

THE WILL OF GOD IN MISSION
ACCORDING TO THE USE OF THE WORD PREDESTINED*

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1. Introduction

Man, a free agent born responsible to God, has freedom of choice, but can choose to conduct his life by the precepts of the Word, or by his own design. God created man for fellowship with himself and with other persons, not for automatic replays of pat phrases and set answers. As we find the personality of Jesus multi-faceted, so great diversity of personalities abide in the body of Christ. God has predestined, He made man's life possible that all who will repent and come to Him may receive forgiveness, salvation, and life eternal through His son Christ Jesus.

2. Consideration of Terms

The word "predestined" appears primarily in three passages: Romans 8:29, Ephesians 1:5, and Ephesians 1:11. Beginning with Romans 8:29, the word "predestined" has been presented in the following phrases: "He predestined us to adoption as sons" (NAS); "For those whom He foreknew" (AMP); "For whom He foreknew, He also predestined" (NKJV); "For those God foreknew He also predestined" (NIV); "For whom He did foreknow, he also did predestinate" (KJV); "For from the very beginning God decided that those who came to Him – and all along He knew who would – should become like his son" (TLB)

* [This essay was originally written over 30 years ago. This essay both argues a case and is reflective of the time period. As such, we saw the invaluable contribution of the piece. The Editors]

The Oxford American Dictionary and Thesaurus² defines “predestine” as “God or fate decide in advance that something will happen or that someone will have a particular fate. Thiessen³ indicates that the words “foreordained” and “predestined” have the same meaning. He describes “foreordained” as: “that effective exercise of the will of God by which things before determined by Him are brought to pass.” Funk and Wagnall’s Standard Dictionary⁴ describes predestine as something “designed for some special fate, foreordained by divine decree, as to salvation; to destine or decree beforehand; foreordained.”

Williams⁵ affirms the purpose of God for His Church as predestined: (1) “to be adopted as sons” (Ephesians 1:5); (2) “for the praise of His glory” (Ephesians 1:11-12); and (3) “to be conformed to the likeness of His son” (Romans 8:29). Romans 3:23 states all mankind have sinned, and because of it, do not know God. But God made it possible reference: for Jesus to take our sins upon Himself, that “we might become the righteousness of God” (2 Corinthians 5:21). We are adopted as sons of God if we accept Jesus as Lord by belief, faith, and confession. Romans 10:9 affirms: “that if you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord” (NAS). By His grace, the free gift of God (Ephesians 2:8), we are saved through faith in Jesus Christ.

3. An Abbreviated Comparison of Arminianism and Calvinism

The consideration of predestination belongs to that branch of theology called soteriology, the doctrine of salvation. The questions concerning the controversial meanings of “predestinate/predestined” have divided the religious community into two main camps. People ask: “Is salvation conditional or unconditional?” “If a person is saved, is he eternally saved?” “On whom does salvation depend – man or God?” “Is grace irresistible?” “Will a person be saved whether or not he wants

² *Oxford American Dictionary and Thesaurus*, 2nd ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, Inc., 2009), 1,012.

³ Henry C. Thiessen, *Lectures in Systematic Theology* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1949), 345.

⁴ Funk and Wagnall’s *Standard Dictionary of the English Language*, Combined with the Britannica World Language Dictionary, I (Chicago: Encyclopedia Britannica, Inc., 1985), 993.

⁵ Morris Williams, *Partnership in Mission*, Revised and enlarged ed. (Springfield, MO: Division of Foreign Missions, 1979; 1986), 15.

to be saved?” “Is a person once in grace (saved) always in grace (saved)?”⁶

Guthrie⁷ summarizes his comments on predestination by observing:

Paul does not set out salvation as if God decreed that so many people, irrespective of human responsibility, should be saved and the rest condemned. That would make men robots, mere tools in the hand of God. The remarkable balance between God’s sovereignty and man’s responsibility does not remove the tension . . . but he was sufficiently down to earth to see the need for constant appeals to Christians to persevere in faith.

