

John Calvin's Predestination; A Perversion of Scripture

"John Calvin was a French protestant reformer. His doctrine on predestination teaches that there are two classes of people in the world. Those who have been predestined by God before the foundation of the earth to eternal damnation and those that have been predestined to eternal life. Calvin taught that there is nothing one can do to be saved because God has already decided who is going to be saved and who is not going to be saved... Thus, we have the damnable heresy of predestination. This doctrine is at the core of Calvinism and its influence is widely felt throughout much of 'Christendom.'"

~Brother Jack McNiel;

Predestination;<http://churchofchristarticles.com/blog/administrator/predestination>

Brother McNiel has it exactly right. With all due respect, John Calvin's personally-perpetrated perversion of the biblical idea of predestination is so incredibly far-fetched and biblically-contradictory as to be almost utterly unthinkable. To even begin to believe that God chose everyone who was going to be saved, as well as everyone who was going to be lost, long before they were ever even born, and that there would be absolutely nothing on earth that they could ever even hope do to influence or change that decision/sentence one iota one way or the other, so completely contradicts so many bible verses as to defy even the most minute and uninformed of imaginations.

Just consider for a moment... If such an utter travesty of biblical teaching were even remotely true, then why on earth would we need the bible with all of its instructions telling us how God wants us to live in order to inherit eternal life anyway? I mean, after all, those already "ear-marked" for eternal life before they were born could live any defiant and despicable way they wanted to, as they could not possibly lose their salvation anyway (according to Calvin, but once again, certainly not according to Christ – see: [Galatians 5:4](#); [Hebrews 6:4-6](#); [10:26-31](#); [2 Peter 2:20-22](#)). And as for any of those who might choose to live the most righteous, holy and upright of earthly lives possible out of a love for God and His commandments, what iota of eternal good would it possibly do them if they were already "ear-marked" for eternal destruction?

And additionally; if the bible is true – and it is ([Psalm 119:160](#); [John 8:31-32](#), [17:17](#)), and if God had His way and had not given each and every one of us the free-will-required choice to either love and obey him or to hate and deny Him, then He would have "ear-marked" and sentenced NO ONE to eternal destruction but EVERYONE to eternal life! So He said in His holy word! Note:

"The Lord is... not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance." ([2 Peter 3:9](#) – *emphasis mine* – DED).

Under the Calvinistic concept of a pre-birth, irreversible selection/rejection process by Providence, John would have had no reason to write his gospel any more than we would have any need of any biblical instruction to point us to God because our eternal destination would have already been signed, sealed, delivered and decided long before we drew our first breath. Verses like [John 20:30-31](#) would be a waste of time and space:

“And truly Jesus did many other signs in the presence of His disciples, which are not written in this book; but these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in His name.”

John told us very clearly and concisely that he wrote his gospel so that those who read it could learn about Jesus, and that those who subsequently chose to believe in Him because of what they read therein, could then have access to eternal life through Him (See: [John 3:16, 36](#); [8:31-32](#); [11:25-27](#); [14:1-6](#); and also [1 John 5:13](#)).

No, Calvinism’s doctrine of predestination is a completely contradictory version – and even *per*-version – of Christ’s N.T. teaching through his divinely-inspired apostles, and O.T. teaching through God’s divinely-inspired prophets and patriarchs ([2 Peter 1:16-21](#); [3:1-3](#)), who always taught that we human beings are not endowed with some irreversible earmark for either earthly or eternal salvation or destruction, but that those are options determined solely by our own educated but freewill choices (See: [Deuteronomy 28](#) and [Joshua 24](#) for example).

Calvin’s perverted predestination doctrine is – in this writer’s humble opinion – just exactly the type of heresy referred to by Peter in places like [2 Peter 2:1-3](#), and 3:14-16. And I would conclude this paragraph with Peter’s final recorded words of warning which follow immediately on the heels of those verses cited above (and which also clearly state that one can indeed “fall” and be “led away,” based on their own personal decisions and choices as well):

“You therefore, beloved, since you know this beforehand, beware lest you also fall from your own steadfastness, being led away with the error of the wicked; but grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To Him be the glory both now and forever. Amen.” ([2 Peter 3:17-18](#)).

And so, to the topic at hand. Having discussed what Calvinism teaches in regard to “predestination,” what exactly does the word of God actually say about it? The word “predestined” occurs in four verses in the New Testament, twice in [Romans 8](#), and twice in [Ephesians 1](#). Let us now explore these two texts in-depth...

“For whom He foreknew, He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren. Moreover 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](#)).

The first thing we notice in this text is the first word, “For.” Whenever you see the words “for,” or “therefore,” in any bible text, it is absolutely imperative to understand what the “for” or “therefore” is actually, ‘there for!’ It is there because the author wants you to understand without exception, that what he is about to say is invariably linked to, and based upon, what he just said. He is saying, “Because of this, or based on that, then this...” In other words, anything God says relative to “predestination” in this particular passage, must be explained and understood in light of the immediate context of those “whom He foreknew” from the immediately preceding passage! Those whom God “predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son” are those “whom He foreknew” would what, from verse 28? Those who would “love God” (See verse 28)! Those whom God knew in advance would choose – in and of their own free will – to love Him (and

whether or not we love God or anyone else is completely and entirely up to us – it’s our choice. Love is always a choice {[John 3:16](#), [14:15](#)}; otherwise, it’s not love, its oppression and slavery), **THESE** He “predestined” to be conformed to the image of His Son; **THESE** He called, justified, and glorified. But it’s not as if they were originally somehow divinely earmarked for eternal salvation and there was absolutely nothing on earth they could do about it one way or the other; in fact, just the exact opposite is true: whether or not they became one of those “predestined” for these blessings began when they made the 100% personal free will choice to either love and obey God, or hate and reject Him to begin with! And to any and all of those who would make that personal, freewill choice based on the evidence of the written word, God has already predestined to receive those blessings – but it all begins with them and their choice!

