

A serene landscape photograph of a long wooden pier extending from the foreground into a calm body of water. The pier is constructed of dark wooden planks and posts, leading the eye towards the horizon. The sky is a mix of soft blues and oranges, indicating a sunset or sunrise. The sun is low on the right side, casting a warm glow and reflecting on the water's surface. In the distance, a range of misty mountains is visible across the water. A small boat is anchored near the pier's end on the right.

THREE FORMS OF PREDESTINATION

A Booklet by Charles Mawungwa

Introduction

Our view of predestination ultimately shapes our view of God and his attitude towards us as his creation. Today we would like to dig dip into the scriptures so they can present to us who God is and how his predestination works. We want to face all the hard questions and see how the bible answers them.

Did God create a few people that he loved, that he made good, so that he could give them glory, and then create a whole bunch of people that he despised with the sole purpose of burning them for eternity? How exactly is God's glory and sovereignty made manifest? On the other end, is God sitting wondering what will happen, with no real control over the outcome of his creation? Who are the vessels of honour and the vessels of wrath? Who has been hardened by God, and who will receive his mercy? Does man have power to choose, and if so, does this power override God's will? Did Jacob actually serve Esau and if not, then why did God say, "The elder shall serve the younger?"

All these questions and more are answered in the bible, and so join me on this journey as we explore three forms of predestination. We will look at predestined purpose, predestined events and predestination in Christ Jesus.

What is Predestination?

According to the Strong and Thayer Greek bible dictionaries, the definition of the word simply means to: ***ordain something beforehand, to predetermine, to limit in advance, to decide beforehand, to appoint beforehand.***

So let's use this definition to understand the following scripture.

Romans 8:29-30 New American Standard Bible (NASB)

29 For those whom He foreknew, He also predestined to become conformed to the image of His Son, so that He would be the firstborn among many brethren; 30 and these whom He predestined, He also called; and these whom He called, He also justified; and these whom He justified, He also glorified.

So let's breakdown what this scripture is telling us.

- i) At some point in the past God foreknew certain people. To foreknow is to know beforehand. This means that God knew these people before they even existed.
- ii) God then predestined which means he predetermined and ordained beforehand that these people, that he knew, must at some point become transformed to be like his son Jesus.
- iv) After these people had been born, then God called these people that he had known beforehand, so that they can enter into the destination he had appointed for them.
- v) God then justified, meaning he declared, revealed and made them righteous.
- vi) God then glorified, meaning he transformed them to become like his son Jesus Christ, by putting his spirit in them. That is the glorification.

From this scripture alone, we don't see God predestinating anyone for hell. We see God predestinating people to be conformed to the image of Jesus Christ. We also learn that God's foreknowledge, his ability to know things before they happen, is what led to him predestinating. This point is also supported by apostle Peter.

1 Peter 1:2 New International Version (NIV)

2 who have been chosen according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through the sanctifying work of the Spirit, to be obedient to Jesus Christ and sprinkled with his blood:

Before we go onto dissect the three kinds of predestination, we need a basic understanding of three of God attribute.

God's Sovereignty, Justice and Love

As I said, at the opening of this presentation, our view of predestination will ultimately shape our view of God and his attitude towards us. When talking of predestination, there are two main attributes that are highly considered: God's sovereignty vs God's justice. Yet I feel that we tend to forget God's very nature which is Love. God's sovereignty answers the WHAT of God's actions, and His Love answers the WHY of his actions. If you want to know what God can do, look at his sovereignty, if you want to know WHO he does it to, look at his justice and if you want to know WHY he does what he does then look at his Love.

a) God's Sovereignty

The word sovereign means self-governing, having supreme authority.

Jeremiah 32:17 New International Version (NIV)

17 "Ah, Sovereign Lord, you have made the heavens and the earth by your great power and outstretched arm. Nothing is too hard for you.

In simple terms it means God has absolute supreme authority and power to make decisions over his creation without consulting or considering anyone's opinion.

Ephesians 1:11 New King James Version (NKJV)

11 In Him also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestined according to the purpose of Him who works all things according to the counsel of His will,

The above scripture shows us that God who predestinated us to obtain an inheritance, does all things according to the purpose, desire and counsel of his own will. In simple terms, God does what God wants. He does not do anything because he has been pressured by someone. He does what he wants to do. In-fact, everything that happens in creation happens because God wants it to happen. If he does not want things to happen, they won't happen.

A lot of this will be difficult to receive, but bear with me. We will go to God's justice and love later. But let's look at his sovereignty for now. We see God's sovereignty revealed in the following scriptures.

i) God causes people to be born disabled.

Exodus 4:11 New International Version (NIV)

11 The Lord said to him, "Who gave human beings their mouths? Who makes them deaf or mute? Who gives them sight or makes them blind? Is it not I, the Lord?"

ii) God causes disasters on cities and countries

Isaiah 45:7 New International Version (NIV)

7 I form the light and create darkness, I bring prosperity and create disaster; I, the Lord, do all these things.

Amos 3:6 New King James Version (NKJV)

6 If a trumpet is blown in a city, will not the people be afraid? If there is calamity in a city, will not the Lord have done it?

iii) God determines the outcomes of random things such as Dices and lotto.

