

## Are we as Christians predestined before the world began?

The question arises among the brethren; Are we predestined to be called to be children of the most high before the foundation of the world?

Some believe that the Father knew our “persons” before the foundation of the world and that no matter our behavior we will be glorified and have our place in the Kingdom of the Father.

The primary passage for the belief in support of predestination is written by Paul in Ephesians chapter one;

Eph 1:4 According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love:

5 Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will,

6 To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved.

The central view of this belief;

Verse 4 it is said establishes the fact that we “are chosen” or existing in the mind of the Father before the foundation of the earth. It also presupposes that our person would be physically created and inserted into various points in human history according to the will of the Father. Some placed in the Old testament and some in the new testament. It also implies that we are not required to do anything, we are “chosen” and that means we will be glorified no matter our behavior. Our behavior then is preordained that we will not disobey the creator at any time or to the place of being disqualified from being in the Kingdom.

So, do the scriptures support such a view of our origin and destiny.

We first begin our discussion with the belief that our person`s existed in the mind of the Father before the foundation of the world; That the Father knew us by **name** before we were born.

There are two examples of an individual being predestined from before the womb. besides the Messiah; Clearly, Jeremiah is mentioned and David is strongly alluded to in that his days were preordained.

The others from the womb would include Moses, Paul, and John the baptized.

In the case of Jeremiah, he was predestined “before the womb” the wording is very clear;

Jer 1:4 Then the word of the LORD came unto me, saying,

Jer 1:5 **Before I formed thee in the belly I knew thee;** and before thou camest forth out of the womb I sanctified thee, and I ordained thee a prophet unto the nations

The reference to David occurs in the Psalms where he talks about his birth and design for his life by Yahovah.

Psa 139:15 My substance was not hid from thee, when I was made in secret, and curiously wrought in the lowest parts of the earth.

Psa 139:16 Thine eyes did see my substance, yet being unperfect; and in thy book all my members were written, which in continuance were fashioned, when as yet there was none of them.

Psalm 139:15-16 Amplified Bible, Classic Edition (AMPC)

15 My frame was not hidden from You when I was being formed in secret [and intricately and curiously wrought [as if embroidered with various colors] in the depths of the earth [a region of darkness and mystery].

16 Your eyes saw my unformed substance, and in Your book all the days [of my life] were written before ever they took shape, when as yet there was none of them.

In verse 15 predestination begins with the view of the child at conception being “the unformed substance”. Continuing, all the days of David’s life were written in the book at the time of that conception. One can argue that the Father had the idea of King David in mind before the conception took place. That would be reasonable to assume in one sense, however the scripture doesn’t clearly say he was ordained before the womb. Since the concept of the Father knowing all things beforehand is primary, David could have been in the mind of the Father before he was born.

Albert Barnes' Notes on the Whole Bible/ Psalm 139:15-16

**Thine eyes did see my substance, yet being unperfect** - This whole verse is very obscure, but the “idea” in this expression clearly is, “Before I had shape or form thou didst see what I was to be.” The single word in the original translated “my substance, yet being unperfect,” is גֹּלֶם gôlem It occurs only in this place, though the verb - גָּלַם gâlam - is found in 2 Kings 2:8, where it is used in reference to the mantle of Elijah: And Elijah took his mantle, and “wrapped it together,” etc.

That is, he rolled it up, or he folded it. The noun, then, means that which “is” rolled or wrapped together; that which is folded up, and hence, is applicable to anything folded up or undeveloped; and would thus most aptly denote the embryo, or the foetus, where all the members of the body are as yet folded up, or undeveloped; that is, before they have assumed their distinct form and proportions. This is undoubtedly the idea here. Before the embryo had any such form that its future size, shape, or proportions could be marked by the eye of man, it was clearly and distinctly known by God.

**And in thy book** - Where thou recordest all things. Perhaps the allusion here would be to the book of an architect or draftsman, who, before his work is begun, draws his plan, or sketches it for the direction of the workmen.