Jacobus Arminius (1560 – 1609), a progressive Protestant Dutch theologian and author of the reformed branch of theology known as Arminianism, reacted against the sternness of Calvinism. “Arminius discarded the idea of unconditional predestination and taught that man had freedom to choose or reject salvation.”⁸

John Calvin (1509-1564) was born in France, studied in Paris, Orleans, and Bourges and later was forced to break away from the Catholic Church. He founded in 1559 what later became known as the University of Geneva. Barker⁹ calls him “the greatest theologian and disciplinarian of the great of the reformers.” Hurbut¹⁰ calls him “the greatest theologian of the church after Augustine. Calvin’s Institute of the Christian Religion (1536), published at age 27, became standards of Protestant reform doctrine.” The Council of Orange formally accepted the Augustine doctrine of unconditional election in A.D. 529, upon which Calvin based his theology.¹¹

⁶ Myer Pearlman, *Knowing the Doctrines of the Bible* (Springfield, MO: Gospel Publishing House, 1937), 269-71.

⁷ Donald Guthrie, *New Testament Theology* (Leicester, England: Inter-Varsity Press, 1981), 629.

⁸ William Baker, *Who’s Who in Church History* (Old Tappan, New Jersey: Fleming H. Revell Company, 1969), 23.

⁹ *Who’s Who*, 57

¹⁰ Jessie L Hurbut, *The Story of the Christian Church*, rev. ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1970), 122.

¹¹ Merrill F. Unger, *The New Unger’s Bible Dictionary*, rev. & updated (Chicago: Moody Press, 1988), 347.

Calvinism can be summarized in an oversimplified manner by using the mnemonic device – “t-u-l-i-p.” Calvin believed in the complete sovereignty of God. Man has no choice with regard to election and salvation. Man exists (1) “T”otally depraved. He was born completely sinful and corrupted. Salvation (2) becomes a matter of “U”nconditional election apart from human endeavor or divine knowledge. Election has a dual predestination – some will be saved, others will be condemned. Christ’s work on the Cross (3) was “L”imited atonement, received only by those elected to salvation. The doctrine of (4) “Irresistible grace says the elect will be saved, whether or not they desire salvation. The Holy Spirit will irresistibly draw them to Christ. (5) “P”erseverance of the saints describes the doctrine that says they will never be lost.

Calvin’s theological emphasis echoes that of Augustine. “Like other reformers,” Cairns¹² comments, “he went from the Bible to Augustine to seek support” for his conclusions.

A comparison of major predestination beliefs of Calvin and Arminius include the following:¹³

<u>Calvinism</u>	<u>Arminianism</u>
1. Salvation is only a matter of divine grace.	1. Man is able to initiate his salvation from God’s offer.
2. Election is unconditional, some men to grace, others to condemnation.	2. Election is conditional on man’s reaction to God.
3. Christ’s Atonement is only for those elected to salvation.	3. Christ’s death was sufficient for all who will believe.
4. God’s grace is irresistible	4. Man may resist God’s saving grace.
5. Saved man will never be lost (“Perseverance”).	5. It is possible for man to fall away from salvation.
	6. God is not the author of sin; man is not an automaton. ¹⁴

¹² Earle E. Cairns, *Christianity Through the Centuries*, rev. ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1967), 336-37.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 352

¹⁴ Emery H. Bancroft, *Christian Theology*, rev. ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1961), begin his “unconditional” position, p.219f. Thiessen begins his presentation on “election”, 343ff. Both authors

4. The Wider Scope of Man's Destiny

The issue in predestination: "How does the divine Sovereign choose who may be children of God and heirs of heaven?" Calvinists maintain that the "election of individuals to salvation is absolute, unconditional, by virtue of divine decree." Arminians regard "election as conditional upon repentance and faith," repent and believe, and you will be saved by Jesus Christ. Sufficient grace will be given everyone to make the proper decision. Arminians also believe man is responsible for making his own decision with regard to accepting salvation.¹⁵

Predestined (*proorizō*) in Ephesians 1:5 "adopted as sons" (NAS), carries the Greek meaning of "one to obtain a thing." Predestined in Romans 8:29 "to become conformed to the likeness of His Son (NAS) means "to foreordain, to appoint beforehand."¹⁶

This writer follows the Arminian viewpoint of predestination. Many of the salvation passages contain the conditional word "if." I feel the burden has been placed directly on man himself to accept or reject God's provision for taking away man's sin and bestowing grace on a person through Jesus Christ. Romans 10:9 says "That if you confess." Roman 8:10 states "If Christ is in you." Romans 8:11 affirms "But if the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you." Romans 8:17 records "If indeed we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together." Romans 11:22 states "If you continue in His goodness. Otherwise you also will be cut off" (NKJV).