Proverbs 16:33 New King James Version (NKJV)

33 The lot is cast into the lap, But its every decision is from the Lord.

iv) God determines which of our plans, will come to pass and which ones will fail.

Proverbs 16:9 New King James Version (NKJV)

9 A man's heart plans his way, But the Lord directs his steps.

Proverbs 19:21 New International Version (NIV)

21 Many are the plans in a person's heart, but it is the Lord's purpose that prevails

So everything that happens in all of creation, happens because of God. There is nothing that anyone or anything can do without God. This is what is called, God's sovereignty.

b) God's Justice

According to the dictionary, The word justice means the treatment or representation of someone with all fairness and appreciation. It is also defined as the administering of deserved punishment or reward.

Psalms 89:14 NIV

Righteousness and justice are the foundation of your throne; love and faithfulness go before you

When we speak of God's throne, we are speaking of him as king and ruler of all creation. The psalmist is telling us that God's rulership is founded on righteousness and justice. When we say God is just, we mean that his punishment and his reward are well deserved. He rewards good and punishes wrong.

Proverbs 21:15-15

When justice is done, it brings joy to the righteous but terror to evildoers.

Leviticus 19:15-15

“Do not pervert justice; do not show partiality to the poor or favoritism to the great, but judge your neighbor fairly.

So if God starts punishing the innocent and rewarding evil doers, or showing favouritism then he is no longer just. God himself talks of his justice here:

Isaiah 61:8 NIV8

“For I, the LORD, love justice; I hate robbery and wrongdoing. In my faithfulness I will reward my people and make an everlasting covenant with them.

God’s justice actually works together with his compassion and mercy.

Isaiah 30:18 New International Version (NIV)

18 Yet the Lord longs to be gracious to you; therefore he will rise up to show you compassion. For the Lord is a God of justice. Blessed are all who wait for him!

Zecharia 7:9

*“This is what the Lord Almighty said: ‘Administer true **justice**; show **mercy** and compassion to one another.*

Matthew 23:23 New International Version (NIV)

23 *“Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You give a tenth of your spices—mint, dill and cumin. But you have neglected the more important matters of the law—justice, mercy and faithfulness. You should have practiced the latter, without neglecting the former.*

So what have we learnt so far about justice. Justice is the administering of deserved punishment or reward. When justice is done, it brings joy to the righteous and terror to the evildoers. When justice is perverted it shows favouritism, partiality and is unfair. God has made righteousness and justice the foundation of his throne of rulership. He hates evildoers and rewards the faithful. His justice also works together with his compassion.

So now that we know that God is both sovereign and just. It means that we can be assured of two things:

1. God is in control of everything that happens and determines the outcomes of all our plans.
2. God’s decisions are fair. He will punish wrong doers and reward the faithful. He will not show favouritism or partiality.

1 Peter 1:17 New Life Version (NLV)

17 The Father is the One Who judges you by what you do. He does not respect one person more than another. If you call Him Father, be sure you honor Him with love and fear all the days of your life here on earth

C) God's Love

Love is not just a quality that God possess, it his his nature.

1 John 4:8 NLV

*Those who do not love do not know God because **God is love.***

1 John 4:6 NLV

*We have come to know and believe the love God has for us. **God is love.** If you live in love, you live by the help of God and God lives in you.*

Scripture tells us that love is the bond of perfection. Love is the greatest, and there is nothing in heaven, earth, future or present that can separate us from the love of God. Love is the reason why.

John 3:16 New International Version (NIV)

16 For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.

Creation, salvation, judgement: all that is done because of God's love. If you wan't to know why God does anything, what drives him, it is love.

Scripture tells us that Jesus was an exact representation of the person of God. So by looking at Christ, we can get an exact idea of who God is, why he does anything and what he would or would not do.

Hebrews 1:3 New International Version (NIV)

3 The Son is the radiance of God's glory and the exact representation of his being, sustaining all things by his powerful word. After he had provided purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty in heaven.

We know that Jesus was sent down as an expression of God's love. Let's look at that for a moment.

1. Because of Love, Jesus was willing to give-up all the attributes that made him equal to God. In other words his glory.

Philippians 2:6-7 New Living Translation (NLT)

6 Though he was God, he did not think of equality with God as something to cling to. 7 Instead, he gave up his divine privileges; he took the humble position of a slave and was born as a human being. When he appeared in human form,

2. Because of Love he was willing to give up his LIFE

John 15:13 New Living Translation (NLT)

13 There is no greater love than to lay down one's life for one's friends.

Jesus love for humanity was so powerful that he gave up his life, his glory, his dignity, his authority. He gave up everything to save us from death. He is the exact representation of God's person. So we know that as far as it is possible, God loves us so much that he would give up his entire life to save us. God's character is reflected in the description of what love is.

