

TOPIC X

PREDESTINATION AND PREDETERMINATION

Part II.

In part I we discussed "free will."¹ If "free will" exists then "predestination" as defined by many, does not. Further, if God predetermines a person's life and time of death then to prolong a person's suffering or cut short their life in childhood does not reflect a kind and caring deity. Jesus noted the opposite in Matthew 24:21-22,

"For then there will be a great tribulation, such as has not occurred since the beginning of the world until now, nor ever will. Unless those days had been cut short, no life would have been saved; but for the sake of the elect those days will be cut short."

There is no question that the character of God is called into question every time something tragic or horrible occurs. In the predestination doctrine this is a given. He is held responsible for every problem and evil afflicting humanity since creation. John Calvin is the most prominent name in promoting the doctrine of predestination. He wrote his 1,500 page work, "The Institutes of the Christian Religion" in French in the early to mid-1500's.²

Calvin begins at Genesis and notes that in the Garden man had complete free will.

"In this upright state, man possessed freedom of will, by which, if he chose, he was able to obtain eternal life. It were here unseasonable to introduce the question concerning the secret predestination of God, because we are not considering what might or might not happen, but what the nature of man truly was. Adam, therefore, might have stood if he chose, since it was only by his own will that he fell; but it was because his will was pliable in either directions

¹ See page 76 ff.

² Michael Servetus, a medical doctor and theologian objected to Calvin's view of predestination in a published work in 1553 called "The Restoration of Christianity", a work that sharply rejected the idea of [predestination](#) as the idea that God condemned souls to Hell regardless of worth or merit. God, insisted Servetus, condemns no one who does not condemn himself through thought, word or deed. In the same volume he also objected to the churches view of the Trinity which he felt was an offense to the Jews and failed to represent scripture accurately. In both of these matters he aroused the ire of Calvin, the French church and in due time was burned at the stake. Calvin believed he deserved this death and helped instigate this sentence and supported and approved it. Servetus was obviously "predestined" to this fate. How comforting it is to know that our evil and inhumane acts are already "predestined by God."

and he had not received constancy to persevere, that he so easily fell. Still he had a free choice of good and evil; and not only so, but in the mind and will there was the highest rectitude, and all the organic parts were duly framed to obedience, until man corrupted its good properties, and destroyed himself."³

Then he proceeds to claim that after "the fall"⁴ man lost his "freedom of will" and became so totally depraved he could not make a godly choice and so God becomes the determiner of who shall receive grace and who shall not since man is not capable of choosing anything to do with God whatsoever. He writes,

"There is no man who would not be pleased with eternal blessedness; and yet, without the impulse of the Spirit, no man aspires to it. Since, then, the natural desire of happiness in man no more proves the freedom of the will, than the tendency in metals and stones to attain the perfection of their nature, let us consider, in other respects, whether the will is so utterly vitiated and corrupted in every part as to produce nothing but evil, or whether it retains some portion uninjured, and productive of good desires."⁵

He goes on to say that even the acts of what some could be considered "good" are nothing more than a means of satisfying a self-centered emptiness.⁶ So God must choose whom will be saved or lost, not based on the merit of man or a grace offered to all, but on His own sovereignty and grace to those He chooses and who are called the "elect." Calvin, writes,

"The covenant of life is not preached equally to all, and among those to whom it is preached, does not always meet with the same reception. This diversity displays the unsearchable depth of the divine judgment, and is without doubt subordinate to God's purpose of eternal election. But if it is plainly owing to the mere pleasure of God that salvation is spontaneously offered to some, while others have no access to it, great and difficult questions immediately arise, questions which are inexplicable, when just views are not entertained concerning election and predestination. To many this seems a perplexing subject, because they deem it most incongruous that of the great body of mankind some should be predestinated to salvation, and others to destruction. How ceaselessly they entangle themselves will appear as we proceed. We may

³ Book 1, chapter 15, section 8

⁴ A term never used in the Bible to describe this event. It was actually a "self-exaltation" of himself to the place of God. (Genesis 3:4-6)

⁵ Book 2, chapter 2, section 26 .

⁶ Book 2, chapter 2 section 26.

add, that in the very obscurity which deters them, we may see not only the utility of this doctrine, but also its most pleasant fruits. We shall never feel persuaded as we ought that our salvation flows from the free mercy of God as its fountain, until we are made acquainted with his eternal election, the grace of God being illustrated by the contrast, viz., that he does not adopt all promiscuously to the hope of salvation, but gives to some what he denies to others."⁷

On what basis does God make this choice?

