

# Election Precedes Creation

## One of the Most Difficult Concepts in the Entire Bible

Many Christians refuse to believe that God predestines some people to lives of evil, followed by their just condemnation.

Some Christians even refuse to believe that God predestines some people to believe the Gospel and be saved from eternal condemnation.

These Christians all believe that God's power takes second place to man's "Free Will."

"Free Will" is defended by Pastors and Evangelists who want to increase their results. They want more people to "come forward," join the ranks, and be on hand when the offering plate passes in front of them. These teachers are afraid that if they report what the Bible actually says about predestination, some will be deterred from converting, thinking "I haven't been predestined to come forward, so I won't."

Predestination is a major theme of the Bible. "Free Will" is not. The Bible does not teach that God respects or honors or defers to man's "Free Will." For every verse that has been twisted to "prove" the existence of man's "Free Will," there are a dozen verses which show that God is completely sovereign, and can make human beings do whatever God wants them to do, to bring the greatest glory to God, without any respect at all for man's "Free Will."

And for every such verse employed to defend the doctrine of "Free Will," there are a dozen verses which show that God predestines the elect to salvation and the reprobate to condemnation, before they were even created, without regard for their works or anything done on their part. All their works and actions, even their very thoughts, are predestined by God.

God's choice to save or to condemn was made before the world was even created. God's choice came before our existence. Election Precedes Creation.

Before anything was created, the Triune God existed. Christ was God, with God (John 1:1).

Father, I desire that they also whom You gave Me may be with Me where I am, that they may behold My glory which You have given Me; for You loved Me before the foundation of the world.

John 17:24

At this time, God chose to bring glory to Himself through his Son by saving some human beings. This means God had to decide to create human beings, predestine them to rebel, and predestine some to be saved from the sin to which they had been predestined.

18 knowing that you were not redeemed with

corruptible things, like silver or gold, from your aimless conduct received by tradition from your fathers, 19 but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot. 20 He indeed was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you 21 who **through Him** believe in God, who raised Him from the dead and gave Him glory, so that your faith and hope are in God.

1 Peter 1:18-21

We don't believe in God through our own "Free Will," but "through Him."

One way the Bible describes salvation is as an "adoption." God predestined that all human beings would sin against the Father and be disinherited. God would give some a new birth, and they would be adopted back into the Family.

3 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, 4 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, 5 having predestined us to adoption as sons by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will,

Ephesians 1:3-5

Not according to our "Free Will," but according to the good pleasure of **His** will, we are adopted, given an inheritance, and God gets all the glory.

11 In Him also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestined according to the purpose of Him who works all things according to the counsel of His will, 12 that we who first trusted in Christ should be to the praise of His glory.

Ephesians 1:11-12

God's plan for His people to be disinherited and then born again into His family was made before the world was created.

Then the King will say to those on His right hand, 'Come, you blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world:

Matthew 25:34

On the other hand God also planned to **not** adopt others, and their condemnation was decreed before they were born:

All who dwell on the earth will worship him, whose names have not been written in the Book of Life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world.

Revelation 13:8

The beast that you saw was, and is not, and will ascend out of the bottomless pit and go to perdition. And those who dwell on the earth will marvel, whose names are not written in the Book of Life from the foundation of the world, when they see the beast that was, and is not, and yet is.

Revelation 17:8

Another example of those who were predestined to evil – whose “Free Will” was predestined and decreed and set in place before they were born, is found in the book of Genesis.

Then the LORD said to Abram: “Know certainly that your descendants will be strangers in a land *that is* not theirs, and will serve them, and they will afflict them four hundred years. <sup>14</sup> And also the nation whom they serve I will judge; afterward they shall come out with great possessions. <sup>15</sup> Now as for you, you shall go to your fathers in peace; you shall be buried at a good old age. <sup>16</sup> But in the fourth generation they shall return here, for the iniquity of the Amorites *is* not yet complete.” <sup>18</sup> On the same day the LORD made a covenant with Abram, saying: “To your descendants I have given this land, from the river of Egypt to the great river, the River Euphrates— <sup>19</sup> the Kenites, the Kenezites, the Kadmonites, <sup>20</sup> the Hittites, the Perizzites, the Rephaim, <sup>21</sup> the Amorites, the Canaanites, the Girgashites, and the Jebusites.”