1 Corinthians 13:4-7 New Living Translation (NLT)

4 Love is patient and kind. Love is not jealous or boastful or proud 5 or rude. It does not demand its own way. It is not irritable, and it keeps no record of being wronged. 6 It does not rejoice about injustice but rejoices whenever the truth wins out. 7 Love never gives up, never loses faith, is always hopeful, and endures through every circumstance.

God is love. And that above there, is the nature of the God we worship. God's love is so powerful because he loves his enemies, he does good to those who hate and despise him. When we love our enemies, and do good to those who persecute us, we become like him.

Matthew 5:44-45 New Living Translation (NLT)

44 But I say, love your enemies! Pray for those who persecute you! 45 In that way, you will be acting as true children of your Father in heaven. For he gives his sunlight to both the evil and the good, and he sends rain on the just and the unjust alike.

God loves you, he also loves Satan and every demon, he loves Hitler and every one of his creation. God is pure, undefiled, and perfect love. He seeks the ultimate well-being of everyone. His sovereignty, his justice, his foreknowledge and his predestination are all driven by his love for all.

Now let's get into the three types of predestination.

Predestined Purpose

Jeremiah 29:11 New International Version (NIV)

11 For I know the plans I have for you," declares the Lord, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.

God as the supreme ruler of all creation, has a personal responsibility to set the vision for his creation and to watch over it to see that we are going in the right direction. God has a purpose for the entire universe, which means he has a purpose for each creature in that universe. He has a purpose for every angel, every animal, every human, every race and every nation. As God says in the scripture above, his plans are not to harm but to prosper, to give hope and a future. God is love, and his love is what gives us purpose. We can trust in his goodness.

As a result, it is God who determines when each person is born, what race they are, which country they live in and who their parents are. Those things are out of our control. It is God who determines how big each country is, and their borders.

i) Corporate Purpose

Deuteronomy 32:8 English Standard Version (ESV)

8 When the Most High gave to the nations their inheritance, when he divided mankind, he fixed the borders of the peoples according to the number of the sons of God.

The term Sons of God is written as angels in some of the ancient manuscripts because the sons of God were understood as a certain class of angels as is also implied in Daniel chapter 10 and 11. Other ancient manuscripts put sons of Israel. However, we understand that God set the exact number of nations that would arise, in line with the number of these sons. It was predestined according to his purpose.

Acts 17:26 New International Version (NIV)

26 From one man he made all the nations, that they should inhabit the whole earth; and he marked out their appointed times in history and the boundaries of their lands.

Nations have been born and destroyed out of what seemed like random wars, conflicts, negotiations and colonisations. Yet the outcomes of all those things was predetermined by God. Nations are set in the spiritual and then manifest in the physical.

ii) Individual Purpose

Jeremiah

Jeremiah 1:5 New International Version (NIV)

5 “Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, before you were born I set you apart; I appointed you as a prophet to the nations.”

So, God knew Jeremiah. He knew every detail about his personality, his character, his temperaments, his appearance, his likes and his dislikes. God then appointed this man to be his mouth piece to the nations. God as king has a right to choose people that he deems fit to be his representative. Jeremiah is one such person. The word of God to the nations would naturally come to him. He didn't have to look for it or try hard. God would just give him information concerning the nations. Now Jeremiah had the option to either keep these things to himself, or deliver them as God had told him to do.

At one point Jeremiah decided that he would not share the prophecies. He decided to shut the word of God in his heart. This is what happened.

Jeremiah 20:9 New International Version (NIV)

9 But if I say, “I will not mention his word or speak anymore in his name,” his word is in my heart like a fire, a fire shut up in my bones. I am weary of holding it in; indeed, I cannot.

After Jeremiah had fulfilled his purpose, He went on with the exiles to Egypt and lived the rest of his life there. He had completed what God had predestined him to achieve, and now it was the time for Ezekiel and Daniel to take over as prophets. Let's look at another example.

Paul

Galatians 1:15-16 New International Version (NIV)

15 But when God, who set me apart from my mother's womb and called me by his grace, was pleased 16 to reveal his Son in me so that I might preach him among the Gentiles, my immediate response was not to consult any human being.

The apostle Paul understood that even before his birth, God had chosen that he would reveal Jesus to the gentiles through him. So his whole life, all his experiences, his parents, his education, friends, failures and successes were preparing him for his purpose. And at the right time, Jesus revealed himself to Paul, and Paul went on to fulfil his purpose.

Cyrus

This is one of the greatest examples of predestinated purpose. The prophet Isaiah lived about three hundred years before the birth of Cyrus. When Cyrus was born, became king and invaded Babylon, he was surprised to see this 300 year old prophecy about him. Everything that had happened in his life had been predestined for a single purpose and that purpose was for him to authorise the rebuilding of Jerusalem and the temple. I will only quote sections of the prophecy.

Isaiah 45 New International Version (NIV)

45 *"This is what the Lord says to his anointed, to Cyrus, whose right hand I take hold of to subdue nations before him and to strip kings of their armor, to open doors before him so that gates will not be shut:*

3 I will give you hidden treasures, riches stored in secret places, so that you may know that I am the Lord, the God of Israel, who summons you by name.

