

# ARE YOU PREDESTINED TO BE LOST

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The two preachers had agreed to exchange churches one day. Lyman Beecher, father of the famous Henry Ward Beecher, was to speak in a fellow-minister's church, and the other minister was to speak in Beecher's church. The other minister was a staunch believer in predestination. The day came when they were to exchange pulpits, and each set out for the other's church. Midway they met.

They stopped to pass the time of day, and as Lyman Beecher began to move on, the other Preacher, unwilling to let such an opportunity pass, said, "Dr. Beecher, I wish to call your attention to the fact that before creation God ordained that you were to preach in my church, and I in yours, on this particular day."

"Is that so?" glared Dr. Beecher, "Then I won't preach in your church today," and spinning his horse around, he rode to his own church and preached in it that morning. He believed that man has the power of choice and though God foreknows He does not force anyone.

Jesus once told a parable of the king who made a marriage feast for his son and of the many guests who were invited and who made

excuses for not accepting the invitation. Of these folk Jesus said, "Many are called but few are chosen---. Matthew 22:1-4. Now, I am often asked about this scripture, in fact, and a few others, some have drawn the conclusion that God has already predestined us, or settled our destinies, and that if we are supposed to be saved we will be saved, but if we are supposed to be lost, we will be lost in spite of any effort we make.

There are only four texts in the Scriptures in which the word "predestination" is found. We will examine them and learn what they teach in this regard. But let us first of all read the parable of the marriage feast which forms the background to this Scripture. It reads, as follows, "And Jesus answered and spoke unto them again by parables, and said, The kingdom of heaven is like unto a certain king, which made a marriage for his son, "And sent forth his servants to call them that were bidden to the wedding: and they would not come. "Again, he sent forth other servants, saying, Tell them which are bidden, Behold, I have prepared my dinner, my oxen and my fatlings are killed, and all things are ready: come unto the marriage. But they made light of it, and went their ways, one to his farm, and another to his merchandise: And the remnant took his servants, and entreated them spitefully, and slew them. But when the king heard thereof, he was wroth: and he sent forth his armies, and destroyed those murderers, and burned up their city. Then said he to his servants, The Wedding is ready, but they which were bidden were not worthy. Go you therefore into the highways, and as many as you shall find, bid to the marriage. So those servants went out into the highways, and gathered together all as many as they found, both bad and good: and the wedding was furnished with guests. And when the king came in to see the guests, he saw there a man which had not on a wedding garment: And he said unto him, Friend, how came you here not having a wedding garment? And he was speechless. Then said the king to the servants, Bind him hand and foot, and take him away, and cast him into outer darkness; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth. For many are called, but few are chosen." Matthew 22:1-14.

Now this parable says, "Many are called!" How many are called? Jesus has just shown that the invitation was for all. The Apostle Paul writing to Timothy said, "For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior; who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth". 1 Timothy 2:3,4. God wants to see everyone saved. Another Scripture says, "And the Spirit and the bride say come,

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and let him that hears say come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely!" Revelation 22:17

God is calling all. His Spirit calls all. He says that all who have a longing for something better are invited to come, and those who have heard the invitation are to tell all others to come and "whosoever will", whosoever will yield "may come."

Yes, all may come, for the word, "whosoever" includes all. And Jesus says, "and him that comes to me I will in no wise cast out." John 6:37. Matthew records Christ as having said, "Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing? And one of them shall not fall on the ground without your Father. But the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Fear you not, therefore, you are of more value than many sparrows. Whosoever therefore shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before My Father which is in heaven." Matthew 10:29-32. Jesus sees the sparrows. They are the objects of His tender care, but we are far more precious to Him than sparrows. He is calling you. He is calling everyone. He says, if you will only be willing to acknowledge Him before men, He will acknowledge you before His Father in heaven. Luke gives us another saying of Jesus concerning sparrows. Here it is: "Are not five sparrows sold for two farthings, and not one of them is forgotten before God? But even the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Fear riot therefore: you are of more value than many sparrows." Luke 12:6,7.

Two sparrows are sold for a farthing, five sparrows are sold for two farthings. Here you will notice one is thrown in as a bargain, but yet not one of them is forgotten before God. What a precious message to us - we are of more value than many sparrows. If even the fifth sparrow, added for a bargain, is not forgotten, then not one of us is too insignificant, or too common, not a single one is missed in the Father's call.

Jesus has been calling men and women from the very time that sin came into the world. Isaiah says, "Who has wrought and done it, calling the generations from the beginning? I the Lord, the first, and with the last, I am he." Isaiah 41:4. He who is the first and the last, has been calling the generations from the beginning. John represents Christ, in the Book of Revelation, as being the First and the Last.