Genesis 15:13-21

Notice that at this time, God had already predestined the following to take place:

1. Abram would have a son.
2. Isaac would have a son.
3. Jacob would have 12 sons.
4. Eleven of these sons would become envious of the twelfth.
5. They would sell the twelfth son into the hands of foreigners predestined to be slave-traders, and predestined to be passing by at the precise moment the eleven sons would be at their peak of envy.
6. This great-grandson of Abram would rise from slavery to power in Egypt.
7. His entire family would be brought down to Egypt.
8. A pharaoh who “knew not Joseph” would enslave the entire race of Hebrews.

9. Before they were born, the hearts of the Egyptians had been predestined to be hard, and they would enslave the Hebrews for four centuries (Ps 105:25).
10. A deliverer would be raised up (Moses) who would lead the Hebrews in an Exodus out of Egypt.
11. The Egyptians would give their slaves “parting gifts” (as commanded by God’s Law [Deut. 15:12-14]), so the Hebrews would “come out with great possessions” (Gen 15:14).
12. Pharaoh and his armies would follow the Hebrews out of Egypt, and be destroyed.
13. All the nations whose land was promised to Israel would hear of God’s destruction of Pharaoh (as well as the destruction of Sihon king of Heshbon, Deut. 2:30; Josh 11:20), and would fear God and turn their land over to Israel (Josh 2:9-11).

This entire chain of events, involving millions of human beings and entire empires, was predestined centuries before the actors were even born, and before it was revealed to Abram in Genesis 15. The allegedly sacred “Free Will” of these human beings was of no concern to God. He made them do what He told Abram they would do, in order to bring God the greatest glory. Some were vessels for honor, others created for the sole purpose of being destroyed for the sins they were predestined to commit, to magnify God’s power over the “powerful.”

This is all made clear when Joseph tells his brothers:

But as for you, you meant evil against me; but God meant it for good, in order to bring it about as it is this day, to save many people alive.

Genesis 50:20

Joseph’s brothers were predestined to do evil. Their evil acts served God’s purposes, and brought glory to God. Therefore God changed Abram’s name:

Neither shall thy name any more be called Abram, but thy name shall be Abraham; for a father of many nations have I made thee.

(Genesis 17:5)

The predestination of millions of people and many great nations was made in advance. There was no possible chance it could not happen.

God makes human beings – from the lowliest slave to the most powerful king – do whatever God pleases, so that God gets the greatest glory. Their innermost thoughts and desires are predestined by God without respect for their “Free Will” or “free moral agency.”

The king’s heart is in the hand of the LORD,  
Like the rivers of water;  
He turns it wherever He wishes.

Proverbs 21:1

The Potter fashions the clay just as He wishes. The clay has no vote. The clay has no “Free Will” which God is obligated to honor (Isaiah 29:15-16; Isaiah 64:8; Jeremiah 18:1-11; Romans 9:12-23).

Notice the important point that God’s election was made before the human actors had been born:

11 for the children not yet being born, nor having done any good or evil, that the purpose of God according to election might stand, **not of works** but of Him who calls, 12 it was said to Rebecca, “THE OLDER SHALL SERVE THE YOUNGER.” 13 As it is written, “JACOB I HAVE LOVED, BUT ESAU I HAVE HATED.”

This choice by God was not based on any works He “foresaw” that they would do. This causes those who believe in “Free Will” to suggest that God isn’t fair. Paul answers them:

14 What shall we say then? Is God unfair? Certainly not! 15 For He says to Moses, “I WILL HAVE MERCY ON WHOMEVER I WILL HAVE MERCY, AND I WILL HAVE COMPASSION ON WHOMEVER I WILL HAVE COMPASSION.” 16 So then *it is* not of him who wills, nor of him who runs, but of God who shows mercy. 17 For the Scripture says to the Pharaoh, “FOR THIS VERY PURPOSE I HAVE RAISED YOU UP, THAT I MAY SHOW MY POWER IN YOU, AND THAT MY NAME MAY BE DECLARED IN ALL THE EARTH.” 18 Therefore He has mercy on whom He wills, and whom He wills He hardens. 19 You will say to me then, “Why does He still find fault? For who has resisted His will?”

In other words, why does God condemn someone if nobody can resist God’s predestination? Why does God find fault with someone who is only doing the evil that God predestined him to do? The Apostle answers:

20 But indeed, O man, who are you to reply against God? Will the thing formed say to him who formed *it*, “Why have you made me like this?” 21 Does not the potter have power over the clay, from the same lump to make one vessel for honor and another for dishonor? 22 *What* if God, wanting to show *His* wrath and to make His power known, endured with much longsuffering the vessels of wrath prepared for destruction, 23 and that He might make known the riches of His glory on the vessels of mercy, which He had prepared beforehand for glory, 24 *even* us whom He called, not of the Jews only, but also of the Gentiles?