4 For the sake of Jacob my servant, of Israel my chosen, I summon you by name and bestow on you a title of honor, though you do not acknowledge me.

5 I am the Lord, and there is no other; apart from me there is no God. I will strengthen you, though you have not acknowledged me,

6 so that from the rising of the sun to the place of its setting people may know there is none besides me. I am the Lord, and there is no other.

7 I form the light and create darkness, I bring prosperity and create disaster; I, the Lord, do all these things.

11 *"This is what the Lord says— the Holy One of Israel, and its Maker: Concerning things to come, do you question me about my children, or give me orders about the work of my hands?*

12 It is I who made the earth and created mankind on it. My own hands stretched out the heavens; I marshaled their starry hosts.

13 *I will raise up Cyrus in my righteousness: I will make all his ways straight. He will rebuild my city and set my exiles free, but not for a price or reward, says the Lord Almighty.*

When Cyrus fulfilled his predestinated purpose, as recorded in the book of Ezra and Daniel, he continued to live. It does not mean that he immediately died.

iii) God's Justice

One may ask, so where is the justice? People like Jeremiah, Paul and Moses had incredible visions of God so there is no way they could have said, "God does not exist". They have an unfair advantage. Or do they?

God's justice is in that he judges people according to the level of the revelation of Christ that they received.

Luke 12:48 New International Version (NIV)

48 *But the one who does not know and does things deserving punishment will be beaten with few blows. From everyone who has been given much, much will be demanded; and from the one who has been entrusted with much, much more will be asked.*

A man like Paul, who saw the risen Christ and was given great revelations of the word, will face a much stricter judgement than a person who never saw a single vision or received a single revelation.

James 3:1 New Living Translation (NLT)

3 Dear brothers and sisters, not many of you should become teachers in the church, for we who teach will be judged more strictly.

So you will find that a person, in some remote place who died never having received the word of God, will not be judged by what they never received. They will be judged according to how faithful they were to that little light they had.

John 15:22 New International Version (NIV)

22 If I had not come and spoken to them, they would not be guilty of sin; but now they have no excuse for their sin.

Some will actually be judged simply by how faithfully they listened to the voice of their conscience. (Romans 2:14-16)

Can you resist God's Purpose?

So, is it automatic that if people see God and hear his voice, or see a vision like that seen by Paul or Jeremiah, they would automatically believe? No.

The Israelites who were in Egypt, saw God perform 10 spectacular plagues. They saw God open the sea where they walked on dry ground. They saw God bring water out of a rock, and they had a supernatural flame of fire over their heads. They had bread and meat fall from heaven. God even came down from heaven on to the mountain. All of them saw the fire on the mountain and heard his voice deliver the Ten Commandments. The seventy elders went with Moses up the mountain and saw God and ate together with him.

Exodus 24:9-10 New International Version (NIV)

9 Moses and Aaron, Nadab and Abihu, and the seventy elders of Israel went up¹⁰ and saw the God of Israel. Under his feet was something like a pavement made of lapis lazuli, as bright blue as the sky.

Of the 600 000 families that saw all this great revelation of God. One two people believed, and the rest had to be destroyed.

Numbers 14:22-23 New Living Translation (NLT)

22 not one of these people will ever enter that land. They have all seen my glorious presence and the miraculous signs I performed both in Egypt and in the wilderness, but again and again they have tested me by refusing to listen to my voice. 23 They will never even see the land I swore to give their ancestors. None of those who have treated me with contempt will ever see it.

We have an example of Balaam, a prophet who actually had an incredible gift of God, but chose to work against God's purpose by serving the person who paid him money.

The Will of God

As we look into predestined purpose, we have to look at the will of God. We have established that in God's sovereignty, he does exactly what he wants. So what does God want? The answer to this question determines whether one can say in the day of judgement, "I had no option, God designed me for hell."

i) Gods has given people the power to choose

God in his sovereignty has given people the power to choose.

Deuteronomy 30:19 New International Version (NIV)

19 This day I call the heavens and the earth as witnesses against you that I have set before you life and death, blessings and curses. Now choose life, so that you and your children may live

There are two dimensions of God's will in this scripture. The first dimension is that God wants people to choose whether they want life or death. This means that both the person who chooses life, and the person who chooses death have complied to the will of God. No man would have been able to make a choice, unless it was God who had permitted it. So we can call this God permissive will. Or his delegated will. However, God then says, "Choose Life." That last statement, is God's good, acceptable and perfect will.

Romans 12:2 New King James Version (NKJV)

2 And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.

God can choose a lot of things for us, but ultimately, the choice between life and death is up to us. As a result, every person who will go to hell will go against God's desire and purpose. Look at the following points.

ii) People Can Choose to Disobey God

Because God has given people the power to choose between whether they want life or death. When it comes specifically to their salvation, people can choose to defy God's call, purpose and will for their life.

Jeremiah 6:16 Amplified Bible (AMP)

Thus says the Lord, "Stand by the roads and look; ask for the ancient paths, Where the good way is; then walk in it, And you will find rest for your souls. But they said, 'We will not walk in it!'

