

NBTS
M. Div
K849
234.9

**PREDESTINATION AND FREEWILL:
A STUDY OF ROMANS 8:29-30**

**A Degree Essay
Presented to the
Faculty of the
Nigerian Baptist Theological Seminary
Ogbomoso, Nigeria**

**In Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements for the Award
of the Degree
Master of Divinity**

**J. C. POOL LIBRARY
BAPTIST SEMINARY
OGBOMOSO, NIGERIA**

by

**Peter Adebisi Koyejo
June, 1998**

99092

ABSTRACT

In the introduction part of this essay which the ~~writer~~ took as the first chapter, ~~he~~^{he} treated the background to the study of Predestination and Freewill. ~~he~~^{he} saw that it had been a subject of debate for centuries. The thoughts of Augustine, Calvin and Palagias were briefly examined.

The ~~writer~~^{writer} proceeded to give the purpose of the essay which was an attempt to answer the question.. "if God has predestined us to eternal salvation, why should we not live as we pleased?" Stated therein, were the methods employed in writing the essay and the limitation thereof. ~~he~~^{he} ended the introduction by giving the definitions of core terms.

In chapter Two, Predestination and Freewill were treated more fully, by examining Calvin's doctrine of Predestination. Election, Foreordination, Freewill and Moral Responsibility were also discussed. Chapter Three of the essay took us to the study of Determinism and indeterminism. Determinism is seen to be saying that everything that happens has a cause. That everything that happens is determined to happen before it happens. ~~The~~^{writer} went on to examine the fallacies connected with determinism. Indeterminism on the other hand is seen to be totally opposed to determinism.

It states that there are no antecedents or simultaneous causes of man's actions. This doctrine however, is said to be unacceptable to a Christian. In Chapter Four, ^{the writer} treated the doctrine of Destiny in African Traditional Religion. The Yoruba belief in 'Ori' head, and 'ayanmo' predestined share, were examined. The Yoruba believe that a person receives his destiny from Olodumare (God). Although, one's destiny could be changed by some agents. Chapter Five treated the sovereignty of God. Thus, throwing more light on the doctrine of Election.

Chapter Six is the conclusion of this essay. It was in the chapter that Romans 8, verses 29 to 30 were studied. The whole issue of predestination, foreordination, and election were examined from Biblical perspectives. It was seen that Biblical predestination does not eliminate man's freewill. The call of God was seen as the historical application of His eternal predestination, and this came through the preaching of the gospel.

CONCLUSION

The Reformers and Early Church Fathers correctly interpreted predestination and free agency of man. They stated that the two biblical truths do not conflict. The blending of the absolute sovereignty of God and the free agency of man is illustrated in every earthly kingdom. The king has the right to impose laws, and his subjects have the duty to observe them. God's right to impose law arises from His sovereignty. Man's duty to observe His law grows from his responsibility as created being to his Creator.

In concluding this essay by looking at the whole issue from biblical perspective, we can discuss predestination and freewill from three premises.

1. Biblical predestination is not fatalism. The Islamic concept of predestination is fatalistic. In genuine fatalism, fate is a natural force. The fatalist excludes mind and purpose, and confuses God with natural law. The Christian, however, is assured that actions proceed from the loving heavenly Father.

Fatalism is a heathen doctrine, but predestination is a Christian doctrine. It is called 'destination'

because it comprehends a determined order of the means to the end. It is called 'predestination' because God appointed that order in and with Himself before the actual existence of those things He so ordered. God's providence completes in time what He predestined in eternity.

The Christian is not in the hands of a cold, immutable determinism, but in the hands of the warm, loving, heavenly Father. Predestination signifies that God created all things, and His providence extends to all His works. God Himself is free, and He has provided that man shall be free within the limits of his nature. Although man does not have a freewill, he is a free agent. The truth of predestination destroys a person's pride and casts him at the feet of the sovereign God.

2. Biblical predestination does not eliminate man's free agency. God ordained human history and free agency in the midst of it. Self-determinism belongs only to man. God has the right to make laws, and man is obliged to obey them. Man is responsible for his volition - his disposition or inclination, is self-moved.

Man's free actions are not excluded from God's foreordination. Moreover, God's foreordination should not be regarded as over-riding man's free agency.

For Foreknowledge and foreordination stand or fall together. Since God knows even the most infinitesimal things (Matthew 10:29-30), it is contradictory to say He foreknows the certainty of an event which in its very nature is uncertain. Divine certainty does not conflict with free agency, since God's decree does not produce an event. The same decree that determines the certainty of an event also determines the freedom of the agent of the event.

3. Biblical predestination does not reduce the will of man to a mere machine. The alternatives to predestination are determinism and indeterminism. Atheistic determinism refuses to acknowledge God as the first cause. Non-atheistic determinism traces causality to God. Although the term determinism does come within the vocabulary of Christian conversation, the Christian doctrine of predestination and free agency presents something other than determinism and indeterminism. The Word of God reveals the almighty activity of God and human responsibility at the same time.¹

Criticisms against predestination are based on five premises:

1. Predestination is said to foster arrogance, since God's elect may boast of their favoured status. But on the contrary, predestination excludes boasting.

¹W. E. Best, Free Grace Versus Free Will (Houston: W. E. Best Book Missionary Trust, n.d.), pp. 49, 52.