God’s Election precedes man’s creation. God’s will overrules man’s will – indeed, God’s will creates and predestines man’s will. Man wants what God makes him want.

## The Most Frightening Verse in the Whole Bible

“It’s 10pm. Do you know where Judas Iscariot is?” “The traitor” who betrayed Christ – where is he right now? Or where will he eventually be?

Let’s recall the facts of his earthly life.

Judas was so despondent over his act of betraying Christ that he committed suicide (Matthew 27:4-5). But Judas had been predestined by God to commit this horrible crime:

(Luke 22:21-22) But, behold, the hand of him that betrayeth Me is with Me on the table. {22} And truly the Son of Man goeth, **as it was determined**: but woe unto that man by whom He is betrayed!

Everything about the execution of Christ was “determined” — marked out by God before it happened.

(Acts 2:22-23) Ye men of Israel, hear these words; Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among you by miracles and wonders and signs, which God did by him in the midst of you, as ye yourselves also know: {23} Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain:

Judas was known as a “traitor” for the work to which he had been predestined:

(Luke 6:16) And Judas the brother of James, and Judas Iscariot, which also was the **traitor** [Gk., *prodotes*].

But the Jews were also traitors:

(Acts 7:52) Which of the prophets have not your fathers persecuted? and they have slain them which showed before of the coming of the Just One; of whom ye have been now the **betrayers** [Gk., *prodotes*] and murderers:

Both Judas and the apostate Jews had been predestined to be traitors against the sinless Son of God. They had even been predestined to be murderers. And not murderers of some scumbag, but murderers of God’s only-begotten sinless Son.

If Judas turns out to be a Christian (or turns out to have gotten saved, or gets to go to heaven, or whatever it is that defenders of “Free Will” claim that God does not predestine), and this in spite of being a traitor against God’s Beloved Son, then Judas can expect eternal bliss in the presence of God. We can then say everything worked out OK for Judas.

But this is not what the Bible says. The Bible says it will not work out OK for Judas, because he was predestined to betray Christ.

Pontius Pilate is immortalized in the creed:

He suffered under Pontius Pilate,  
was crucified, died, and was buried.

Pilate had the power to release Christ, but chose to murder Him. “What is Truth?” he mocked (John 18:37-38). But Pilate’s sin is not as bad as the one Judas was predestined to commit.

(John 19:11) Jesus answered, Thou couldst have no power at all against Me, except it were given thee from above: therefore **he that delivered Me unto thee hath the greater sin.**

Judas was predestined to commit the most heinous crime in the history of mankind. Worse than Pilate’s. So where is Judas now?

Here is possibly the most frightening verse in the Bible:

(Matthew 26:24) The Son of man goeth as it is written of Him: but woe unto that man by whom the Son of man is betrayed! it had been good for that man if he had not been born.

It would be good for a man to be born if he gets to spend eternity with God, no matter what happened during the fleeting moments of his earthly life. But it would have been better for Judas if he had never been born, because he had been predestined to betray Christ. If Judas knew what he was going to do, and if Judas had “Free Will,” he would have chosen not to be born. But Judas had no choice in the matter. God is sovereign, not man.

If Judas is in heaven right now, it was good for him to have been born. Who would not want to spend eternity in heaven? But Jesus says it would have been better if Judas had never been born. But what choice did Judas have? Did Judas exercise his “Free Will” when he decided when and where to be born? Could Judas have chosen **not** to betray Christ? No, He had no choice. He was created for God’s purpose. “Free Will” is a myth.

The predestination of Joseph’s brothers, of Pharaoh, of numerous other kings, of all the people who were orchestrated to play their part in God’s creational symphony by rebelling against God’s Law and sinning, then to be judged, all pale in horror next to Judas being predestined to betray Christ. But without that act, our salvation would not have been sure.

Of course, all human beings are created in the Image of God. They are fearfully and wonderfully made, and can hear, understand, reflect upon and will to obey or disobey the Commandments of God. All human beings are justly held accountable to God for their actions. And in the end, every tongue will confess that God was just and fair, and we were sinners who deserve nothing but condemnation. We will all know this because we have been created in the Image of God. We aren’t pigs or

dogs – contrary to the “animal rights” crowd.<sup>1</sup> Our value comes not from our “Free Will” and God’s powerlessness, but from our being created by and in the Image of a personal, predestinating God.