**All my members were written** - The words “my members” are not in the original. The Hebrew is, as in the margin, “all of them.” The reference may be, not to the members of his body, but to his “days” (see the margin on the succeeding phrase) - and then the sense would be, all my “days,” or all the periods of my life, were delineated in thy book.

That is, **When my substance** - my form - was not yet developed, when yet an embryo, and when nothing could be determined from that by the eye of man as to what I was to be, all the future was known to God, and was written down - just what should be my form and vigor; how long I should live; what I should be; what would be the events of my life.

**Which in continuance were fashioned** - Margin, “What days they should be fashioned.” Literally, “Days should be formed.” DeWette renders this, “The days were determined before any one of them was.” There is nothing in the Hebrew to correspond with the phrase “in continuance.” The simple idea is, The days of my life were determined on, the whole matter was fixed and settled, not by anything seen in the embryo, but “before” there was any form - before there were any means of judging from what I then was to what I would be - all was seen and arranged in the divine mind.

**When as yet there was none of them** - literally, “And not one among them.” Before there was one of them in actual existence. Not one development had yet occurred from which it could be inferred what the rest would be. The entire knowledge on the subject must have been based on Omniscience.

In reference to Moses , Paul and John the Baptist the scriptural references are below;

Moses;

Exo 2:1 And there went a man of the house of Levi, and took to wife a daughter of Levi.

Exo 2:2 And the woman conceived, and bare a son: and when she saw him that he was a goodly child, she hid him three months.

Heb\_11:23. asteios to Theo, "beautiful to God" =

Paul;

Paul reference to himself is found in Galatians. He states here that the predestination or separation took place “from” or “at” his mother`s womb. The Father had foreknowledge of him. The question we must ask if this predestination occurred before the foundation of the world.

Gal 1:15 But when it pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb, and called me by his grace,

John the Baptist;

The baby leaped in the womb of Elizabeth at the hearing of the salutation of Mary

Luk 1:41 And it came to pass, that, when Elisabeth heard the salutation of Mary, **the babe leaped in her womb**; and Elisabeth was filled with the Holy Ghost:

Luk 1:76 And thou, child, shalt be called the prophet of the Highest: for thou shalt go before the face of the Lord to prepare his ways;

Luk 1:77 To give knowledge of salvation unto his people by the remission of their sins,

The concept of the Father having our persons already determined before the foundation of the earth and are placement in the body of Christ seems to contradict some clear scriptures that exists in the bible about predestination.

The first concept along these lines shows us that there is a calling of individuals in the scriptures to Yahshua that respond by their own freewill, drawn by the Father at that time, but not by predetermination. Take, for instance, the parable of the sower and the seed.

There is foreknowledge before the calling but not a predetermination to remain faithful to the end as a predetermined outcome would demand.

This parable is explained by Yahshua himself so we can interpret this parable confidently as to its meaning.

Mat 13:18 Hear ye therefore the parable of the sower.

19 When any one heareth the word of the kingdom, and understandeth it not, then cometh the wicked one, and catcheth away that which was sown in his heart. This is he which received seed by the way side.

20 But he that received the seed into stony places, the same is he that heareth the word, and anon with joy receiveth it;

21 Yet hath he not root in himself, but dureth for a while: for when tribulation or persecution ariseth because of the word, by and by he is offended.

22 He also that received seed among the thorns is he that heareth the word; and the care of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches, choke the word, and he becometh unfruitful.

23 But he that received seed into the good ground is he that heareth the word, and understandeth it; which also beareth fruit, and bringeth forth, some an hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty

So, we see in this parable that Christ as sowing the word of truth or the gospel expects a rejection of the word in many and one category, the few, receiving the seed or truth to remain faithful and grow abundantly in understanding.

This parable clearly shows that there is free choice among those being called. They have a choice to stay or leave with regard to the gospel. If they were predetermined there would be no need to present this parable. All called would naturally have a predisposition to the truth and all would be of “good ground” But here we see not all those called are of “good ground”

Christ himself tells us that there is a selection process.

A call goes out into the world and the few are they which respond to it and are chosen.