Roman 8:28-30 contains five words that describe the salvation progression in a person's life: (1) God's foreknowledge; (2) predestinate (also foreordained or election); (3) called; (4) justified) and (5) glorified. Sanctification remains deleted in this grouping, however,

write as Calvinists; *Pearlman* presents both sides, but concludes as an Arminian.

¹⁵ Merrill F. Unger, *Unger's Bible Dictionary* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1966), 297.

¹⁶ Joseph H. Thayer, *Thayer's Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament*, trans., rev. & enlarged (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1974 [1889], 541.

Pomerville¹⁷ states “Sanctification is progressively becoming like Christ here and now. Glorification is perfect sharing in Christ’s nature and inheritance there and then. Sanctification is glory begun, glory is sanctification completed.” Each of the above five terms grow out of and depend upon the preceding term. In the perfection of one’s salvation, foreknowledge and foreordination are past tense; our calling and justification are present tense events. Glorification will be a future tense event in our life.

Foreknowledge refers to the fact that God foreknows and foresees¹⁸ who will respond to the Gospel. Foreordained and predestined have been defined above. One who has been justified has been declared right with God and treated accordingly. His wrong doing has been taken away, just as if the person had never sinned. Justification concerns not the innocent person, rather the guilty one. Justification cancels out the guilt of sin. Sanctification deals with the power of sin; a person becomes separated from the world and drawn unto closeness with God. In the process the person undergoes a process of being made holy. A person “called” by God might well follow George Mueller’s six steps in finding God’s will for his life.¹⁹ First (Not your Will), come to the place where you have no will of your own in the matter. Ninety percent of the problem of ascertaining God’s will can be found here. Second (Ask God), ask God in earnest prayer to lead you in His will and keep you from being led astray. Third (Consult the Word), seek the will of God in connection with the Word of God. The Word and the Spirit must agree. Fourth (Circumstances), take into account providential circumstances; these sometimes clearly indicate the will of God. Fifth (Decision), come to a deliberate conclusion, according to the best of your ability and knowledge. Sixth (Peace –Action), with your mind at peace after several more petitions. Proceed accordingly.

¹⁷ Paul A. Pomerville, *Galatians and Romans: A Study Guide* – ICI Diploma Program (Brussels, Belgium: International Correspondence Institute, 1976), 204-05.

¹⁸ Anthony Palma, *Galatians and Romans: A Study Guide* – ICI Advanced Level (Brussels, Belgium: International Correspondence Institute, 1973), 127-32.

¹⁹ Hugh P. Jeter, *Introduction to Missions: A Study Guide* (Brussels, Belgium: International Correspondence Institute, 1974), 41.

Jeter²⁰ defines the missionary call with “The Great Commission, plus the assurance in your heart, no matter how it comes, that God wants you to go as His witness to those who do not know the Savior.”

Cook²¹ relates that very few missionaries receive their call by means of a vision, a dream or by hearing an audible voice. Most are influenced by reading or hearing an appeal for willing workers. Sometimes the call is general, sometimes to a specific place and ministry.

A Christian worker needs to be led of the Lord because: (1) God knows us better than we know ourselves; (2) God knows the task ahead and the power and strategy of the enemy; (3) God knows the future; (4) God knows His work and what should be done; and (5) the secret of success is as the Lord leads us.²²

5. Conformed to the Likeness of Jesus

God’s will (Romans 8:28-29 for each person clearly indicates he be conformed to the image and likeness of Jesus. The Holy Spirit knows what Jesus wants for each of us: His work in each person’s life and directing experiences in our lives, which will eventually make us like Jesus.²³ Jesus became the first-born among all His body of believers. God’s will manifests a family of joint-heirs and brethren, men and women – people, his sons and daughters, who will share heaven with Him. They will tabernacle with Him and He will be their God.