Hosea 8:4 NIV

They set up kings without my consent; they choose princes without my approval. With their silver and gold they make idols for themselves to their own destruction.

God never predestined anyone to offer their children to molek. But people did it anyway. God even says, it never even entered his mind. He says it three times in the book of Jeremiah.

Jeremiah 32:35 New International Version (NIV)

35 They built high places for Baal in the Valley of Ben Hinnom to sacrifice their sons and daughters to Molek, though I never commanded—nor did it enter my mind—that they should do such a detestable thing and so make Judah sin.

So we have many instances in which people clearly choose the way of death, and go against God's good, acceptable and perfect will. They are able to do this because God has permitted man to choose whether he wants life or not.

iii) God Does not want anyone to be destroyed.

2 Peter 3:9 NLT

The Lord isn't really being slow about his promise, as some people think. No, he is being patient for your sake. He does not want anyone to be destroyed, but wants everyone to repent.

God does not want any person to be destroyed. Yet there are people who will be destroyed. Why? Because they chose death.

Isaiah 66:4 Amplified Bible (AMP)

So I will choose their punishments And will bring on them what they dread Because I called, but no one answered; I spoke, but they did not listen And they did evil in My sight And chose that in which I did not delight."

So, these are people who received the call of God, and heard the voice of God, but still chose to do evil. As a result, God will punish them. However, it pains God to do this. God is pained by the death of every sinner.

Ezekiel 33:11 NIV

Say to them, 'As surely as I live, declares the Sovereign LORD, I take no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but rather that they turn from their ways and live. Turn! Turn from your evil ways! Why will you die, people of Israel?

God in his sovereignty, declares that he does not want any wicked person to die, but they have to make the choice for life.

iv) God wants all people to be saved.

God's desire is for all human beings to be saved.

1 Timothy 2:4 Easy-to-Read Version (ERV)

4 God wants everyone to be saved and to fully understand the truth.

If we interpret scriptures in a way that break other scriptures then we are in error. Whatever understanding we get of predestination must compliment these other biblical truths. God has designed all people for salvation, and God does not want any person to be destroyed. However, God has given man the right to choose life or death, and those who refuse his call for life, and choose to do evil, they will get the result of their choice. The scriptures have spoken.

c) God did not create the lake of fire for humans.

When God created the lake of fire, it's purpose and design was for Satan and his Angels not for humans. However, those humans who choose death, will be cast in the lake of fire which is the second death.

Matthew 25:41 International Standard Version (ISV)

41 *"Then he will say to those on his left, 'Get away from me, you who are accursed, into the eternal fire that has been prepared for the Devil and his angels!"*

Predestined Events

There are certain events that are decreed by God to occur. Whats predestinated is not the people but the events. Jesus says it this way.

Matthew 18:7 New International Version (NIV)

7 Woe to the world because of the things that cause people to stumble! Such things must come, but woe to the person through whom they come!

We have an example of the triumphant entry of Jesus on a donkey into Jerusalem.

Luke 19:37-41 New King James Version (NKJV)

37 Then, as He was now drawing near the descent of the Mount of Olives, the whole multitude of the disciples began to rejoice and praise God with a loud voice for all the mighty works they had seen, 38 saying: "Blessed is the King who comes in the name of the Lord!" Peace in heaven and glory in the highest!" 39 And some of the Pharisees called to Him from the crowd, "Teacher, rebuke Your disciples." 40 But He answered and said to them, "I tell you that if these should keep silent, the stones would immediately cry out."

What was predestined was the event, to the extent that if the people had refused to praise him, the rocks would have immediately started shouting.

Let me give another example.

The destruction of Jerusalem

Jerusalem was under judgement and God declared that Jerusalem would be burnt down by the babylonians.

Jeremiah 37:10 New International Version (NIV)

10 Even if you were to defeat the entire Babylonian army that is attacking you and only wounded men were left in their tents, they would come out and burn this city down."

It didn't matter who was in the army. Whoever it was, even if they were mere children, they would have succeeded. This event was so set in stone that even when the sorcerers of Babylon were trying to decide which city to conquer, their idols and their divination lots pointed them to Jerusalem.

Ezekiel 21:21-22 New International Version (NIV)

21 For the king of Babylon will stop at the fork in the road, at the junction of the two roads, to seek an omen: He will cast lots with arrows, he will consult his idols, he will examine the liver.

22 Into his right hand will come the lot for Jerusalem, where he is to set up battering rams, to give the command to slaughter, to sound the battle cry, to set battering rams against the gates, to build a ramp and to erect siege works.

Predestination in Christ

God predestined some people to be transformed to be like Christ. But how did he chose which people to predestine. The bible says God chose those people in Christ Jesus.

Ephesians 1:4-5 New International Version (NIV)

4 For he chose us in him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight. In love

5 he predestined us for adoption to sonship through Jesus Christ, in accordance with his pleasure and will—

Ephesians 1:11 New International Version (NIV)

11 In him we were also chosen, having been predestined according to the plan of him who works out everything in conformity with the purpose of his will,

Do you hear what these two scriptures are saying. The people that God predestined, were chosen in Christ.