"The predestination by which God adopts some to the hope of life, and adjudges others to eternal death, no man who would be thought pious ventures simply to deny; but it is greatly caviled at, especially by those who make prescience its cause. We, indeed, ascribe both prescience and predestination to God; but we say, that it is absurd to make the latter subordinate to the former (see chap. 22 sec. 1). When we attribute prescience to God, we mean that all things always were, and ever continue, under his eye; that to his knowledge there is no past or future, but all things are present, and indeed so present, that it is not merely the idea of them that is before him (as those objects are which we retain in our memory), but that he truly sees and contemplates them as actually under his immediate inspection. This prescience extends to the whole circuit of the world, and to all creatures. By predestination we mean the eternal decree of God, by which he determined with himself whatever he wished to happen with regard to every man. All are not created on equal terms, but some are preordained to eternal life, others to eternal damnation; and, accordingly, as each has been created for one or other of these ends, we say that he has been predestinated to life or to death. This God has testified, not only in the case of single individuals; he has also given a specimen of it in the whole posterity of Abraham, to make it plain that the future condition of each nation lives entirely at his disposal..."⁸

Then, he sets up a "straw man" argument.

"Many controvert all the positions which we have laid down, especially the gratuitous election of believers, which, however, cannot be overthrown. For they commonly imagine that God distinguishes between men according to the merits which he foresees that each individual is to have, giving the adoption of sons to those whom he foreknows will not be unworthy of his grace, and

⁷ Book 3, chapter 1, section 1

⁸ Book 3, chapter 21, section 5.

dooming those to destruction whose dispositions he perceives will be prone to mischief and wickedness.⁹ Thus by interposing foreknowledge as a veil, they not only obscure election, but pretend to give it a different origin. Nor is this the commonly received opinion of the vulgar merely, for it has in all ages had great supporters (see sec. 8). This I candidly confess, lest anyone should expect greatly to prejudice our cause by opposing it with their names. The truth of God is here too certain to be shaken, too clear to be overborne by human authority."

Later in the same section,

"If election precedes that divine grace by which we are made fit to obtain immortal life, what can God find in us to induce him to elect us? What I mean is still more clearly explained in another passage: God, says he, "has chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we might be holy and without blame before him in love: having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will" ([Eph 1:4](#), [Eph 1:5](#)). Here he opposes the good pleasure of God to our merits of every description."¹⁰

His straw man argument is that God's foreknowledge of a person's character, and seeing that some are prone to evil and others, "giving the adoption of sons to those whom he foreknows will not be unworthy of his grace, and dooming those to destruction whose dispositions he perceives will be prone to mischief and wickedness. Thus by interposing foreknowledge as a veil, they not only obscure election, but pretend to give it a different origin." This is of course, totally untrue though some may hold this view. His election is not based on His foreknowledge, but in His foreknowledge He knows whom will be of faith and thus has predestined them to life.

He states, "We, indeed, ascribe both prescience and predestination to God; but we say, that it is absurd to make the latter subordinate to the former." He bases this on

⁹ Calvin is objecting to the Catholic doctrine that honors "merits" as a way of forgiveness and salvation. However, the early apostles, especially Paul, had already dismissed "merit" or "works" as a means to forgiveness and salvation making Calvin's argument for predestination - in opposition to this premise - a baseless and futile doctrine in and of itself. His premise has no more validity than does the Catholic doctrine.

¹⁰ Book 3, chapter 22, section 1. As one member of the study group pointed out, Calvin is essentially objecting to Catholicism and their doctrines that see "merit" as a (or the) grounds upon which their salvation is based. Servetus essentially supports the Catholic position. Both men are dealing with Catholic views and doctrines during the heat of this reformation period. However Calvin, though opposing the Catholic position, fails to provide any reliable scriptural basis for his position. Even the simple and beloved verse John 3:16(-18) stands in stark opposition to his position. In addition, Calvin disregards the matter of faith in his diatribe. His position and foundation regarding the events of Genesis three have no scriptural support whatsoever.

a totally spurious (straw man) argument and then proceeds to blow over the straw man.

Calvin's arguments are erudite and persuasive to such an extent that multiplied millions have adopted them and the majority of denominations as well. Who are we to question such a learned man and scholar?