Romans Chapter Nine continues the discussion of God’s absolute sovereignty in election. God has elected that all who believe on His Son Jesus Christ shall be saved. The Jews were not automatically saved because of being sons of Abraham, nor because they kept the Law. Their salvation will be by faith in and belief on Jesus Christ. God’s predestined plan prefers those who believe in His Son and rejects those who do not accept Jesus. “Whoever will believe” (Romans 9:33; 10:11) will receive his mercy (Romans 9:23) and grace. Man has a

²⁰ Jeter, *Introduction to Missions*, 44.

²¹ Harold R. Cook, *An Introduction to Christian Missions* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1971), 78-91.

²² Cook, *An Introduction to Christian Missions*, 92-101. Jeter. 43-44.

²³ Morris Williams, *Declare His Righteousness* (Springfield, MO: Division of Foreign Missions, 1975), 64-65, 69-71.

responsibility (Romans 9: 30-33): to receive God's righteousness in faith, not human works. The predestined way to God has been established that all who believe are the elect of God, irrespective of race, color, or creed (Romans 9:24-26).²⁴

Barclay²⁵ relates how the father of a Roman family had absolute power over his children, even when they were full-grown and may have been employed in high positions of government. He then describes the Roman adoption process. In the buying back process, the adopted person finally has been sold to the new family for the third time. That time the "old family" no longer buys back the person. As a member of the new family all old debts and obligations were cancelled. Connections with the previous family were abolished completely and never brought to mind again. God has accomplished that feat for us through the atoning work of Jesus.

We are "adopted as sons" (Ephesians 1:5). The power of sin and of the world, and the mistakes of the past are completely wiped out. We are made new in Jesus Christ. We are made the righteousness of God through Jesus (2 Corinthians 5:21). As adopted sons have the likeness of Christ, we will grow up into maturity as a perfect person in Christ (Ephesians 4:13). Our new life will be marked by righteousness and true holiness (Ephesians 4:24).

Some blessings of adoption include: His fatherly care (Luke 12:27-33); family love (John 13:35); father comfort (2 Corinthians 1:4); and a new family name (1 John 3:1). Some evidences of sonship of those adopted into God's family include: (1) being led by the Spirit (Romans 8:4); (2) having liberty of access to God (Ephesians 3:12); (3) having love for the brethren (1 John 2:9-11); and (4) having a child-like confidence in God (Galatians 4:5-6).

Hastings²⁶ concludes his comments on predestination:

Men attending to the will of God revealed in His Word, and yielding obedience ... may be assured of their eternal election. So shall this doctrine afford... praise, reverence, and

²⁴ Ibid., 68-71.

²⁵ William Barclay, *The Letter to the Galatians and Ephesians*, rev. ed. (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1976), 79-80.

²⁶ James Hastings, *Dictionary of the Apostolic Church*, II Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1973), 264.

admiration of God, and of humility, diligence, and consolation to all that sincerely obey the Gospel.

6. Summary Comments about Life in the Son

William W. Adams comments in the Introduction to *Life in the Son*²⁷ about Robert Shank's essays on the doctrine of perseverance of the saints and of the security of believers:

There are certain people who should not read *Life in the Son*: People who have already decided what they intend to believe.... The book was not written for people with spring-trap minds that have already sprung. People who prefer to determine their doctrine from new proof texts and ignore or wrest other passages bearing on a given theme.... Pastors who never read except to gather material for next Sunday's sermon.

Shank²⁸ questions: Is it possible to know we are persevering? Can we know whether salvation is a present reality, rather than a vain assumption?" Answer (1 John 5:13): "Know that you have eternal life," because apart from Jesus there is no salvation.

