



Predestination 1: The Mind of God

The notion of predestination is one that has spawned controversy and led to the development of doctrines in its defense that have no support in what the scriptures say about salvation. Predestination is one of those ideas that appears to have come about in an effort to explain the mind of God and his reasons for doing things the way that he has. It is also an attempt to explain the religious state of the world and make sense of it from a human perspective. A key problem here is the application of human logic to explain things that are clearly beyond the scope of mortal reasoning. In this series we will examine the mind of God, the history of predestination, some key passages that are misunderstood to defend the notion of predestination, other doctrines that have arisen to complement the idea and then we will look at problems that these things cause in light of what the scriptures teach. What is predestination and what does it mean for the average individual who seeks to understand their place in the world and their relationship with God? Webster's 20th Collegiate Dictionary states that "God in consequence of his foreknowledge of all events infallibly guides those who are destined for salvation." At face value those who are familiar with the scriptures can see that there are problems with the idea of predestination in light of the New Testaments statements that the Gospel is for all, and the Old Testament prophecies that God's kingdom would be established for all nations. The idea of predestination is that at the creation of the world, God selected those who will be saved and has "elected" or ordained them to salvation. While that may be a comforting thought to some folks, the idea leaves a lot of others out of the picture. If we adopt this idea then we also have conflicts with many other passages that teach otherwise. The result is that the Bible becomes so confusing that there is no way that we can figure it out or understand it. Coincidentally this is exactly what some who hold to the idea teach, that the scriptures are beyond human comprehension and that those who are saved

will be drawn to them and saved. The problems that arise from this perspective indeed validates what atheists and agnostics claim; that the Bible is nothing more than the world's greatest collection of contradictions. Doctrines such as this presume to explain the logic and behavior of God. Solomon speaks of the impossibility of understanding the mind of God when he states, "... **he hath set the world in their heart, so that no man can find out the work that God maketh from the beginning to the end.**" (Eccl 3.11). Isaiah also wrote of this stating, "**For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the LORD. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts.**" (Isa 55.8-9). When humans apply mortal reasoning to the actions of God and take it upon themselves to provide in depth explanations, error is born. We can read the scriptures, accepting that there are some things that are hard to understand (2 Pet 3.15-16), some things that God has chosen not to reveal (Deut 29.29) and other things that we simply must accept as presented in the scriptures. Over the next few weeks we will examine the history and origins of the doctrine, the way in which it has influenced critical religious thinkers and the resulting doctrines that have emerged. The intent of the discussion is to examine the scriptures for what they actually say, not what they have been interpreted to mean. The interpretations of humans often incorporate explanations that have other agendas beside the saving of souls. Hopefully we will see that the idea of predestination violates many basic scriptural teachings and principles and creates such distortions of passages that the true meaning is lost. It will also be shown that if such a doctrine were true then depression, desperation and despair could be the only result, defeating any notion of God, His love for us, and would defeat any benefit of believing in Christ.