



73 Twenty Ministries
BIBLE STUDIES FOR THE ENTHUSIAST

BEFORE THE FOUNDATION OF THE WORLD

Understanding Predestination as God's Plan for Every Believer

73 TWENTY MINISTRIES

A TEACHING MINISTRY OF DR. ROBERT C CROWDER

73TWENTY MINISTRIES: CHARTING THE WORD, NAVIGATING FAITH

Rooted in a lifelong passion for teaching and guiding others in Biblical truth, 73Twenty Ministries is devoted to helping believers navigate the depths of Scripture with both clarity and conviction.

The name 73Twenty holds deep personal significance: it comes from my childhood home at 7320 Greenwood Boulevard in Denver, Colorado. It was here that the foundations of my faith, study, and service were first laid. With the majestic Rocky Mountains ever-present on my horizons, God's Word has been a constant guide and presence throughout my life. The logo of 73Twenty Ministries, with its three mountain peaks in gray, blue, and orange, symbolizes not only the Triune God: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, but also the unwavering foundation of Biblical truth upon which our faith is built.

For more than twenty years, I've served as a pastor, teacher, mentor, and author, committed to making Biblical truths accessible and applicable. Through sermons, Bible studies, books, articles, and other teaching resources, 73Twenty Ministries exists to equip believers, strengthen churches, and proclaim the Gospel. Our mission is both simple and profound: to chart the Word, guiding faith, and helping others anchor their lives in Scripture.

At 73Twenty Ministries, we believe that faithful Biblical study should engage the mind, transform the heart, and shape daily life. Whether through exegetical teaching, character studies, theological exploration, or practical application, every resource is crafted to deepen understanding, strengthen conviction, and encourage obedience to God's Word.

As a ministry grounded in a conservative Baptist, dispensationalist approach, we focus on Biblical exposition, doctrinal clarity, and practical discipleship. We uphold the belief that Scripture is the authoritative, inerrant, and sufficient Word of God, and it's our privilege to help others navigate its timeless truths.

I invite you to explore the resources at 73TwentyMinistries.com and join us on this journey of discovery, growth, and unwavering faith. Together, let's stand on the mountain of God's truths and proclaim His name to every generation.

For His glory alone,

Dr. Robert C. Crowder, Th.D.

Founder, 73Twenty Ministries

PREDESTINATION: GOD’S SOVEREIGN PLAN FOR THE BELIEVER’S DESTINY

Romans 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.

Ephesians 1:3–4 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ: 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.

OPENING REFLECTION

I remember sitting in a theology class many years ago, surrounded by passionate students debating whether we were chosen for salvation before time or whether our decisions even mattered. One side spoke of God’s sovereignty, the other of man’s responsibility. But the longer I studied the Scriptures, the clearer it became: these truths are not at odds. They are companions. God is absolutely sovereign: and yet He invites every man and woman to respond freely to His grace. Predestination is not about who gets saved and who doesn’t. It’s about what God has prepared for those who believe.

FOUNDATIONAL TRUTHS: UNDERSTANDING THE DOCTRINE

The word *predestinate* comes from the Greek word *proorizō*, meaning “to determine beforehand.” It is used in reference to God’s plan for believers in four New Testament verses (Romans 8:29–30; Ephesians 1:5, 11). In each of these cases, the context speaks of blessings and purposes for those who are already in Christ. Predestination is not a decree concerning who will be saved; it is a promise concerning what will happen to the saved.

In Romans 8:29–30, we read that those whom God “foreknew” He also “*predestinated to be conformed to the image of his Son*.” This means God’s plan for the believer is transformation: Christlikeness. It is sanctification and glorification. The golden chain: *called, justified, glorified*, describes a spiritual process God ensures for every true believer.

Likewise, Ephesians 1:5 declares that we are predestined to *adoption as children by Jesus Christ*, and verse 11 affirms that we have been predestined to obtain an *inheritance*. Both passages underscore the believer’s position and future, not their initial reception of the gospel.

THE “GOLDEN CHAIN” OF REDEMPTION

The term “Golden Chain” is often used to describe the sequence of divine actions in Romans 8:29–30, which outlines God’s complete redemptive plan for every believer. It is called a *chain* because each

Before the Foundation of the World

doctrine is linked to the next, and *golden* because it reflects the precious and eternal work of God in the life of His children:

“For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son... 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.” (Romans 8:29–30)

Let’s briefly look at each link:

1. Foreknowledge: God’s prior knowledge of those who would respond to Him in faith (1 Peter 1:2).
2. Predestination: God’s determination that those foreknown would be conformed to Christ’s image (Romans 8:29).
3. Calling: The invitation extended through the gospel, leading to repentance and faith (2 Thessalonians 2:14).
4. Justification: God’s legal declaration of righteousness granted to the believer at the moment of faith (Romans 5:1).
5. Glorification: The final and certain transformation of believers into Christ’s likeness at His coming (Philippians 3:21).

I realized this chain does not determine who will be saved: it affirms what will happen to those who are saved. It begins with foreknowledge, not predestination. The entire sequence is God’s gracious commitment to bring His children from the moment of saving faith to eternal glory. In a dispensational framework, it preserves both God’s sovereignty and human freedom, anchoring our assurance in the faithfulness of God.

FREE WILL AND THE CALL TO BELIEVE

Understanding predestination rightly demands that we also understand the doctrine of “free will.” The Bible presents man as a moral agent, responsible before God to respond to His revealed truth. Free will, in this context, is the God-given ability to respond to the gospel: to accept or reject God’s offer of salvation.

