

Predestination

A Bible Study Course for Adults

by

John A. Moldstad, Jr.

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Lesson One

Laying the Groundwork

Predestination, pp. 7-16

Goal

To lay the foundation for understanding the doctrine of predestination through a review of the key teachings of the Bible on the subject of salvation.

Introduction

- In our culture today the term *Christian* is used to describe a wide variety of theological positions, customs, and lifestyles. Some people's ideas of what makes people Christian is far removed from what the Bible says. Can you give some examples of how the term is misused?
- What makes a person or group truly Christian?

Since numerous misunderstandings are connected with the name Christian, we will review some of the basic teachings of the Bible concerning the salvation of sinners. This review will help us in our future discussion of predestination.

Corruption of the sinner

Romans 5:18 The result of one trespass was condemnation for all men.

Psalms 53:3 Everyone has turned away, they have together become corrupt; there is no one who does good, not even one.

Romans 8:7,8 The sinful mind is hostile to God. It does not submit to God's law, nor can it do so. Those controlled by the sinful nature cannot please God.

- You've heard the expression "There's a little good in everyone." How does this saying compare with how Scripture describes the spiritual state of all people?

- If God gave us exactly what we deserved, what kind of predicament would we all be facing?
- Considering the teaching of total depravity, is anyone more qualified for coming to faith than another?

1 Timothy 2:4 [God] wants all men to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth.

2 Peter 3:9 He is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance.

- How does the Bible make a connection between what God desires for all people and the length of time he permits the world to exist?

2 Corinthians 5:19 God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting men's sins against them.

Ezekiel 33:11 "As surely as I live, declares the Sovereign LORD, I take no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but rather that they turn from their ways and live."

- When Christ died on the cross, for how many people's sins was he paying the punishment?
- Does God try harder to win some to faith than he does with others?
- Considering the fact that God has redeemed all people and wants all to be saved, is there any reason in God that some are lost?

1 Corinthians 12:3 No one can say, "Jesus is Lord," except by the Holy Spirit.

Matthew 23:37 "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, you who kill the prophets and stone those sent to you, how often I have longed to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under wings, but you were not willing."

- Each of the above passages teaches a principle that we must keep in mind when discussing predestination. One concerns faith, and the other, unbelief. What are they?

Romans 10:17 Faith comes from hearing the message, and the message is heard through the word of Christ.

John 3:5 No one can enter the kingdom of God unless he is born of water and the Spirit.

- What “channels” does the Holy Spirit use in bringing people to faith?
- When Christians from other denominations speak of “making one’s decision for Christ,” what Bible teachings presented in this chapter are placed in jeopardy?

Summary

Today we have reviewed basic doctrines concerning our salvation from sin. We have noted that sin is so ingrained in us from birth that we enter into this world spiritually dead and as enemies of God. We have heard how Christ came and rescued mankind by making the ultimate sacrifice for sin. We noted that God wants all people to go to heaven, and therefore he offers salvation in Christ through the means of grace. Where the means of grace are in use, there the Holy Spirit works faith according to his plan.

This background enables us to look more carefully in our next sessions at the passages that speak specifically about the doctrine of predestination. In our next lesson, we will continue to define what it means to be a Christian and examine some very important passages on predestination.

During the week

1. Review this lesson by reading *Predestination*, pages 7-16. Or, look ahead to the next lesson by reading pages 17-23.
2. Read Romans 1-8. Here we find an overview of what it means to be a Christian.