But just as a computer programmer can create a computer and predict how the computer will work because it was programmed to do so (and the computer is perfectly “happy”), so God can create human beings who are “programmed” to do what God wants done, so that in the end every person does what he “wants,” and God gets the glory. Every tongue will confess that they deserved only punishment. Nobody will say God was unfair to condemn them for carrying out the evil deeds that God predestined them to commit (Romans 9:14-20). Especially those who were involved in some way with the murder of Christ and the salvation of God’s Elect.

When God put words in the mouths of the Old Testament prophets that Christ would be murdered, God had already determined that apostate Jews would be born and would murder Christ. We have already seen this in Acts 2. Later in Acts, we read:

(Acts 13:27-28) Because the residents of Jerusalem and their leaders did not recognize him or understand the words of the prophets that are read every sabbath, they fulfilled those words by condemning Him. {28} Even though they found no cause for a sentence of death, they asked Pilate to have Him killed.

The only way God knew that the Jews would fulfill the words of the prophets is that God created them for this very purpose. He predestined their parents to conceive them so they would commit this heinous sin.

The word in Acts 2 translated “determinate” is *horizo*, the Greek word from which we get our word “horizon.”

Here are the relevant occurrences of this word:

(Luke 22:22) And truly the Son of man goeth, as it was determined: but woe unto that man by whom he is betrayed!

(Acts 2:23) Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain:

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<sup>1</sup> “Animal liberationists do not separate out the human animal, so there is no rational basis for saying that a human being has special rights. **A rat is a pig is a dog is a boy.** They are all mammals.” —Ingrid Newkirk, national director, People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA), as quoted in *Vogue*, September 1989.

“The life of an ant and that of my child should be granted equal consideration.” —Michael W. Fox, Vice President, The Humane Society of the United States, *The Inhumane Society*, New York, 1990.

(Acts 10:40-42) Him God raised up the third day, and showed him openly; {41} Not to all the people, but unto witnesses chosen before [Gk., *pro-cheirotoneo*, chosen beforehand] by God, even to us, who did eat and drink with him after he rose from the dead. {42} And he commanded us to preach unto the people, and to testify that it is he which was ordained [*horizo*] of God to be the Judge of quick and dead.

(Acts 17:26) And hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth, and hath determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of their habitation;

Notice in this verse that the entire life of individuals in every nation has been determined: where they will live, and how long they will live: all determined by God before they were even born.

If everything in a person's life can be predestined – his parents and ancestry, and thus his genetic makeup, his birthplace and nationality, where he will live during his life, his personality, upbringing, and education, and even acts which are utterly contrary to the Law of God, including the most despicable sins imaginable – if all these things can be predestined by God, why not that person's "salvation?"

The fact is that every single molecule in the universe is predestined by God. The molecules in our brain that make up our thoughts, emotions, imaginations and aspirations, are animated by electrical current passing between synapses, and every atomic movement in our being has been predestined by God. Nothing came into existence that God did not create, and nothing – no power or force – compelled God to create in a way He did not want.

Notice that Judas, in carrying out God's predestined work, was moved by Satan.

(Luke 22:3-4) Then entered Satan into Judas surnamed Iscariot, being of the number of the twelve. {4} And he went his way, and communed with the chief priests and captains, how he might betray Him unto them.

Satan was created by God and therefore was predestined by God as the means to the end (the end

being Judas betraying Christ), which was itself a means to the end of crucifying Christ, which was the means to the end of securing salvation for God's elect.

God knows the end, and predestines all the means.

(Isaiah 46:10) Declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done, saying, My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure:

(Isaiah 44:6-7) Thus saith the LORD the King of Israel, and his redeemer the LORD of hosts; I am the first, and I am the last; and beside me there is no God. {7} And who, as I, shall call, and shall declare it, and set it in order for me, since I appointed the ancient people? and the things that are coming, and shall come, let them show unto them.

(Isaiah 45:21) Tell ye, and bring them near; yea, let them take counsel together: who hath declared this from ancient time? who hath told it from that time? have not I the LORD? and there is no God else beside me; a just God and a Saviour; there is none beside me.

(Revelation 22:13) I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last.

God has foreknowledge because He is the Creator. Just like a competent computer programmer knows what a computer will do when it runs his program, God knows the end from the beginning because He created the end, and the means thereto. His foreknowledge and predetermination includes the lost:

(Acts 2:23) Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain:

and the saved:

(1 Peter 1:2) Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ: Grace unto you, and peace, be multiplied.