Mat\_20:16 So the last shall be first, and the first last: for many be called, but few chosen.

Mat\_22:14 For many are called, but few are chosen.

The one who wrote about predestination, Paul, in Ephesians says of himself that even though he was ordained from the womb, to be an Apostle, he was subject to being **disqualified** if he succumbed to the works of the flesh. He said he was striving for the mastery of the human body. There is no predestination here in his words to the Corinthians.

1Co 9:25 And every man that striveth for the mastery is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a corruptible crown; but we an incorruptible.

26 I therefore so run, not as uncertainly; so fight I, not as one that beateth the air:  
27 But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, **I myself should be a castaway.**

Notice verse 27 the phrase “ I myself should be a “castaway” the word castaway in the greek is ’

δοκιμος  
adokimos  
ad-ok'-ee-mos

From G1 (as a negative particle) and G1384; unapproved, that is, rejected; by implication worthless (literally or morally): - castaway, rejected, reprobate.

So, we see that Paul is indicating the possibility that he could become unapproved or “rejected” if he did not bring his body into subjection with the power of the holy spirit. His statement tells us that one cannot do whatever one wants and still be predestined to be glorified.

Paul also was a murderer as he killed many Christians in his day. Was he predestined to commit those crimes against the body of Christ. He was ordained from the womb to be an Apostle, but he first murdered them.

Why was he forgiven for these acts? Was it that he was ordained from the womb? No, it was because he did it “ignorantly” in unbelief. He did not know he was doing evil. He thought he was serving God.

1Ti 1:12 And I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who hath enabled me, for that he counted me faithful, putting me into the ministry;

1Ti 1:13 Who was before a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and injurious: but I obtained mercy, **because I did it ignorantly in unbelief.**

He chose to commit those murders. If he did not repent of those wrongdoings he would not have been able to be an Apostle is the implication. That`s why he **obtained mercy.**

In the letter to the seven churches Christ said that if the church of Ephesus would not repent and overcome their candlestick would be removed. If the brethren were predestined how could their candlestick be removed because of their “first” works? Their first love.

Rev 2:5 Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent.

Reviewing Paul’s statements in Romans 8:29,30

Rom 8:29 For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren.

Rom 8:30 Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified.

These verses can be taken to say that the foreknowing of the Father was before the foundation of the world but Paul in Galatians as we have seen said his foreknowing began in the womb. He did not say before the world began. That is the same with others called specially for a special purpose by the Father. They were called either in or before the womb. None of the scriptures in those instances say “before the world began” It is assured that there was a plan of things to occur during the course of mankind’s existence on the earth but the predestination of individual people to fit into that plan occurred prior to but not before the foundation of the world.

In verse 29 Predestination is defined to be about “conforming” to the “image” of Yahshua. Not about predestinating the individual to a desired end without the participation of the individual’s freewill in the process.

Verse 30 shows that this predestination into a process of “conforming “into the image of the Son sets the foundation for the individual being called into that process. After the calling from the Father takes place he justifies the person by the sacrifice of Christ and after the resurrection glorifies the person into a spirit being.

Returning back to Ephesians we also see that predestination refers to becoming adopted children not necessarily foreknown before the foundation of the world.

Eph 1:5 **Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children** by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will,

I believe the passages from Heb 10:29 by Paul show the process of salvation but it also shows the possibility that the individual can reject that plan and end up in the lake of fire. This redefines the normal concept of predestination from a destination to the kingdom despite our behavior to one that includes our free will.

Heb 10:29 Of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, **who hath trodden under foot the Son of God**, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace?

Heb 10:26 For if we sin wilfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, **there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins,**

Paul, in Thessalonians clarifies this concept of rejection by those called into the truth and those in the world not accepting the truth. It goes further to show the Father`s response to that attitude; That they all be damned or judged.

2Th 2:10 And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved.