This Scripture says: "I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day, and heard behind me a great voice as of a trumpet, saying, I am Alpha and Omega, the first and the last: And I turned to see the voice that spoke with me. And being turned, I saw seven golden candlesticks; And in the midst of the seven candlesticks one like unto the Son of man." Revelation 1:10-13.

In the parable of the marriage, Jesus said, "Many are called, but few are chosen". You see, all are called. Why then are few chosen? The parable makes plain that many are not chosen, because they themselves chose not to accept the invitation. None of the excuses that they gave were well founded. The man who must needs go and see his piece of ground, had already purchased it. His haste to go and see it was due to the fact that all his interest was absorbed in his purchase. The oxen, too, had been bought. The proving of them was only to satisfy the interests of the buyer. The third excuse had no more semblance of reason. The fact that the intended guest had married a wife, need not have prevented his presence at the feast. His wife also would have been made welcome. But he had his own plans for enjoyment and they seemed to him more desirable than the feast he had been invited to attend. He had learned to find pleasure in other society than that of his host. He did not ask to be excused. He did not even make a pretence of courtesy in his refusal. His "I cannot come", was only a veil for the truth. "I do not care to come". And so all the excuses, betray a preoccupied mind. To those intended guests, other interests had become more absorbing. The invitation they had pledged themselves to accept was put aside and the generous friend was insulted by their indifference. You notice the parable represents the king's servants as giving the invitation, "but they", that is those who were invited, made light of it and went their ways, one to his farm, another to his merchandise". Matthew 22:5. And so it is today. Men declare that they cannot imperil their worldly prospects by giving attention to the claims of God. They count their temporal interests to be of more value than the things of eternity. The very blessings they have received from God they make into a barrier to separate their souls from their Creator and Redeemer. They will not be interrupted in their worldly pursuits and so they say to the messenger of mercy, "Go thy way, for this time. When I have a convenient season, I will call for thee". Acts 24:25.

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Others urge the difficulties that would arise in their social relations should they obey the call of God. They say that they cannot afford to be out of harmony with relatives and acquaintances. Thus they prove themselves to be the very actors described in this parable. The master of the feast regards their loose excuses as showing contempt for his invitation, and so many today are making light of heaven's invitation. They are more interested in the merchandise of the store; more interested in the farm; they are more interested in making money and in earthly things than they are in preparing their lives for an eternity with God. Ah, poor souls, For what is man profited, if he shall gain the whole world and lose his own soul? Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?" Matthew 16:26

And then, you will remember, one came to the marriage feast without a wedding garment. You see, he failed to make the proper preparation. He was called but neglected to meet the standard. So, many will be called, but they will not be chosen because they are unwilling to meet the standard. Take for instance, the case of Judas in contrast with the experience of St. Paul. St. Paul was called, he was a chosen disciple, and he was found faithful. Judas, on the other hand, was called, he was also chosen as a disciple, but he was unfaithful and hence unchosen at the last. And that is why God calls us to make our own "calling and election sure". So many will be called but they will not be chosen at the last great day because they are unwilling to meet the standard. They are unwilling to break loose from all that is sinful and filthy and displeasing to God and to really make an earnest, thorough preparation for heaven.

Oh, friends, may God help us to accept the invitation and to put on the wedding garment that we might be ready to meet Jesus when He comes again.

Two classes of unchosen people are represented in this parable. Those who, when the invitation was given, they did not choose to accept it. The parable says; "When they received the invitation they made light of it, and went their ways, one to his farm, another to his merchandise; and the remnant took his servants and entreated them spitefully, and slew them." Matthew 22:5,6. And so there are many today who are so much interested in the material things of this world that they will have nothing to do with God's earnest plea with them to put away sin, and to accept Him and to prepare to meet Him.