When God said, Christ will be King, everyone who enters Christ becomes predestined to be king, because that is Christ's destination.

When God said, Christ will be righteous, everyone who enters Christ becomes righteous because that is Christ's predestination.

So our election and predestination is in Christ.

2 Corinthians 5:17 King James Version (KJV)

17 Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.

1 John 5:11-12 New International Version (NIV)

11 And this is the testimony: God has given us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. 12 Whoever has the Son has life; whoever does not have the Son of God does not have life.

As long as you remain in Christ, you remain in his predestination. But if you go and partake with the devil, you then enter into the devils predestination. The devil is predestined for death in fire.

John 15:6 New International Version (NIV)

6 If you do not remain in me, you are like a branch that is thrown away and withers; such branches are picked up, thrown into the fire and burned.

Understanding Romans 9

Paul's Style of Teaching

In Romans Chapter 9, 10 and 11 the apostle Paul talks about predestination extensively. The book of Romans is one of apostle Paul's most powerful books, but it needs to be read in its entirety and not just verses in isolation. The apostle presents his arguments over several chapters. He starts with your current understanding, and then builds the teaching till he gets to the full truth.

Let me give an example concerning justification by faith.

In Romans Chapter 2, the apostle Paul introduces the issue of the Law, and while there he says these words.

Romans 2:13 New International Version (NIV)

13 For it is not those who hear the law who are righteous in God's sight, but it is those who obey the law who will be declared righteous.

In the very next chapter he says

Romans 3:27-28 New Living Translation (NLT)

28 So we are made right with God through faith and not by obeying the law.

If you read the context of his message, you will see that he is not contradicting himself. In chapter two he is introducing the issue of justification, and speaks concerning the Jews who know the law that according to the law, those who obey the law are the ones declared righteous not just those who hear the Law. But in Chapter 3 he then introduces a greater principle which is faith, and shows that ultimately when it comes to God, it is actually faith in God that justifies a man and not the Law itself. So its necessary to hear his full thought.

Another example is on food sacrificed to idols.

1 Corinthians 8:7-8 New Living Translation (NLT)

7 However, not all believers know this. Some are accustomed to thinking of idols as being real, so when they eat food that has been offered to idols, they think of it as the worship of real gods, and their weak consciences are violated. 8 It's true that we can't win God's approval by what we eat. We don't lose anything if we don't eat it, and we don't gain anything if we do.

In Chapter 8, It sounds as though he is saying, it is okay to eat food sacrificed to idols as long as your conscience can bear it, but if you follow the full teaching, in chapter 10, he

concludes that we must not eat food from idols at all, because we will be partaking with demons.

1 Corinthians 10:19-20 New Living Translation (NLT)

19 What am I trying to say? Am I saying that food offered to idols has some significance, or that idols are real gods? 20 No, not at all. I am saying that these sacrifices are offered to demons, not to God. And I don't want you to participate with demons.

The apostle Paul wrote in this style on many issues, which is why it is easy to misquote him, if you don't follow his full teaching on a subject.

2 Peter 3:15-16 New Living Translation (NLT)

15 And remember, our Lord's patience gives people time to be saved. This is what our beloved brother Paul also wrote to you with the wisdom God gave him—16 speaking of these things in all of his letters. Some of his comments are hard to understand, and those who are ignorant and unstable have twisted his letters to mean something quite different, just as they do with other parts of Scripture. And this will result in their destruction

Dissecting Romans 9

In Romans 9, 10 and 11, Paul is addressing the issue of why the Israelites have failed to recognise their own messiah, when they were the chosen people.

Romans 9:2-4 New International Version (NIV)

2 I have great sorrow and unceasing anguish in my heart. 3 For I could wish that I myself were cursed and cut off from Christ for the sake of my people, those of my own race, 4 the people of Israel. Theirs is the adoption to sonship; theirs the divine glory, the covenants, the receiving of the law, the temple worship and the promises.

Consistent with his style of teaching, In Chapter 9, the apostle establishes the issues, he asks a lot of questions and quotes several scriptures, but then he gives his conclusions and answers in chapter 10 and 11.

I) JACOB AND ESAU

Romans 9:10-13 New International Version (NIV)

10 Not only that, but Rebekah's children were conceived at the same time by our father Isaac. 11 Yet, before the twins were born or had done anything good or bad—in order that God's purpose in election might stand: 12 not by works but by him who calls—she was told, "The older will serve the younger." 13 Just as it is written: "Jacob I loved, but Esau I hated."

The apostle is establishing the important principle of God's election by grace for a purpose. God elects people for their purpose before hand. Before we have done good or bad, he assigns us our purpose. In this particular case, God's purpose in election, had to

do with the line in which Jesus Christ would be born. God chose the messiah to be born through Jacob and not Esau. This was God's choice.

