 9:11 - Includes randomness of the universe, genetics, accidents, coincidence
 - 2. The exception to this is God's providence and protection in response to prayers of His children; the answers are yes, no, and later
 - 3. The wonder of this is that God is capable of taking into account all three of the above and using them to accomplish His will - Isa. 10:5-7

I. WE ARE SAVED OR LOST BASED ON OUR OWN CHOICES

- A. The Scriptures clearly teach that salvation is conditional, and that every person is able to meet those conditions - Rom. 10:13-14, 16-17, 21
- B. God grants to each person the power to accept or reject salvation
 - 1. Each person is able to choose to meet the conditions of salvation.
 - a. Deut. 30:15-19
 - b. God promised blessings to Israel if they obey - Deut. 28:1-14
 - c. And curses if they disobey Him - Deut. 28:15-68
 - d. Then He urged them to choose life.
 - e. Choose God - Josh. 24:15; Ex. 32:26; 1Kings 18:21
 - f. Choose good - Heb. 11:24-25; Luke 10:42
 - g. God reasons with men; He does not compel them against their will - Isa. 1:18-20

- h. Some choose evil - Matt. 23:37, 13:14-15; Rev. 22:17
- 2. Each person has a role in determining his own destiny
 - a. 1Peter 1:22; Rom. 6:13, 16-18; 2Cor. 8:5; Phil. 2:12
 - b. 1Tim. 4:16; Acts 2:40; 2Cor. 5:20
- 3. God shows no partiality - Rom. 2:6-11; Acts 10:34-35
 - a. He blesses all with the same opportunities; what each man does with those opportunities is his loss or gain - Matt. 5:43-48

II. "DOES GOD KNOW EVERYTHING I AM GOING TO DO BEFORE I DO IT?"

- A. God does not force people against their will to be good or bad, but He can foreknow what choices they will make.
 - 1. Judas was already evil before He betrayed Jesus - John 12:6.
 - 2. Pharaoh was evil before God hardened his heart - Ex. 8:15, 32, 9:12
 - 3. God did not make these men evil. He simply foreknew what choice they would make; then He used their choices accordingly.
 - 4. If foreknowing and prophesying a thing means that God decreed it must be so such that men have no choice, then since the men sinned, it must be that God decreed them to commit sin
 - 5. This violates His righteous character - James 1:13
- B. Jesus' death was also foreknown and prophesied
 - 1. Isa. 53; John 3:14; 12:27; Matthew 16:21.
 - 2. Nevertheless, Matt. 26:53 shows that Jesus had the power to stop it. He had a choice in spite of the fact the matter had been prophesied.
 - 3. God foreordained that Jesus would die
 - a. 1Peter 1:20; Acts 2:23, 4:28; Luke 22:22
 - b. This involved a sin committed by those who killed Him. If this means it was decreed so men had no choice, then again God decreed that men must commit sin
- C. Though God foreknew what some men did, that does not prove that He foreknows all the acts of all men
 - 1. God has power to foreknow all things, but at times He chooses not to exercise that power. His power to foreknow is based on His power to do all things. But He does not do everything He has power to do.
 - 2. Gen. 11:5, 18:20-21, 22:12

Conclusion:

- A. Salvation is offered to all men, so any one can receive it. But each individual must choose for himself whether or not to respond, and each one is capable of so choosing.
 - 1. Illustration: Suppose a man is drowning, but a sailor throws him a life preserver attached to a rope. The drowning man by himself is powerless to be saved. The sailor is his savior. But the man still has to choose to take hold and grip tightly until he is in the boat.
 - 2. So God is the source and provider of salvation. Salvation is by God's grace. But He has decreed that each individual must choose for Himself whether or not to accept the salvation offered, and remain saved after obeying the gospel by living faithfully.