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Six Things Predestined by God

Introduction

The doctrine of predestination is one of the most misunderstood doctrines in the New Testament. As to doctrinal formation there are only four verses in the New Testament that use the word "Predestined." They are Romans 8:29, 30 and Ephesians 1:5, 11. In addition, another form of the same verb is used in Acts 4:28 and 1 Corinthians 2:7. The Greek word *proorizo* is translated "predestinate" means "to predetermine," "to foreordain," or "to plan in advance." Many claims are made about the meaning of predestination or foreordination. The following clearly marks out what God says about this matter.

1. Acts 4:27-28 - *For truly against Your Holy Servant Jesus whom You anointed, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles and the people of Israel, were gathered together to do whatever Your hand and Your purpose determined (literally, predestined) before to be done (NKJV).* This clearly states that the sacrificial death on the cross may have been orchestrated by Herod, Pilate, the Jewish leaders, and the people, but God was conducting the orchestra. It was His predetermined plan and purpose to allow Jesus to suffer and die for the sins of a lost world, Jn 3:16-18. This plan was not an afterthought, but clearly it was a part of God's predetermined will before the world began.

2. 1 Corinthians 2:6-7 - *However, we speak wisdom among those who are mature, yet not the wisdom of this age, nor of the rulers of this age, who are coming to nothing. But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, the hidden wisdom which God ordained (literally, predestined) before the ages for our glory.* Every believer has access to the wisdom of God. That access was predestined before the world began. It is one of the mysteries or sacred secrets of the Word of God that is understood by every believer but the world cannot grasp this wisdom.

3. Romans 8:29 - *For whom He foreknew, He predestined to be conformed in the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn of many brethren.* When we are saved God begins the process of remaking us in the image of His Son, Jesus the Messiah. This promise is a guarantee, predestined that every believer is to be remade in the image of Jesus. See the helpful note on Romans 8:29 in the *Believer's Study Bible* p. 1611. The Bible clearly teaches two irreconcilable truths. God is absolutely sovereign in all things. Human beings have a limited free will and therefore are held accountable for knowing the deep things of God, especially the Gospel. How can limited free will exist in a universe that operates under the absolute sovereignty of God?

4. Romans 8:30 - *Moreover whom He predestined these He also called; whom He called, these He also justified; and whom He justified, these He also glorified.* The call, justification, and glorification of every believer also is predestined and guaranteed by God Himself. This is why Southern Baptists teach the doctrine of the perseverance of believers. Every believer is a recipient of this great promise that insures that salvation once secured is immutable because of the will, promise, and power of God. See the note on 8:30 in the *Believer's Study Bible*, p. 1611.
5. Ephesians 1:5 - . . . *having predestined us to the adoption as sons by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will.* God has predetermined that every believer will be adopted into the family of God. This means every person has the opportunity to believe but only those who respond will be adopted into the family of God with Jesus as their elder brother.
6. Ephesians 1:11 - *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.* This is a restatement of Romans 8:28, the verse that precedes to two "predestination verses" in Romans 8:29-30. Romans 8:28 says, *And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose.* Actually, the subject of this sentence is "God" not "things" so it should be translated, *So we know that God is working together all things for good to those who love Him and are called according to His purpose* (translated from the Greek text).

Conclusion

There is a tension in the Bible in that it teaches us that God is omnipotent, omniscient, omnipresent and therefore absolutely sovereign over all creation and all things in heaven and in the material universe. How can God be sovereign and human beings have even a limited free will to disobey God? We cannot explain or resolve this tension. Armenians believe in a works based salvation, denies original sin, God's grace can be resisted, conditional election, and believe that salvation can be lost by apostasy. Calvinists believe faith is not a condition for salvation, the grace of God is irresistible, there are no works to produce salvation, humans are totally depraved, and salvation is permanent. I am sometimes asked are you a Calvinist or an Armenian? My answer is neither, I am a Baptist!

Baptists believe salvation is by grace through faith both granted by the power of God, Ephesians 2:8-9. Genuine salvation is irrevocable, Heb 7:25; 12:7-11. Grace can be resisted and rejected even though Christ died for all, Matthew 22:14. God extends His invitation to all but only those who surrender are saved, Matt 11:28; Jn 3:16; Rom 10:9-10; Rev 22:17. God is absolutely sovereign but has permitted limited free will so that human beings can reject him if they choose.