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Predestination 2: A Confusing Dilemma

Are there souls who are destined to be servants of God while others are lost no matter what they do? If we take this view then we create a problem and the result is that the scriptures represent the largest collection of contradictions known to man. We believe that the Bible is divinely inspired (**2 Tim 3.16**) and is infallible in the recording and preservation of spiritual truth. Examining the scriptural record we can see that there are statements that may lend themselves to supporting the ideas contained in the belief of predestination. On the other hand there are statements that contradict this. This week we will look at passages indicating that the Gospel is open to all. We will also look at passages from the Old Testament that show an inclusive nature to God's commands in provisions made for those who were not of Hebrew descent who would turn to God. As Peter met with Cornelius and heard the account of how an angel had appeared to him, Peter came to a realization. ***"Then Peter opened his mouth, and said, Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons: But in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him."*** (Acts 10.34-35). This same truth is stated elsewhere in the New Testament. Paul stated, ***"For there is no respect of persons with God."*** (Rom 2.11). Paul also told the Ephesians the same thing in his letter to them (**Eph 6.9**). Speaking of judgment of those who do what is right or that which is wrong Paul stated, ***"But he that doeth wrong shall receive for the wrong which he hath done: and there is no respect of persons."*** (Col 3.25). James condemned such partiality in judgment in his letter as well (**Jas 2.1**). James tells us that such attitudes are sinful when he states, ***"But if ye have respect to persons, ye commit sin, and are convinced of the law as transgressors."*** (Jas 2.9). Peter also tells us that the judgment of God is unbiased in dealing with mankind according to what we have done (**1 Pet 1.17**). In the Old Testament we find that there were those who were not Hebrews who departed from the land

of Egypt with the children of Israel (**Ex 12.38**) and throughout the Law there are statements concerning the treatment of "strangers" or foreigners who dwelt among them. As the children of Israel came into the land we find that there were still some of these non-Hebrews who settled in the land as well, who had been with them in the wilderness (**Judg 1.16**). Ruth, the Moabitess, remained with her mother-in-law, married Boaz, a Hebrew and became the great grandmother of king David (**Ruth**). In his prayer of dedication for the temple, Solomon prayed for those who were foreign who would lift up their prayers to God, that the Lord would hear them so that they would know that He was indeed God (**1 Kng 8.41-43**). This is just a sampling of the numerous statements that can be found in the scriptures that show that even prior to the revelation of the Gospel, God did not exclude any who would seek him. Paul indicated that all of mankind not only needed to seek the Lord, but that they should do this, turning away from idols (**Acts 17.24-30**). All of these statements present a problem for those who hold to the idea that only those who God has chosen could draw nigh to him. It is the product of human thinking that limits salvation to the "elect". Paul indicates that the Gospel is for all when he states, ***"For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek."*** (Rom 1.16). We find that God created man as a reasoning being and has given us the choice of what we do in this life. Unfortunately most will choose to follow things that God does not approve of. Christ stated this very clearly when he said, ***"Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it."*** (Matt 7.14). Having stated this we then must understand passages that are used to support the idea of predestination and reconcile them to what is presented here.

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