

D. N. Jackson wrote a book entitled 'The Doctrine of Divine Election, Calvinism and Arminianism Examined.' In this book you will find this statement: ' God has predestinated that believers shall be saved ...' Is that a true statement? If we will compare it to the word of God the answer is no, it is not a true statement.

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To the point, the Bible nowhere says that God predestinates believers. Now this might sound a little strange to the ears at first because we know that believers are predestinated or else they would never have believed. But the statement is confusing and misleading. What folks usually mean when they make a statement like this is that God predestinates some *because* they have believed, and that is not true. As a matter of fact it's a lie and here's why. That statement takes a result or an effect *of* predestination and turns it into a cause *for* predestination. Why the very same thing is done by those who say that God foreknew or foresaw who would believe. Well, of course He foreknew them that believed or else they would not be of those that shall believe. Again, what folks usually mean by saying something to this effect is that God foreknew them that believed *because* God saw they would believe. However, the Bible says nothing concerning faith as the moving cause of God's act to foreknow someone to salvation. The truth is that the foreknowledge of God is not based on whether one shall have faith in Christ. This kind of reasoning presents the absurd mental image of a tail chasing the dog rather than what we are all familiar with, which is the dog chasing his tail. It is this kind of reasoning that is applied to some very important Bible doctrines. We need to pay close attention to what the Bible teaches or else we could be turned away from its truths and into great errors by what appears to be to us only seemingly small, insignificant details. So, what does the Bible teach about predestination?

The Bible says that God predestinated those which he foreknew. Read it for yourselves in Ro 8:29: *For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many*

brethren. First, I'd like to point out that the objective case pronoun 'whom' refers to someone, not something. God foreknew someone. In other words God cast His special *forethought* upon a certain person. And, second, notice here that predestination is applied to those that God foreknew. Nothing here says that predestination was because one was a believer or because of faith. Referring once again to the Scriptures which is the only source for deriving the faith of Christ, we find predestination applied to those which God elects. In Eph.1.3-5 it is written: *Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ: according as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should 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, to the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved.* Like we read in Romans chapter 8 predestination is applied to those which God chose (elected) before the foundation of the world. To be chosen by God before the foundation of the world means that before there was anything of this present age founded (this refers to the whole universe) God alone chose to save a people for His name's sake. So what have we gleaned from the word of God so far? We have gleaned that God predestinated those upon whom he set His eternal thought and upon whom He acted with an eternal act ... to save.

The foreknowledge of God and His election of grace have nothing to do with any *good or evil* that the person known or chosen will do. NOTHING. Now, there's no question that God knew from eternity all the good and evil every person would ever do throughout all of human history. But that knowledge is not foreknowledge. It is omniscience. So the acts of men are excluded from the issue of God's foreknowledge of some to salvation. We just read in the Ephesian text that God's election of grace was *that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love*. Therefore election assumes holiness and blamelessness are lacking in those elected unto salvation. Essentially the same idea is stated Ro.9.11: *For the children being not yet born, neither having done any good or evil, that the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works, but of him that calleth ...* Election isn't determined by the elected but by the Elector. This much we know

of those elected: there was no holiness and no righteous standing so that they might live in the unmediated presence of God. Isn't this the purpose of salvation? ... to bring a people into His unmediated presence by the redemptive work of the Son of God, Jesus Christ? (Jn.14.3; 17.24; Re.21.3)

Now there are some things hard to understand in the word of God. For example, omniscience and foreknowledge are not the same things, yet so many of us treat them as if they are. Omniscience, like omnipresence, omnipotence, is an attribute of God. An attribute describes for us something of what God is like. Omni- from the Latin *omnis*, meaning all or universally. God is all-knowing, present in all places at one time, and all-powerful. However, foreknowledge and election refer to acts of God. I believe the statements, 'God has predestinated that believers shall be saved,' and, 'God foreknew who they are that would believe,' is a direct result of confusing God's attribute of omniscience with His act that is called foreknowledge. That God comprehends all things at once, that He knows all things, that He knows from eternity the beginning from the end is true. (Is.46.10; Jn.16.30; 21.17) We do not deny that God is omniscient, but omniscience isn't an act. In other words there is no intent in knowing. However, to foreknow is to act. God acts positively toward those he foreknows. This foreknowledge is when He sets His special thoughts upon someone. Therefore it can be said that omniscience differs from foreknowledge as a thought does from a deed, and this deed by God to foreknow is by His grace.

Grace is the moving cause of foreknowledge. As a matter of fact grace is the moving cause of both foreknowledge and election. God by His grace set His mind specially upon one (foreknowledge) to choose him (election) in Jesus Christ to be saved. *1Pe 1:2, Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ: Grace unto you, and peace, be multiplied.* (cf. Ro.11.5) G-R-A-C-E: the absolutely arbitrary, unmerited, loving favor of God bestowed upon those foreknown and elected. By now hopefully we understand better that foreknowledge isn't determined by the foreknown, but by the Foreknower; that, election isn't determined by the elected, but by the Elector; and that,

predestination isn't determined by the predestinated, but by the Predestinator. These things are the works of God. They are unilateral and unconditional. It is His right to apply these to whomever He will as His is the power to do as He pleases. How presumptuous for men to think it could be any other way.

We have proved by the word of God predestination is only applied to those which God has foreknown and elected unto salvation. It cannot be affirmed by the word of God that predestination (not to mention foreknowledge and election) is based on *foreseen* works or faith. That idea is *foreign* to the word of God. Rather, predestination, the Greek, προορίζω, prooridzō, means, to determine beforehand. So God determined beforehand the destiny of those He foreknew and elected. In other words predestination sets the course of certain ones so that they shall surely receive the gift of everlasting life and positively come to faith in God's only begotten Son, Jesus Christ. Listen, apart from the work of God no man *can* come to Christ because of sin. (Jn.6.29, 44) Man is *dead* in trespasses and sins. How few there are which grasp that man is really *this* dead. Well-meaning men pump just enough life into the man so that he can do something, anything. For this reason they have created one of the greatest contradictions in the word of God and one of the sharpest divisions there is among those of the true faith of Jesus Christ. They have made faith the moving cause for God's foreknowledge, election and predestination.

There is no better way to display the awesome greatness of God than by His public display from eternity past to eternity future that He can do what He pleases, when He pleases, and how pleases to whom He pleases. If you are one that knows Jesus Christ died for your sins, was buried and rose again from the dead there can be no greater comfort for you at this present time than to believe every word of God. Receive it all just as it is written and be blessed.