“Choose you this day whom ye will serve...” (Joshua 24:15)

God draws, convicts, and offers salvation to all (John 12:32; 1 Timothy 2:4; 2 Peter 3:9). But man must respond by faith (Romans 10:9–13). The offer is universal, but the response must be personal. To suggest that God predestines certain individuals to heaven and others to hell, apart from any opportunity or response, contradicts the character of a just and loving God.

“Whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.” (Romans 10:13)

The Holy Spirit draws the sinner (John 6:44), but the sinner must repent and believe (Acts 17:30). God’s foreknowledge is not causative. He knows who will believe, but that knowledge does not override their freedom. Just as a teacher knows which student is likely to fail the test, it is still the student’s responsibility to study or neglect it. So too, God sees the heart and the future yet allows each person the dignity of decision.

Free will preserves the integrity of the gospel invitation:

“Whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely.” (Revelation 22:17)

LIVING THE TRUTH: HOW PREDESTINATION SHAPES OUR DAILY WALK

When rightly understood, the doctrine of predestination brings comfort, not confusion. It is God’s assurance that the believer’s future is secure. We are not adrift in uncertainty; we are anchored in divine purpose.

To be *predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son* means that every trial, every lesson, every blessing in your life is a part of God’s shaping work. You are being crafted into the likeness of Christ. Predestination is not about fatalism. It is about formation. It is not about exclusion—it is about transformation.

VOICES OF WORSHIP AND WISDOM

“He who has predestined us to be conformed to the image of His Son has also promised to complete that work in us.” Warren Wiersbe

“God doesn’t predestinate people to become Christians. He predestinates Christians to become Christlike.” Charles C. Ryrie

“God’s foreknowledge never violates man’s freedom, and God’s sovereignty never negates man’s responsibility.” Lewis Sperry Chafer

A DISPENSATIONAL PERSPECTIVE

In dispensational theology, the emphasis is on the distinct plan of God for different ages, with the Church age marked by the invitation of grace to Jew and Gentile alike. The Church is a “called out assembly” of those who have believed. Predestination, in this context, relates to the believer’s identity *in Christ* and the blessings that accompany that position.

It is not a secret election of individuals to salvation before time began, but a divine guarantee that those who trust Christ will share in His glory, purpose, and inheritance. Predestination is part of the believer’s security, not the sinner’s sentence.

NAVIGATION POINT: ANCHORING FAITH IN THE PURPOSE OF GOD

In a world filled with uncertainty, believers can rest in this truth: God has marked out a path for those who trust in His Son. He has not left our sanctification to chance, nor our eternal hope to fate. The doctrine of predestination assures us that what God starts, He will finish. It is the believer’s destiny, not their decision to believe, but their transformation after believing, that has been predetermined.

CONCLUSION

Predestination, properly understood, is a doctrine of great comfort, not controversy. It is God's promise that those who are in Christ will be conformed to His image, adopted into His family, and share in His glory.

It is not the cause of belief, but the consequence of it. The Bible never portrays God as arbitrarily selecting some for salvation and others for damnation. Instead, it reveals a God who "*so loved the world*" (John 3:16), who calls all men to repent, and who secures the future of those who believe.

Predestination, then, is not about exclusion, it is about destination. And for every child of God, that destination is glory.

CHARTING THE COURSE: QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION AND DISCUSSION

1. How does Romans 8:29–30 help you understand the purpose of predestination?
2. In what ways does Ephesians 1 emphasize the believer's spiritual blessings in Christ?
3. Why is it important to maintain the balance between God's sovereignty and man's responsibility?
4. How would you explain the difference between foreknowledge and predestination to someone confused by Calvinism?
5. What are some ways the truth of predestination can bring peace and assurance in daily Christian living?

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Allen, David L. *Calvinism: A Biblical and Theological Critique*. Nashville: B&H Academic, 2022.

———. *Text-Driven Preaching: God's Word at the Heart of Every Sermon*. Nashville: B&H Academic, 2010.

———. *The Atonement: A Biblical, Theological, and Historical Study of the Cross of Christ*. Nashville: B&H Academic, 2019.

Baucham Jr., Voddie T. *Family Driven Faith: Doing What It Takes to Raise Sons and Daughters Who Walk with God*. Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2007.

———. *Fault Lines: The Social Justice Movement and Evangelicalism's Looming Catastrophe*. Washington, DC: Salem Books, 2021.

Chafer, Lewis Sperry. *Systematic Theology*. Vol. 3. Dallas: Dallas Seminary Press, 1948.

Geisler, Norman L. *Chosen But Free: A Balanced View of Divine Election*. Minneapolis: Bethany House, 1999.

———. *Christian Apologetics*. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 1976.

———. *Systematic Theology, Volume 1: Introduction and Bible*. Minneapolis: Bethany House, 2002.

Lightner, Robert P. *The God of the Bible and Other Gods: Is the Christian God Unique Among World Religions?* Grand Rapids: Kregel Publications, 1998.

McDowell, Josh. *More Than a Carpenter*. Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, 1977.

———. *The New Evidence That Demands a Verdict: Fully Updated to Answer the Questions Challenging Christians Today*. Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1999.

Oliphint, K. Scott. *The Battle Belongs to the Lord: The Power of Scripture for Defending Our Faith*. Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing, 2003.

———. *Covenantal Apologetics: Principles and Practice in Defense of Our Faith*. Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2013.

Pentecost, J. Dwight. *Things to Come: A Study in Biblical Eschatology*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1958.

Ryrie, Charles C. *Basic Theology: A Popular Systematic Guide to Understanding Biblical Truth*. Chicago: Moody Press, 1986.

Walvoord, John F. *The Prophecy Knowledge Handbook*. Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1990.

Wiersbe, Warren W. *Be Series Commentary*. Colorado Springs: David C. Cook Publishing, various volumes.