

Enns, P. P. (1997, c1989). *The Moody handbook of theology*.

PREDESTINATION

Calvin defined predestination as follows: “Predestination we call the eternal decree of God, by which he hath determined in himself what he would have to become of every individual of mankind...eternal life is foreordained for some, and eternal damnation for others. Every man, therefore, being created for one or the other of these ends, we say he is predestinated either to life or to death.”¹¹

Predestination has both a wider and a narrower aspect. In its wider aspect it emphasizes that God has foreordained whatever comes to pass, based on Ephesians 1:11. From eternity past God has determined the events of history. The narrower aspect of predestination is personal; it means that from eternity past God has elected (or chosen) some to salvation while allowing remaining members of humanity to go their own way. This latter doctrine is known as reprobation (Rom. 9:16–19).¹² Although they deserved nothing and had no merit in themselves, God chose some to salvation; God also passed over some, condemning them to eternal punishment for their sins. Calvin called this a “horrible” doctrine but insisted that the Scripture clearly teaches it and that the doctrine could not be avoided.¹³

The word *predestinate* (Gk. *prooridzo*) means “to mark out beforehand” (Eph. 1:5, 11; Rom. 8:29; Acts 4:28; 1 Cor. 2:7). On this basis Calvinists teach that God, in the act of predestination, elected certain ones to salvation. Election itself is based on the term *call* (Gk. *kaleo*), which means “to call out from among.” It suggests the sovereign work of God in choosing some people for salvation out from among the masses of humanity. The many references to *call* in the New Testament emphasize God’s sovereign call to salvation (e.g., Rom. 1:1; 8:28, 30; 9:11; 1 Cor. 1:1, 2).

As indicated earlier, there are close relationships among the essential doctrines of the Calvinistic system. Calvinists insist that election and predestination are necessary because of man’s fall. If man is dead in trespasses and sins (Eph. 2:1), then it is necessary for God to initiate salvation. If God had not marked out some to salvation, no one could have been saved. Man in his depraved state is utterly unable to make a move toward God.

¹¹ 11. John McClintock and James Strong, “Calvinism,” in *Cyclopaedia of Biblical, Theological and Ecclesiastical Literature*, 12 vols. (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1970), 2:42.

¹² 12. W. S. Reid, “Predestination,” in *Evangelical Dictionary of Theology*, p. 870.

¹³ 13. W. S. Reid, “Reprobation,” *ibid.*, p. 937.