We are assured of our salvation if we keep His Word; If we walk after the example of Jesus; If we love the Father rather than the world; If we practice righteousness rather than sin; If we love the brethren; If we are conscious of the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit.²⁹

Shank³⁰ with overwhelming detail in 367 pages, convincingly refutes the arbitrary consignment of some persons to perdition, while other individuals gain an unconditional choice of eternal salvation. One argument of supporting evidence has been stated in Appendix A entitled "New Testament Passages Establishing the Doctrine of Conditional Security, and a List of Passages Cited by [Lewis Sperry]

²⁷ Robert Shank, *Life in the Son* (Springfield, MO: Westcott Publishers, 1960), xiv-xv. William W. Adams was a professor at the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, Kentucky. Adams states "it would require months, even years, to prepare the average Baptist audience to face the flesh Biblical exegesis this book contains (xv).

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 301.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 302-05

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 333-37

Chafer as ‘Misunderstood’ by Arminians.” Shank has paralleled a list of 85 passages establishing the doctrine of conditional security beside Chafer’s list of 51 passages in support of the doctrine of unconditional security. Thus, a continuing conclusion throughout each chapter in *Life in the Son*: search the Word, don’t rely on man’s opinion.

All the glory and honor for saving mankind belongs to Jesus. Individuals thus saved need to show and demonstrate the glorious grace and mercy given them by Jesus. We who have trusted Him, have obtained a special inheritance set forth in the council of God before the world was created.³¹ God has created us to be a radiant, praising church, without spot or wrinkle (Ephesians 5:27, 30). We are members of His body, His flesh and bones. As we praise Him and glorify God, we are reminded to be like Jesus in our ministry endeavors.

7. Epilogue: Conditional Security through Decades of Change

Mary, our daughter Cindy, and I arrived in Metro Manila in August 1982 on the week to prepare for three classes at Far East Advanced School of Theology (FEAST, currently Asia Pacific Theological Seminary), settle ourselves into a new apartment, and begin the adjustment process in a new culture. The US Assemblies of God Far East Field Director Wesley Hurst, referring to the Educational program of FEAST in the Philippines stated, “We’re preparing men to produce Pentecostal churches. We’ll keep pushing upward academically, but we don’t want to remove ourselves from where the people really need help.”³² His comment described the missionary attitude toward Bible education throughout the Philippines. Both American missionaries and national pastors enjoyed a parallel ministry of evangelism, teaching and church planting.

This joint ministry activity became firmly established on September 23, 1953 when the Philippines General Council of the Assemblies of God incorporated and registered with the securities and Exchange Commission. Reverend Rodrigo (Rudy) C. Esperanza was elected General Superintendent from 1953 to 1969. From 1961 – 1973

³¹ Joseph S. Exell, *The Biblical Illustrator*, XIX (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1973), 54-61.

³² Wesley Hurst, “Philippines Report: FEAST.” *The School of Missions* (Springfield, MO: Assemblies of God, Division of Foreign Missions, June 1976), 2. Notes and interview material received from Adele F. Dalton, July 1981.

the General Council met annually. By 1981 there were ten district councils, with one aim:

To perpetuate the evangelistic fervor and missionary zeal with which the Pentecostal Movement was born. With the Holy Spirit's anointing (Act 1:8), nationals and missionaries, clergy and laity work together in winning the Philippines for God until Jesus comes.³³

General Superintendent Javier, speaking at the 1981 School of Missions stated these observations:

- (1) We are concerned with "Cross-cultural missions," not foreign Missions;
- (2) The missionary is responsible to the national church of which he is a part;
- (3) Let not the problem of mechanics overshadow your vision and your call;
- (4) Filipinos are personally oriented: Americans are principle oriented. Even with principles, mercy is needed.³⁴

In spite of the scars of World War II still evident in the 1960s, the wind of the Pentecostal activity roared fervently in evangelistic open-air meetings, targeting the bigger cities. One significant attempt at evangelism resulted in the Manila '85 city-wide thrust. Many people were saved, but lack of follow-up resulted in excessive fallout of church growth possibilities. The lessons of Manila '85 increased the emphasis on holding revival meetings in small towns and in the barrios (suburbs) of larger cities.

One of the notable success stories of Manila '85 was the growth of the new work. Good news Assembly in Project 8, a Metro Manila suburb pastored by Reverend Eli Gaad.