Well, let's do so anyway. The often stated principles of Calvinism are stated simply in the anagram T.U.L.I.P. and this is indeed way too simplified. In brief, this stands for:

The total Depravity of man (also known as Total Inability and Original Sin)

Unconditional Election

Limited Atonement (also known as Particular Atonement)

Irresistible Grace

Perseverance of the Saints (also known as Once Saved Always Saved)

These five categories do not comprise Calvinism in totality. They simply represent some of its main points.

Total Depravity:

Sin has affected all parts of man. The heart, emotions, will, mind, and body are all affected by sin. We are completely sinful. We are not as sinful as we could be, but we are completely affected by sin.

The doctrine of Total Depravity is derived from scriptures that reveal human character: Man's heart is evil (Mark 7:21-23) and sick (Jer. 17:9). Man is a slave of sin (Rom. 6:20). He does not seek for God (Rom. 3:10-12). He cannot understand spiritual things (1 Cor. 2:14). He is at enmity with God (Eph. 2:15). And, is by nature a child of wrath (Eph. 2:3). The Calvinist asks the question, "In light of the scriptures that declare man's true nature as being utterly lost and incapable, how is it possible for anyone to choose or desire God?" The answer is, "He cannot. Therefore God must predestine."

Calvinism also maintains that because of our fallen nature we are born again not by our own will but God's will (John 1:12-13); God grants that we believe (Phil. 1:29); faith is the work of God (John 6:28-29); God appoints people to believe (Acts 13:48); and God predestines (Eph. 1:1-11; Rom. 8:29; 9:9-23).

Unconditional Election:

God does not base His election on anything He sees in the individual. He chooses the elect

according to the kind intention of His will (Eph. 1:4-8; Rom. 9:11) without any consideration of merit within the individual. Nor does God look into the future to see who would pick Him. Also, as some are elected into salvation, others are not (Rom. 9:15, 21).

Limited Atonement:

Jesus died only for the elect. Though Jesus' sacrifice was sufficient for all, it was not efficacious for all. Jesus only bore the sins of the elect. Support for this position is drawn from such scriptures as Matt. 26:28 where Jesus died for 'many'; John 10:11, 15 which say that Jesus died for the sheep (not the goats, per Matt. 25:32-33); John 17:9 where Jesus in prayer interceded for the ones given Him, not those of the entire world; Acts 20:28 and Eph. 5:25-27 which state that the Church was purchased by Christ, not all people; and Isaiah 53:12 which is a prophecy of Jesus' crucifixion where he would bore the sins of many (not all).

Irresistible Grace:

When God calls his elect into salvation, they cannot resist. God offers to all people the gospel message. This is called the external call. But to the elect, God extends an internal call and it cannot be resisted. This call is by the Holy Spirit who works in the hearts and minds of the elect to bring them to repentance and regeneration whereby they willingly and freely come to God. Some of the verses used in support of this teaching are Romans 9:16 where it says that "*it is not of him who wills nor of him who runs, but of God who has mercy*"; Philippians 2:12-13 where God is said to be the one working salvation in the individual; John 6:28-29 where faith is declared to be the work of God; Acts 13:48 where God appoints people to believe; and John 1:12-13 where being born again is not by man's will, but by God's. "All that the Father gives Me shall come to Me, and the one who comes to Me I will certainly not cast out," (John 6:37).

Perseverance of the Saints:

You cannot lose your salvation. Because the Father has elected, the Son has redeemed, and the Holy Spirit has applied salvation, those thus saved are eternally secure. They are eternally secure in Christ. Some of the verses for this position are John 10:27-28 where Jesus said His sheep will never perish; John 6:47 where salvation is described as everlasting life; Romans 8:1 where it is said we have passed out of judgment; 1 Corinthians 10:13 where God promises to never let us be tempted beyond what we can handle; and Phil. 1:6 where God is the one being faithful to perfect us until the day of Jesus' return.¹¹

With all the discussion, some of it heated over this issue, I have yet to see anyone who took the time to research what the Jews in the first century and especially the apostle Paul understood and meant by the term used six times in the New Testament, all associated with or used by Paul. No use of this specific term is

¹¹ The Calvinist Corner, Matthew J. Slick, online.

found in the Old Testament.¹² But, the use of this term does indeed reflect the ancient Jewish understanding, which, by the way, is quite simple.