Simply illustrated, let’s say that one of our members drives the church van. Every Sunday morning and evening as well as Wednesday evening, he drives around and picks up some of our teens whose parents don’t attend, a few of our elderly, and basically anybody who wants and needs a ride to services. Everybody knows where that van is going and why. It is going to the church building. This has been predetermined. This is the purpose of the journey. This is the journey’s culmination and destination. It has been predetermined by the elders of the church that anyone who chooses to get on that van is predestined to be at the church building for services – but it’s still the choice of every single person in town as to whether or not they get on board. It’s completely up to them. Otherwise, if the elders, in their godly love for lost souls, could somehow override every townspersons freewill, they would predestine or “earmark” everyone in town to be at services! But their predestinating in advance, everyone who gets on board that van for bible study and/or worship at the church building, in no way negates the fact that each person’s destination is completely determined originally, by their own personal decision and action to either get on board or not!

The same can be seen in the Ephesians one passages on predestination. Whom did God predestine to adoption as sons (vs. 5)? And whom did He choose He would bless before the foundation of the world with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places (vss. 3-4)? Simple: Each and every single one of those who would personally and of their own freewill choice, choose to believe in, be placed in, and be faithful in, Christ Jesus (Vss. 1-14). Any person who would personally choose to get on board and “into” Him (just like with the “church van” illustration above) God predestined for a very blessed journey to an extremely glorious destination! But that initial decision was, is, and always will be, 100% up to them.

Now; some in the past have cited Pharaoh as a case in point for Calvin’s concept of predestination. They would tell us that because “God hardened Pharaoh’s heart” ([Exodus 7:3](#), [13](#); [9:12](#); [10:1](#), [20](#), [27](#); [11:10](#); [14:8](#)), Pharaoh had no choice and was therefore “predestined” for destruction despite anything he might have said and/or done. Some have also sincerely sought to make a similar claim when it comes to Judas Iscariot over the years, based on passages such as [Acts 1:16](#), which states that Peter, after Judas hung himself, said “Men *and* brethren, this Scripture had to be fulfilled, which the Holy Spirit spoke before by the mouth of David concerning Judas, who became a guide

to those who arrested Jesus.” Those who would seek to defend Judas on the charge that God “predestined” him to betray Jesus based on this and similar passages, I believe, are perhaps confusing the term “predestination” with “foreknowledge” – and there is a huge and telling difference! There is a colossal difference between knowing in advance someone is going to choose to do something, and compelling them to do it. God has the distinct advantage of knowing all things ahead of time – including how we are going to react and respond in any given situation. It’s like us seeing a movie multiple times and knowing the ending. Just because we can tell someone else who hasn’t seen the movie how the characters are going to respond, certainly doesn’t mean that we are the ones who make them respond in such a fashion. God knew how and what Judas was going to do centuries before he was ever born – but that doesn’t mean that God forced him to do it or that Judas had no choice. Remember, Peter said that Jesus was “...delivered up by the predetermined plan and foreknowledge of God” ([Acts 2:23](#)); but God still held those people who had done so, accountable for their actions because they had personally chosen to do so ([Acts 2:37-38](#)).

Pharaoh’s situation is very similar. God said He would harden Pharaoh’s heart – but He said this BECAUSE he knew Pharaoh himself would make the freewill choice to harden his own heart early on. In fact, Pharaoh is reported as having chosen to do so by his own, God-given free will (Please see: [Exodus 8:15, 32](#); and 9:34. And as you read [Exodus 9:34](#), please keep in mind the definition of sin from [James 4:17](#)). God knew the future, and therefore knew he would. God simply helped Pharaoh along after the fact, to do what He knew Pharaoh would decide to do at the first, in his own heart anyway. And here’s the all-important bottom line lesson in that for us. Although God does not take away our own, personal, individual free will, but allows us to believe and choose whatever it is that we decide we want to, once we have made that decision, God will – not because He has chosen for us, but because He loves us enough to respect our decisions and wants us to have whatever it is we have decided we want, even if it is against His best efforts and intentions for us – help us to have that which we have chosen...

“The coming of the lawless one is according to the working of Satan, with all power, signs, and lying wonders, and with all unrighteous deception among those who perish, because they did not receive the love of the truth, that they might be saved. And for this reason God will send them strong delusion, that they should believe the lie, that they all may be condemned who did not believe the truth but had pleasure in unrighteousness” ([2 Thessalonians 2:9-12](#)).

He goes on to say in the next two verses that those who are “chosen,” became part of the chosen, when they chose to believe the truth of the gospel.

In conclusion then, keep in mind: “The price was paid, the blood was shed, the gift is free, but the choice is yours.” God did not ever predestine any person, at any time, before they were ever born, for either salvation or destruction. God leaves that choice completely up to us. He provided His Son for our sins and His word for our instruction. Whether or not we choose to believe, and accept, and obey what God has provided both

for and to us, by believing, repenting, confessing, and being baptized into Christ for the forgiveness of our sins ([Acts 2:38](#); [Galatians 3:26-27](#)) and then abiding in Christ where all the blessings are ([Romans 8:1](#); [Ephesians 1:3-14](#)), is solely and completely up to us. All of those who will choose His way, He has predestined for many great and wonderful blessings. Conversely, all of those who will choose to reject His way, He has predestined for deception and destruction – because that is exactly what they have indicated they want by their own chosen course of action. It's all up to you – despite Calvinism. Choose wisely!