

## **CHAPTER SIX**

### **PREDESTINATION**

#### **INTRODUCTION**

Or do those who commit evil deeds  
think that We shall make them as those  
who believe and do righteous deeds,  
equal their living and their dying?  
How ill they judge!  
God created the heavens and the earth  
in truth, and that every soul may be  
recompensed for what it has earned;  
they shall not be wronged.

(XLV 20,21)

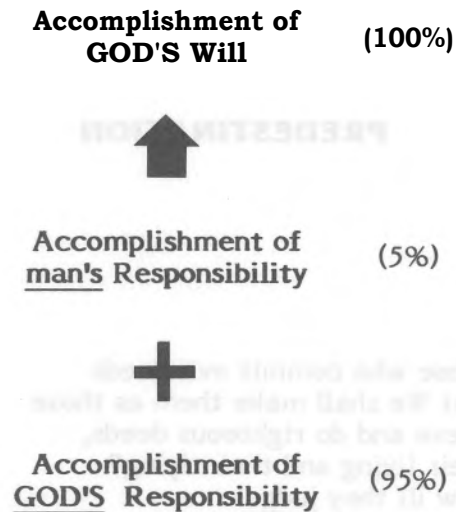
Many devout believers maintain that our lives are predestined by God, that everything from our birth to our death, and even our destiny after death, is pre-determined and established by God. This view, however, tends to lead to fatalism and other negative concepts.

A very different view is reflected in the passage quoted above. The importance of man exercising his free will according to his knowledge of God is clearly indicated.

With the principles we have explained so far, we can come to a satisfactory understanding of predestination and free will.

#### **I. THE PRINCIPLE AND PREDESTINATION**

In the first chapter of this book we indicated that God created man to be a perfect object to Him, at the center of a perfect world. To achieve this position, man had to exercise his free will in obedience to God's will. He had to fulfill a portion of the responsibility in order to achieve perfection.



When man fell, he failed to fulfill his responsibility to God, and therefore could not fulfill God's purpose for him. Nevertheless, God's purpose is perfect and cannot be altered. His intention for the creation remains the same, but the path to its fulfillment has been altered by man's failure.

In a general sense then, we can say that each individual's purpose is predestined to be the achievement of perfection.

God does not, however, predestine every detail of each individual's life. God must work according to the law He Himself created. He has great hope and desire for all men, particularly those who are central to His providence, but each individual must respond himself, and each central figure must answer God's call. God cannot force man to respond to Him.

What God has predestined for man can be realized only when man fulfills his portion of responsibility.

## H. PREDESTINATION AND THE KORAN

The two views of predestination mentioned above are also expressed in the Koran. By far the majority of passages support the point of view that the course of our life is determined by our response to God. The following are some examples:

Surely God wrongs not men anything,  
but themselves men wrong.

(X 45)

By the soul ... prosperous is he who  
purifies it, and failed has he who  
seduces it.

(XCI 9,10)

Gardens of Eden ... that is the recompense  
of the self-purified.

(XX 78)

It is not your fancies, nor the fancies  
of the People of the Book. Whosoever  
does evil shall be recompensed for it,  
... And whosoever does deeds of righteousness,  
Be it male or female, believing —  
they shall enter Paradise, and not be wronged  
a single date-spot.

(Iv 122,123)

There is a great difference between the man who struggles to respond to God and free himself of Satanic influences, and the one who merely follows the form of religion without actually growing closer to God by purifying himself. By accepting a particular belief, man is not necessarily fulfilling a predestined role.

God has predestined all His creation to be restored to Him. At certain times He has worked through particular central figures to bring about the restoration of fallen man. To follow such a figure is to be one of the chosen, until God works a new providence. When He does, each member of the faith is then responsible to follow the new central figure. If they fail to do so, they will lose their special position.

For example, the Jewish people were chosen by God to receive the Messiah. When they rejected Jesus they lost their position and began a history of deep

suffering. What God had predestined for them could not be fulfilled at that time because of their failure.

Muslims must not think that by being Muslims they are predestined to achieve heaven automatically. Each one will be judged according to his real nature and his response to God and the third Adam.

The second view of predestination is that God has planned the lives of all men. He has chosen those who are to reach heaven and those who are to go to hell. He has appointed the day of death for each of us so that nothing we do can affect the course of our life or our final destiny. The logical conclusion of this view is fatalism. The fatalist wonders what point there is in trying to improve his situation, if his life is already predetermined. Fatalism has been a very destructive force in Islam. Its advocates have used passages such as these below to justify their position:

To God belongs the Kingdom of the heavens and the earth;  
He creates what He will;  
He gives to whom He will females,  
and He gives to whom He will males  
or He couples them, both males and females;  
and He makes whom He will barren.  
Surely He is All-Knowing, All powerful.

(XLII 49)

So We delivered him and his family,  
except his wife; We decreed she should  
be of those that tarried.

(XXVII 58)

It is not given to any soul to die, save  
by the leave of God, at an appointed time.

(III 139)

God never predestines evil for man. Because God has no evil desire within Him, it is impossible for Him to wish evil for any of His creations. He predestines good for all men, yet certainly if man disobeys God, there is nothing God can do to help him avoid an evil destiny.

. . God guides not the people of the  
evildoers.'

(X LVI 9)

When man separates himself from God, his life is bound to be miserable. In this sense, man decides his own fate. God, however, always warns man of the probable outcome of his actions.

God knows perfectly the result of human behavior, and therefore can determine the fate of a man according to his character and his response to his circumstances.

We can say then that the ultimate destiny of man (perfection) is predetermined by God, but that the time of its realization depends on man's response to God.

### **III. PREDESTINATION AND REPENTANCE**

Regardless of our situation in life due to birth or environmental factors, we can always change our position for the better if we recognize our evil desires and repent for them. Repentance implies not only recognition of our sin, but determination to eliminate it by changing the direction of our life.

From whatever point we begin, our goal of perfection is the same. Because we are ignorant and sinful, we must maintain a repentant attitude so that we can be guided by God to change. It is also necessary to pray sincerely, asking God to lead and strengthen us in a new course.

... save him who repents, and believes, and  
does righteous work -- those, God will  
change their evil deeds into good deeds,  
for God is All-forgiving, All-compassionate;  
and whosoever repents, and does righteousness,  
he truly turns to God in repentance.

(XXV 70,71)

God is waiting to embrace all people as His children, yet it is our responsibility to first turn to Him. If we are open and humble to Him, He can reveal Himself to us and guide us along the way we must go to fulfill our destiny.

And when My servants question thee  
concerning Me — I am near to answer  
the call of the caller, when he calls

to Me; so let them respond to Me,  
and let them believe in Me; haply so  
they will go aright.

(II 1 82 )

After committing sins, people are often afraid to repent and return to God. However, to God a sincerely repentant soul is the most beautiful thing. We need not fear, because God will never let us be burdened with more than we can bear.

God charges no soul save to  
its capacity; ...

(II 286)

## **CONCLUSION**

God made all His creation to be beautiful and good. Because of the Fall, the achievement of this ideal has been delayed. Yet God's will is absolute, and the fulfillment of His desire is the predestined goal of all beings.

The time of its realization is dependent on man's full response to God. The third Adam, by completing the Three Blessings, will be the first man to completely fulfill this predestined purpose, and will open the way for all others to follow.

The following chapters will describe the process by which God has been working in history to restore mankind and establish a true Kingdom of Heaven on earth.

The providential purpose of twentieth century events will also be explained so that we, as individuals, can understand God's will for our lives today.