It always amazes me that Paul is interpreted by Calvin rather than by what he himself understood about this matter. Frankly, it's ridiculous.

The Greek in the New Testament passages is, "προορίζω" and means "before" or "in front of" a "mark" or "boundary." It means basically "to determine ahead of time." Here are the verses:

Acts 4:27-28,¹³ 27: "For truly in this city there were gathered together against Your holy servant Jesus, whom You anointed, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, along with the Gentiles and the peoples of Israel, 28: to do whatever Your hand and Your purpose predestined to occur."

This points to God's predetermined plan for Jesus' coming, ministry, death, resurrection and ascension. We have discussed this and there is little question about the definite plan for Christ to appear and that it was pre-destined by God at a specific time when the "fullness of time" occurred as God saw it.¹⁴

Paul writes in Romans 8:28-30, 28: And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to *His* purpose. 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."

Verses 29 and 30 are predicated upon verse 28, a verse always taken out of context, but not without justification. So verses 29-30 continue the thought that for those who love God and are called according to His purpose, His purpose is to ultimately glorify them. It refers specifically to those whom God already knows.

Verse 29, states this clearly. This sentence places God's foreknowledge as the basis for His predestination to glorify those who love Him and who He knows as His own.

¹² Some passages do relate to this and we will look at them shortly.

¹³ A portion of Peter and John's prayer to God after they were released from arrest.

¹⁴ Galatians 4:4.

To "foreknow" is not necessarily just about events or the destination of people. It is used in a relational sense as a personal and intimate relationship between two beings. One comes to be "known" by God when one comes to Him in faith, and repentance. An example of this is found in Matthew 7:21-23,

21: "Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father who is in heaven *will enter*. 22: "Many will say to Me on that day, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in Your name, and in Your name cast out demons, and in Your name perform many miracles?' 23: "And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; DEPART FROM ME, YOU WHO PRACTICE LAWLESSNESS.'

We have the same idea in the Old Testament. In Genesis 4:1 and 4:17 the KJV translates the Hebrew "yada" as "Know" which is accurate while the NASB translates it as "had relations with." This word is used even of the most intimate of relationships as well as those that are personal and close.

4:1 "And Adam knew Eve his wife; and she conceived, and bare Cain, and said, I have gotten a man from the LORD.

4:17, And Cain knew his wife; and she conceived, and bare Enoch: and he builded a city, and called the name of the city, after the name of his son, Enoch.

This is a fairly common expression as Numbers 31:17 illustrates.

Numbers 31:17, "Now therefore, kill every male among the little ones, and kill every woman who has known man intimately."

In the New Testament we have similar statements such as in John 10:14-15,

14: "I am the good shepherd, and I know My own and My own know Me, 15: even as the Father knows Me and I know the Father; and I lay down My life for the sheep."

And, II Timothy 2:19,

19: "Nevertheless, the firm foundation of God stands, having this seal, 'The Lord knows those who are His,' and, 'Everyone who names the name of the Lord is to abstain from wickedness.'"

So to "foreknow" in Romans 8:28-30 reflects this idea. We will get back to the first century Jewish understanding of this in a moment. It is very important. But first, let's look at the rest of the occurrences in the New Testament that reflect Jewish understanding.

I Corinthians 2:7, "...but we speak God's wisdom in a mystery, the hidden *wisdom* which God predestined before the ages to our glory;"

Paul is clear that God's wisdom was to result in "our glory." Just as he said in Romans 8:28-30. Here is the context and we will see who the "our" are.

I Corinthians 2:1-7, 1: "And when I came to you, brethren, I did not come with superiority of speech or of wisdom, proclaiming to you the testimony of God. 2: For I determined to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ, and Him crucified. 3: I was with you in weakness and in fear and in much trembling, 4: and my message and my preaching were not in persuasive words of wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power, 5: so that your faith would not rest on the wisdom of men, but on the power of God. 6: Yet we do speak wisdom among those who are mature; a wisdom, however, not of this age nor of the rulers of this age, who are passing away; 7: but we speak God's wisdom in a mystery, the hidden *wisdom* which God predestined before the ages to our glory;"

So the "our" is not some predetermined mass of humanity, but those who are already of faith as verse 5 states.

Ephesians 1:5, "He predestined us to adoption as sons through Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the kind intention of His will,.."