Genesis 25:22-23 International Standard Version (ISV)

22 But when the infants kept on wrestling each other inside her womb, she asked herself, "Why is this happening?" So she asked the Lord for an explanation. 23 "Two nations are in your womb," the Lord responded, "and two separate people will emerge. One people will be the stronger, and the older one will serve the younger."

Just as a point to note, this prophecy was about the two nations that would come from Jacob and Esau and not necessarily the two individuals themselves. Esau actually never serves Jacob. Infact Jacob returned and called Esau his Lord, and when Jacob tried to give Esau wealth, Esau refused because he himself had amassed great wealth.

Genesis 32:4 International Standard Version (ISV)

4 He instructed them, "This is what you are to say to my master Esau: 'Your servant Jacob told me to tell you, "I've journeyed to stay with Laban and I've remained there until now."

Genesis 33:8-9 International Standard Version (ISV)

8 Then Esau asked, "What are all these livestock for?" "To solicit favor from you, sir," Jacob answered. 9 But Esau replied, "I already have so much, my brother, so keep what belongs to you."

The apostle then quotes another scripture, which is in Malachi.

Malachi 1:2-3 International Standard Version (ISV)

2 "I've loved you," says the Lord. "But you ask, 'How have you loved us?'

"Was not Esau Jacob's brother?" declares the Lord, "yet I loved Jacob, 3 hated Esau, turned his mountains into a wasteland, and gave [a](#) his inheritance to desert jackals.

This particular section was not a prophecy, it was a declaration of the past. God showing how he has blessed the nation of Israel over the nation of Edom.

God's Hardening and Mercy

Romans 9:14-18 New International Version (NIV)

14 What then shall we say? Is God unjust? Not at all! 15 For he says to Moses, "I will have mercy on whom I have mercy and I will have compassion on whom I have compassion."

16 It does not, therefore, depend on human desire or effort, but on God's mercy. 17 For Scripture says to Pharaoh: "I raised you up for this very purpose, that I might display my power in you and that my name might be proclaimed in all the earth." 18 Therefore God has mercy on whom he wants to have mercy, and he hardens whom he wants to harden.

The apostles now explains that God can harden whomever he wants to harden, and grand mercy on whomever he wants to grant Mercy. His purpose for election is not depended on human effort but purely on his mercy. So who does God harden, and who does he show mercy? The answer is everyone. In chapter 11 as he concludes his teaching on predestination, Paul then concludes that God actually hardens everyone, and then shows mercy to everyone.

Romans 11:32 English Standard Version (ESV)

32 For God has consigned all to disobedience, that he may have mercy on all.

In chapter 9, Paul establishes God's ability to harden and to show mercy. In Chapter 11, he concludes that everyone has been hardened at some point so that everyone can see the mercy of God. So no-one can say i did not receive the mercy of God, including pharaoh.

Two forms of hardening.

There are two forms of hardening revealed in the book of Romans. There is hardening for mercy and hardening for judgement. We have already talked about God's justice. To whom much is given, much is expected.

Hardening for Mercy

A good example of hardening for mercy, is the very blindness that Paul is addressing in this scripture

Romans 11:7-8 English Standard Version (ESV)

7 What then? Israel failed to obtain what it was seeking. The elect obtained it, but the rest were hardened, 8 as it is written, "God gave them a spirit of stupor, eyes that would not see and ears that would not hear, down to this very day."

Romans 11:25 English Standard Version (ESV)

25 Lest you be wise in your own sight, I do not want you to be unaware of this mystery, brothers: a partial hardening has come upon Israel, until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in.

Jesus Christ spoke of this hardening, or blindness that God placed on some of the Israelites so that they would not recognise their Messiah.

Luke 8:10 English Standard Version (ESV)

10 he said, "To you it has been given to know the secrets of the kingdom of God, but for others they are in parables, so that 'seeing they may not see, and hearing they may not understand.'

So why was this hardening for mercy? Jesus was predestined to die. If the Israelites had received the revelation that Jesus was the Christ, and then gone on to crucify him, They

would have been accursed like Judas. But because they were blinded, God does not charge them with sin.

John 9:40-41 New International Version (NIV)

40 Some Pharisees who were with him heard him say this and asked, "What? Are we blind too?" 41 Jesus said, "If you were blind, you would not be guilty of sin; but now that you claim you can see, your guilt remains.

Luke 23:34 Easy-to-Read Version (ERV)

³⁴ Jesus said, "Father, forgive them. They don't know what they are doing."^a

Judas on the other hand was one of the twelve apostles, and he received a full revelation of who Christ was. However, after receiving this revelation he did not believe, and so he received blinding for judgement.

John 6:64 New International Version (NIV)

64 Yet there are some of you who do not believe." For Jesus had known from the beginning which of them did not believe and who would betray him.

Hardened for Judgement

Hardening for judgement comes to people who have received the full truth, but they reject it and refuse to obey it. God then blinds those people in preparation for their judgement.

