

Predestination

Overview

This is a subject generally misunderstood by the faithful. Let's try to shed some light on it.

What is predestination?

The church defines predestination as *"the eternal, gracious and infallible decree of God conferring human salvation"*.

Using the language of biblical texts such as Romans 8:29-30 and Ephesians 1:5-11, this doctrine refers to the faith of the church in that the salvation of the saints is the result of foreknowledge and the unmerited act of God. That is, it is a part of God's eternal will for mankind.



However, since mankind is endowed with free will this salvation is dependent both upon the free offer of God in His love for us – but also upon the free acceptance of the individual.

Thomas Aquinas (d. 1274) declared that God desired all to be saved. Aquinas speaks of those whom God predestined to receive grace and those that God let them remain in their sins. More simply put – predestination is a way of expressing God's eternal and universal saving will and purpose for mankind – but only as accepted by human freedom.

God has a plan for each of us

In the scheme of things God has a definite plan for all of us – but only that which is good. God's plan includes dedicated parents, teachers, and workers – in addition to those miracle workers such as Mother Teresa – both the everyday simple and the extraordinary.

Often we hear the concept of predestination as *"why bother because God has already made*

up His mind". This would imply that God pre-planned some of those people to be evil throughout history that were horrific in their actions – which is contrary to the love God has for us. What it means is that those individuals – with their free will – strayed away from their path.

Does God intervene?

The logical question arises as to why God does not interfere with a person straying from His designed plan. There are two answers to this.

Firstly, God does interfere and how often and when would be in His foreknowledge of the future of mankind. We also can see this in natural tragic events such as hurricanes, floods, etc. and wonder why God did not intervene and prevent it from occurring. A better question would be to ask how many other times has God intervened in preventing a natural disaster – that we do not know about because he *has* intervened. In a like manner – how many times has God intervened in your life and you are not aware of His presence?

Secondly, we have to recognize those people, places and events that God has indeed placed in our paths and we make the right choices. Too often we make choices without praying about them based upon our own image of life. I am convinced that our lives would be considerably more peace-filled if we placed our lives in the hand of God.

So – what does it mean?

Since God is Omnipotent (all knowing) – He knows who will or will not achieve His plan for any of us. Since God does not force his will upon us (our free will) God cannot and will not predetermine how any individual creature will respond to the grace and love of God. God desires that all are saved and surely weeps when one of us stray from the plan.