Who are the "us?" Again, the context, Ephesians 1:1-8,

1: Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, To the saints who are at Ephesus and *who are* faithful in Christ Jesus: 2: Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. 3: Blessed *be* the God and Father of

our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly *places* in Christ, 4: just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we would be holy and blameless before Him. In love 5: He predestined us to adoption as sons through Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the kind intention of His will, 6: to the praise of the glory of His grace, which He freely bestowed on us in the Beloved. 7: In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of His grace 8: which He lavished on us. In all wisdom and insight."

Note that the "us" are the saints (believers) with whom Paul includes himself in verse 3-8. Several things are noted; 1. We have been blessed with every spiritual blessing in Christ. 2. This includes that God's chose "us" to be holy and blameless before Him and this was decided before the world was created. 2. Verse 5 cannot be divided up or be separated from 6-8, or 9-12 for that matter. The predestination to adoption as sons was through Jesus Christ, not apart from Christ. Further, it is Christ that is the focus and cause of our redemption, not God's predestination. Note 6-7. We will underscore this from Paul in a moment.

Continuing,

9: "He made known to us the mystery of His will, according to His kind intention which He purposed in Him 10: with a view to an administration suitable to the fullness of the times, *that is*, the summing up of all things in Christ, things in the heavens and things on the earth. In Him 11: also we have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to His purpose who works all things after the counsel of His will, 12: to the end that we who were the first to hope in Christ would be to the praise of His glory."

Verse 12 is very important as it show that those who were the first to hope in Christ would be to the praise of His glory. I have an article by a PHD that says it is the predestination of those condemned to Hell that brings glory to God.¹⁵

Now, before we look to the Old Testament, I would like to look at some passages that indicate that the predestination of people to salvation is based on their faith.

John 1:11-12, 11: He came to His own, and those who were His own did not

¹⁵ Daniel Fuller, "Hell and God's Love," Fuller Seminary professorial class handout.

receive Him. 12: But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, *even* to **those who believe** in His name,

Calvin states that no one has the capacity to "believe" without the intervention of God. It is those whom God has prechosen in whom He does some spiritual work in order for them to believe. But the basis for the pre-choosing is left to His mysterious sovereignty and even Calvin calls it the "mystery" or "secret" of predestination. However, Paul wrote, "For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek." (Romans 1:16)

Speaking of Paul,

Romans 3:22, "...*even the* righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all **those who believe**; for there is no distinction;

But looking at the context, we see that it is the Law that condemns all men, not a predestined plan and that it is faith that saves people, not a predestined plan. This fact begs the question, "Why the Law in the first place?" If everyone's nature and conduct in already formed and predestined before time began, then why even set up the law? Everyone is going to do what they have been planned to do so what is the point?

Anyway, here is the context:

Romans 3:19-28, 19: "Now we know that whatever the Law says, it speaks to those who are under the Law, so that every mouth may be closed and all the world may become accountable to God; 20: because by the works of the Law no flesh will be justified in His sight; for through the Law *comes* the knowledge of sin. 21: But now apart from the Law *the* righteousness of God has been manifested, being witnessed by the Law and the Prophets, 22: *even the* righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all those who believe; for there is no distinction; 23: for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, 24: being justified as a gift by His grace through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus; 25: whom God displayed publicly as a propitiation in His blood through faith. *This was* to demonstrate His righteousness, because in the forbearance of God He passed over the sins previously committed; 26: for the demonstration, *I say*, of His righteousness at the present time, so that He would be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus. 27: Where then is boasting? It is excluded. By what kind of law? Of works?

No, but by a law of faith. 28: For we maintain that a man is justified by faith apart from works of the Law."

There are some significant passages in the New Testament but they relate to the Old and we will see them in a moment. First, however, a couple of verses relating to the free will of people to make a decision. The KJV phrases it correctly. The NASB is weak here with, "if anyone wishes to..." The Greek is "thel-oh" and is more in tune with one "willing", "wanting", "intending" or "desiring" than "wishing" which in our thinking has only a mental desire, not a determination.