Where is the verse in Scripture which says God has to respect the "Free Will" of man?

## Is it God's Will that Not a Single Human Being Perish?

One of the most common arguments against God's predestination of sinners unto condemnation is the idea that God wants all human beings to be saved, but He was forced to create them with a "Free Will" which they use to act in ways that God does not want. Even though many do perish, it is said that God is "not willing that

any should perish."

Who causes the following people to perish, if not God?

(Matthew 10:28) And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather

fear Him which is able to **destroy** [Greek: *apollumi*] both soul and body in hell.

(Matthew 22:7) But when the King heard thereof, He was wroth: and He sent forth His armies, and **destroyed** [*apollumi*] those murderers, and burned up their city.

(Mark 12:9) What shall therefore the lord of the vineyard do? He will come and **destroy** [*apollumi*] the husbandmen, and will give the vineyard unto others.

(Luke 13:3) I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise **perish** [*apollumi*].

(Luke 17:27) They did eat, they drank, they married wives, they were given in marriage, until the day that Noah entered into the ark, and the flood came, and **destroyed** [*apollumi*] them all.

(Luke 17:29) But the same day that Lot went out of Sodom it rained fire and brimstone from heaven, and **destroyed** [*apollumi*] them all.

(Luke 20:16-18) He shall come and **destroy** [*apollumi*] these husbandmen, and shall give the vineyard to others. And when they heard it, they said, God forbid. {17} And He beheld them, and said, What is this then that is written, The stone which the builders rejected, the same is become the head of the corner? {18} Whosoever shall fall upon that stone shall be broken; but on whomsoever it shall fall, it will grind him to powder.

(James 4:12) There is one lawgiver, who is able to save and to **destroy** [*apollumi*]: who art thou that judgest another?

(Jude 1:5) I will therefore put you in remembrance, though ye once knew this, how that the Lord, having saved the people out of the land of Egypt, afterward **destroyed** [*apollumi*] them that believed not.

But isn't there a verse that says God is "not willing that any should perish?"

Yes, but that phrase is taken out of context.

It comes from the second letter of Peter. Most of Peter's letter is about false teachers and evil doers who are about to be destroyed.

5 For this they willfully forget: that by the word of God the heavens were of old, and the earth standing out of water and in the water, 6 by which the world that then existed **perished** [*apollumi*], being flooded with water. 7 But the

heavens and the earth which are now preserved by the same word, are reserved for fire until the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men.

But just as Noah escaped the flood, Peter wants his readers to escape the coming fiery judgment of Israel (Matthew 22:7), as the temple – the "old heavens and earth" of the Mosaic age – is destroyed (Hebrews 8:5; 9:11,23-24; Isaiah 13:13; 51:6; 65:17; 66:22; Joel 2:10,30; 3:16; Luke 21:26; 2 Peter 3:5, 7, 10, 13). This judgment was predicted by Christ (Matthew 24) who said the Day of Judgment would happen before that generation died out (Matthew 16:27-28), but the "scoffers" that Peter describes had been hearing about this imminent Day of Judgment for decades, and were now questioning whether the judgment would happen at all. Peter writes his letter to the elect "who have obtained like precious faith with us by the righteousness of our God and Savior Jesus Christ" (2 Peter 1:1), and urges them as brethren to "be even more diligent to make your calling and election sure" (1:10). Then, after recalling the promised judgment of the scoffers, Peter encourages his fellow-believers, that

The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should **perish** [*apollumi*], but that all should come to repentance.

2 Peter 3:9

God is "longsuffering to *us*-ward," but not *them*-ward. He is merciful toward the elect, but not toward the scoffers, who will not come to repentance, and are about to **perish**.

To use verse 9 to cancel out verse 6 (and all the other verses we just read which talk about God causing some to **perish** [*apollumi*]) is to twist the Scripture. Nobody *has to* perish. There is no Force in the universe that compels God not to regenerate the hearts of scoffers, impute the righteousness of Christ to their account, and save them from perishing. God was "willing" that everyone except Noah "perish" (v.6). God was telling the saints in Peter's day that He was ready to destroy the scoffers (v.9), but was patiently bringing in all the elect before "the Day of Judgment" (v.7; see also 2 Peter 2:9: "then the Lord knows how to deliver the godly out of temptations and to reserve the unjust under punishment for the day of judgment").

God is not willing for any of His Elect to perish, but He has created vessels prepared beforehand for destruction, and He is very willing for them to perish, to show the value of His mercy toward the Elect.