Romans 1:21-24 New International Version (NIV)

21 For although they knew God, they neither glorified him as God nor gave thanks to him, but their thinking became futile and their foolish hearts were darkened. 22 Although they claimed to be wise, they became fools 23 and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images made to look like a mortal human being and birds and animals and reptiles. 24 Therefore God gave them over in the sinful desires of their hearts to sexual impurity for the degrading of their bodies with one another

2 Thessalonians 2:10-12 English Standard Version (ESV)

10 and with all wicked deception for those who are perishing, because they refused to love the truth and so be saved. 11 Therefore God sends them a strong delusion, so that they may believe what is false, 12 in order that all may be condemned who did not believe the truth but had pleasure in unrighteousness.

Vessels of Honour and Vessels of Wrath

Romans 9:19-23 English Standard Version (ESV)

19 You will say to me then, "Why does he still find fault? For who can resist his will?"

20 But who are you, O man, to answer back to God? Will what is molded say to its molder, "Why have you made me like this?" 21 Has the potter no right over the clay, to make out of the same lump one vessel for honorable use and another for dishonorable use?

22 What if God, desiring to show his wrath and to make known his power, has endured with much patience vessels of wrath prepared for destruction, 23 in order to make known the riches of his glory for vessels of mercy, which he has prepared beforehand for glory—

So from this Scripture we learn that there are vessels of honour and there are vessels of wrath. God is able to take the same lump and make a vessel of honour and a vessel of wrath. How does one become a vessel of honour or of wrath?

Before we go further, the apostle Paul himself answers the question.

2 Timothy 2:20-21 New King James Version (NKJV)

20 But in a great house there are not only vessels of gold and silver, but also of wood and clay, some for honor and some for dishonor. 21 Therefore if anyone cleanses himself from the latter, he will be a vessel for honor, sanctified and useful for the Master, prepared for every good work.

A vessel of dishonour can actually be transformed to become a vessel of honour. Infact this is the lesson given in the scriptures which Paul is quoting. When you go to the referenced scripture in Jeremiah, God is teaching Jeremiah that he is able to transform any vessel of dishonour to make them a vessels of honour, if they heed to his word.

Listen carefully

Jeremiah 18 New International Version (NIV)

At the Potter's House

18 This is the word that came to Jeremiah from the Lord: 2 "Go down to the potter's house, and there I will give you my message." 3 So I went down to the potter's house, and I saw him working at the wheel.

4 But the pot he was shaping from the clay was marred in his hands; so the potter formed it into another pot, shaping it as seemed best to him.

5 Then the word of the Lord came to me.

6 He said, "Can I not do with you, Israel, as this potter does?" declares the Lord. "Like clay in the hand of the potter, so are you in my hand, Israel.

7 If at any time I announce that a nation or kingdom is to be uprooted, torn down and destroyed, 8 and if that nation I warned repents of its evil, then I will relent and not inflict on it the disaster I had planned

The whole point of the potter illustration was to show, that even if you were born and raised as a vessel of wrath and dishonour, if you repent, God as the potter is able to transform you into a vessel of honour. So even though we are all clay in his hands, he shapes us according to our faith.

Can anyone Believe in Christ without first being Called?

John 6:44 New King James Version (NKJV)

44 No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him; and I will raise him up at the last day.

Every person who comes to Christ, goes to Him because He has been drawn in that direction by the Father. It is purely by His grace. Scripture goes on to tell us that this grace of God that leads to salvation has appeared to all men.

Titus 2:11 New King James Version (NKJV)

11 For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men,

Salvation comes by grace. That is true. But that grace for salvation has been given to all men. However, from the scriptures we have seen, we know that it is possible to reject the call of God. Here are some more scriptures.

Acts 13:46 International Standard Version (ISV)

46 Then Paul and Barnabas boldly declared, "We had to speak God's word to you first, but since you reject it and consider yourselves unworthy of eternal life, we are now going to turn to the gentiles"

Hebrews 12:25 New King James Version (NKJV)

25 See that you do not refuse Him who speaks. For if they did not escape who refused Him who spoke on earth, much more shall we not escape if we turn away from Him who speaks from heaven,

Hebrews 10:38 New Living Translation (NLT)

38 And my righteous ones will live by faith. But I will take no pleasure in anyone who turns away."

Hebrews 10:28-29 New International Version (NIV)

28 Anyone who rejected the law of Moses died without mercy on the testimony of two or three witnesses. 29 How much more severely do you think someone deserves to be punished who has trampled the Son of God underfoot, who has treated as an unholy thing the blood of the covenant that sanctified them, and who has insulted the Spirit of grace?

So every person who is saved, will be saved because God drew them to Christ and every person who will be destroyed will be destroyed because they rejected the truth. They rejected grace.

Conclusion

God is sovereign, God is Just, God is Love. God is all powerful but he is also all loving. He has a purpose for all of us, and has predestinated us to that purpose. There are many things that God controls and we have no choice over, but he has, by his power given us a choice between life and death. Let us choose life, and enter into Christ's predestination. No-one was created for hell, no-one was created to perish. Our salvation is initiated and completed by God, all we have to do is agree. God wants everyone to be saved and to know the truth but if we don't repent, we will remain vessels of wrath. If we truly believe he will take the lump and make us vessels of honour.