In Mark 8:34 we read, "And when he had called the people *unto him* with his disciples also, he said unto them, **Whosoever will** come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me." (KJV)

Revelation 22:17, And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And **whosoever will**, let him take the water of life freely. (KJV)

So the word "will" is "theloh" and means to "will," "want," "intend" or "desire." This gives the idea that we can make a choice. But the Calvinist would say that only those preselected can make this choice and can only do so because of a work of the Spirit in their hearts and minds. But at the same time he states,

"That there exists in the human minds and indeed by natural instinct, some sense of Deity, we hold to be beyond dispute, since God himself, to prevent any man from pretending ignorance, has endued all men with some idea of his Godhead, the memory of which he constantly renews and occasionally enlarges, that all to a man being aware that there is a God, and that he is their Maker, may be condemned by their own conscience when they neither worship him nor consecrate their lives to his service.¹⁶

All men of sound judgement will therefore hold, that a sense of Deity is indelibly engraven on the human heart. And that this belief is naturally engendered in all, and thoroughly fixed as it were in our very bones, is strikingly attested by the contumacy of the wicked, who, though they struggle furiously, are unable to extricate themselves from the fear of God.¹⁷

¹⁶ Book 1, section 1, chapter 1

¹⁷ Book 1, section 1, chapter 3

Yet none are able to actually come to a saving faith outside of the Holy Spirit's work in one's life. Does the Spirit only work in the life of the elect? John 16:7-9 says,

16:7-11, 7: "But I tell you the truth, it is to your advantage that I go away; for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you; but if I go, I will send Him to you. 8: "And He, when He comes, will convict the world concerning sin and righteousness and judgment; 9: concerning sin, because they do not believe in Me; 10: and concerning righteousness, because I go to the Father and you no longer see Me; 11: and concerning judgment, because the ruler of this world has been judged."

It is difficult to say how this works or whether the work of the Spirit prompts one to faith whether they act on it or not. But in Stephens speech just before he was stoned he said, "You men who are stiff-necked and uncircumcised in heart and ears are always resisting the Holy Spirit; you are doing just as your fathers did." (Acts 7:51) this suggests that the Spirit of God was attempting to move the hearts of people who simply resisted or rejected his efforts. There is not a lot of Scripture about this and the preponderance relates to the move of the Spirit in the hearts of believers.

But another stumbling block comes when the encouragement to seek the Lord is given, especially as a general statement to all. This seems rather unnecessary if indeed the "elect" are predestined to salvation anyway and have no choice but to seek the Lord and be saved.

Psalm 34:10, "The young lions do lack and suffer hunger; But they who seek the LORD shall not be in want of any good thing."

Isaiah 55:6-7, 6: "Seek the LORD while He may be found; Call upon Him while He is near. 7: Let the wicked forsake his way And the unrighteous man his thoughts; And let him return to the LORD, And He will have compassion on him, And to our God, For He will abundantly pardon."

Zechariah 8:20-23, 20: "Thus says the LORD of hosts, '*It will yet be* that peoples will come, even the inhabitants of many cities. 21: "The inhabitants of one will go to another, saying, "Let us go at once to entreat the favor of the LORD, and to seek the LORD of hosts; I will also go." 22: "So many peoples and mighty nations will come to seek the LORD of hosts in Jerusalem and to entreat the favor of the

LORD.' 23: "Thus says the LORD of hosts, 'In those days ten men from all the nations will grasp the garment of a Jew, saying, "Let us go with you, for we have heard that God is with you.'"

Then the case of King Rehoboam of whom it is said, "He did evil because he did not set his heart to seek the LORD." (II Chronicles 12:14)

To me this suggests that Rehoboam was the one who is held responsible for not setting his heart to seek the Lord. There is no word that tells us he was unable to do so due to a predetermined decision by God.

Finally, James tells the assembly at the Jerusalem conference regarding Paul's mission to the Gentiles,

"Simeon has related how God first concerned Himself about taking from among the Gentiles a people for His name. With this the words of the Prophets agree, just as it is written, 'AFTER THESE THINGS I will return, AND I WILL REBUILD THE TABERNACLE OF DAVID WHICH HAS FALLEN, AND I WILL REBUILD ITS RUINS, AND I WILL RESTORE IT, SO THAT THE REST OF MANKIND MAY SEEK THE LORD, AND ALL THE GENTILES WHO ARE CALLED BY MY NAME,' SAYS THE LORD, WHO MAKES THESE THINGS KNOWN FROM LONG AGO." (Acts 15:14-18)

So there is the promise that God will restore the kingdom of David so that the Lord may be sought by all mankind - all the Gentiles whom God knows to be His.