11 And for this cause **God shall send them strong delusion**, that they should believe a lie:

12 That **they all might be damned who believed not the truth**, but had pleasure in unrighteousness.

There is an argument that says that the Father`s will overrides our will and no matter what we do the Father will force us to be in the Kingdom. It is based on the word “will” in Phillipians 2:13

Php 2:13 For it is God which worketh in you both to **will** and to do of his good pleasure.

If we take a look at the word “will” in the Greek we can see that the meaning or force of the word is softer than a “overriding” will of the Father in us.

G2309 Will  
thelō / ethelō

Thayer Definition:

- 1) to will, have in mind, intend
- 1a) to be resolved or determined, to purpose
- 1b) to desire, to wish
- 1c) to love
- 1c1) to like to do a thing, be fond of doing
- 1d) to take delight in, have pleasure

If we take the summary of the intent of this word “will” we see by the various definitions that this “will” is our will taking “delight or being fond of doing” the Father`s will. In other words, we acquiesce our will to the Father`s will because we want to and not because we are coerced.

Another argument is found in Roman 9:18 about the will of the Father and applying the Hardening of Pharaoh`s heart for his purposes to forcing his will in our lives as it applied to Predestination.

Rom 9:17 For the scripture saith unto Pharaoh, Even for this same purpose have I raised thee up, that I might shew my power in thee, and that my name might be declared throughout all the earth.

Rom 9:18 Therefore hath he mercy on whom he will have mercy, and whom he **will he hardeneth**.

G4645 Hardened

sklērunō

Thayer Definition:

- 1) to make hard, harden
- 2) metaphorically
  - 2a) to render obstinate, stubborn
  - 2b) to be hardened
  - 2c) to become obstinate or stubborn

So, we see the verse in context is showing the sovereignty of the Father in the carrying out of his will. No one can stop the plan he what`s to accomplish. In that context he wanted to show his sovereignty and glory by imposing his will on Pharaoh. Nations have to submit to his purposes. The same situation existed with Nebuchadnezzar as the ruler in Babylon submitting to the Father`s rule.

When discussing the Pharaoh himself and his own attitude towards the Israelites. It is remembered that he was worried that the Israelites might pose a problem for him by possibly rebelling against his government and trying to take over his kingdom. He therefore, dealt treacherously with them and caused great hardships upon them unnecessarily.

Stephen is quoted as saying in Acts concerning that time period;

Act 7:17 But when the time of the promise drew nigh, which God had sworn to Abraham, the people grew and multiplied in Egypt,

18 Till another king arose, which knew not Joseph.

19 The same **dealt subtilly** with our kindred, and **evil entreated** our fathers, so that they cast out their young children, to the end they might not live.

So, prior to the Father hardening his heart Pharaoh already displayed a disdain for the children of Israel many years before Moses came on the scene. The Father did not cause Pharaoh to become evil in his dealing with the Israelites, he made him stubborn in releasing the Israelites from captivity so he could show his glory and sovereignty to the Israelites and also to Egypt. He did not cause Pharaoh, who was not a righteousness King, to become evil by making him stubborn. He was already evil and treacherous.

This display of the Father`s will in Pharaoh`s case is different than the Father`s will in his children. Those that try to show a connection from Pharaohs situation to our situation in that the Father`s will is somehow oppressive are mistaken. As we have seen, the will of the Father is welcome in his children for the purpose of accomplishing the plan he has for all mankind. It empowers, not takes over or oppresses the individual. Paul says clearly in Corinthians that the spirit of the prophets is subject to the prophets; It is under their control. In dealing with the nations of the world a spirit of power that cannot be resisted is employed to show the sovereignty of his will in the affairs of mankind.

In conclusion, I want to emphasize that the foreknowledge of the Father and the working of the Son is beyond our comprehension. They both can accomplish whatever they want through their spirit. The inner workings of this process in this study is only a fragment of the true picture. However, I do see in the scriptures that there is a principle of "freewill" that is employed in the salvation of mankind. The Father will not force his will upon those that reject him with regard to salvation. However, he will work strongly in those who want to be at one with him and the Son. The kingdom is righteousness, joy and peace. Those that want to live there must be in agreement with those concepts and display those attributes in their lives.

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