³³ "Fortieth Foundation Year (1940-80)," The Philippines General Council of the Assemblies of God (Manila, Philippines, 1980), 4 Notes and interview material received from Adele F. Dalton, July 1981.

³⁴ Eleazer Javier, "Philippine Report," "School of Missions (Springfield, MO: Assembly of God, Division of Foreign Missions, June 12, 1981), 1. Superintendent Javier was elected General Superintendent of the PGCAAG in 1979.

“The Filipinos’ interest in the World intense,” noted missionary Wesley Weekley, the evangelist who challenged the crowd for the opening two weeks of this crusade. “They are hungry for something, which we know to be Jesus. . . the middle-class people are now coming. They are here with serious needs. They want to hear how they can respond to God.”³⁵

Ten strategic areas in Manila were highlighted for evangelism and church planting with participation of approximately twenty Assemblies of God pastors. General Superintendent Cresencio Tandog commented: “We plan to have no less than 1,000 established A/G national churches by the end of the year. Currently, there are 800 national churches.”³⁶

“My idea,” Missionary Dwight Palmquist emphasized, “is to start with a nucleus of believers in each location, rather than just buy a lot and set up a tent. We need to generate local support first, so from the beginning Manila ’85 becomes their project. Thus the local church will become self-supporting as soon as possible.”³⁷

Reverend Evan Squires, A New Zealand A/G veteran missionary and associate pastor at the Asian Christian Charismatic Fellowship in Cubao Metro Manila said: “We can’t use the standard format of service to attract people. They want more than a “hymn-prayer-sermon sandwich type of service. The Filipino wants to become involved from the pew. All the action cannot come only from the platform. The Filipino wants sharing and fellowshiping with the service.”³⁸

Thus, a move toward partnership ministry began to overtake the mechanics of parallel ministry activities. One of these trends was the regional development and outreach of Bethel Bible College begun 1941, Immanuel Bible College founded in 1951, the Assemblies of God Bible Institute of Mindanao (later MRBC) organized in the 1960s, and the regional Bible Institute for the Deaf opened in 1970.

³⁵ Charles Clauser, “The Challenge of Manila,” *Mountain Movers* (Springfield, MO: Division of Foreign Missions, November 1985), 10

³⁶ Manila ’85 Means Church Planting,” Unpublished Notes gathered by Charles Clauser, 1985.

³⁷ Manila ’85, Clauser Notes.

³⁸ Manila ’85, Clauser Notes.

By the early 90s, missionaries began to specialize in their contributions to the thrust of Filipino A/G ministry. Rather than performing a variety of duties, specific portfolios were developed. For example, one couple concentrated on upgrading the accounting procedures in Filipino and Asia Pacific Bible schools. Another missionary couple devoted their time primarily to health-care ministries. At least three missionaries followed a path of full-time evangelism and church planting. One couple began developing media ministries. This specialized ministry has resulted in several Philippines national pastors assuming leadership positions in Bible school management and auxiliary service development. One growth factor has been the increased number of Filipino missionaries being sent out by the PGCAG.

The age of the cell phone and Facebook plus other fast-track media services in this first decade of the 21st century have been a blessing for teaching the hearing impaired at the Bible Institute for the Deaf. Computer use in the classroom by both teachers and students has been ushering in a higher level of proficiency in evangelism, church planting, Bible school teaching, and in compassion ministries for both deaf and hearing persons.

I believe the Philippine Assemblies of God will continue to bring abundant numbers of persons to Christ because of its pursuit of the Arminian interpretation practice of predestination throughout the last seven decades of its history. Less escape avenues exist in Arminianism for persons hesitating to make a commitment to accept the Lord's way of living. Filipinos, for example, need not hide behind cultural mores of a *bahala na* ("Happen what may" or "What will be, will be") attitude. Filipino pastors have definitely entered upon a stage of leadership ministry in the new century.

Arminianism allows persons the freedom to inquire of spiritual expression, but requires responsibility in pursuing a godly life. The Filipinos I know have risen to the predestined challenge of partnering with God and following the leading of the Holy Spirit in adequately fulfilling His desire for their life Ministry.