Now another class is represented in the parable by a man who did not have on a wedding garment. The Scripture says: "When the king came in to see the guests he saw there a man which had not on a wedding garment: and he said unto him, Friend, how came thou in hither not having a wedding garment? And he was speechless. Then said the king to the servants, bind him hand and foot, and take him away, and cast him into outer darkness; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth. For many are called but few are chosen." Matthew 22:11-14. When the king came in to view the guests, the real character of all was revealed, for every guest at the wedding feast had been provided with a wedding garment. This garment was a gift from the king. By wearing it the guests showed their respect for the giver of the feast, but one man was present, clothed in his common, every-day clothes. He had refused to make the preparation required by the king. The garment provided for him at great cost, he failed to wear, thus he insulted his lord. To the king's demand, "How came you in hither, not having a wedding garment?" he could answer nothing. He was self-condemned. Then the king said, "Bind him hand and foot and take him away and cast him into outer darkness." Now the king's examination of the guests at the feast represents the work of God's judgment. The guests at the gospel feast are those who profess to serve God, those whose names are written in the Book of Life. But all who profess to be Christians are not necessarily true disciples. Before the final reward is given it must be decided who is fitted to share the inheritance of the righteous. This decision must be made prior to the Second Coming of Christ in the clouds of heaven, for when He comes, His reward is with Him "to give every man according as His work shall be". Revelation 22:12. Before His coming, then, the character of every man will have to be determined, and to every one of Christ's followers the reward given will be in accordance with his deeds.

Among the sheep are the goats, among the wheat are the tares, and among the guests are those without a wedding garment. Even among the apostles of Christ there was a Judas. This man of the parable had accepted the invitation, he had passed the first test, but was unable to pass the second. He had been received by the servants, but he could not deceive the master. So our God will Provide us with a wedding garment. He will make His own preparation. May God help us all to make our preparation and not to risk eternity.

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The wedding garment is the righteousness of saints. St. John, writing of the marriage of Christ and of His church, and of the marriage feast in heaven, said, "Let us be glad and rejoice and give honor unto Him for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready. And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints. And he said unto me, write, blessed are they which are called unto the marriage supper of the lamb." Revelation 19:7-9.

The one who had not on the wedding garment was turned out. He was called, but not chosen. It makes clear that while all are called, God still has a predestined standard that we must meet if we are to be saved.

As one visits the large fruit-packing establishments, you will notice that the fruit goes through the grader. Some of the fruit is thrown out because it does not conform to the accepted grade. And that is the way it is with God's kingdom. There is an accepted standard of character that all who will enter heaven must reach. God has made provision through Jesus Christ that all who will, may attain this character, but any who choose to pass through this life without making this earnest preparation will find themselves shut out of heaven, just as the one, who failed to put on a wedding garment, was deprived of a place at the marriage.

Notice carefully for this parable reveals Christ's teaching on predestination. What was predestination? Was it the man or the wedding garment? The wedding garment was the predestined garment for those who would enter. This was the badge of entrance. The man had freedom of choice as to whether or not he would wear it. So the Robe of Christ's righteousness is the badge of entrance to the marriage supper of the Lamb.

This is the predestination that the Scriptures teach. God has left every individual free to make his decision, whether he will choose to live the life that will give him an inheritance in heaven, or whether he will refuse to. God doesn't predestine the fate of individuals, but he has predestined the standard that will be accepted in heaven. Before this world was founded he chose a character standard that would be acceptable. That standard is Christ's likeness. The righteousness of Christ.

There are four texts of Scripture, wherein we find the word "predestination". As we examine them we see that it is a character that is predestined, rather than the fate of an individual.

God certainly does not predestinate some people to be saved and predestinate others to go to perdition. Some use the argument of predestination so they can avoid what they do not want to do. They thus "wrest" the Scriptures. Take for instance the verse of the hymn:

"Rise up O men of God His Kingdom tarries long  
Bring in the days of Brotherhood And end the night of wrong."

Some would evidently have it thus-  
Sit down O men of God You cannot do a thing  
When it is pleasing to God's will His Kingdom He will bring.

Now let us read first of all Ephesians 1:3-5 and also 11,12. "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 the children by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will. In whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of Him who works all things after the counsel of His own will; that we should be to the praise of his glory, who first trusted in Christ." You will notice this Scripture says, "according as he hath chosen us in Him." Christ's character is the standard that was accepted by God before this world was created. As our lives meet the standard of Christ's character we shall be chosen as those who shall share God's home with the redeemed through all eternity. "He has chosen us in Him," the text further says, "having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ". Yes, we have been sinful, but God wants to adopt us as His children.

He can't take us into heaven in our sinful condition, but He has fore-ordained into the purity of character exemplified in Jesus. Thus we shall sit with His Son in His kingdom as sons and daughters, adopted into

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the heavenly family. But the text says still further, "Being predestinated according to the purpose of him who works all things after the counsel of his own will." God has a purpose. His purpose is that all who are saved for eternity shall measure up to this predestinated or accepted standard of character. There are two more Scriptures in which the word "predestination- is found. In these we find the same thought as expressed in the former Scripture. Romans 8:29,30: "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. Moreover whom He did predestinate, them he also called and whom he called, them He also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified." You notice, from the beginning, God predestined we should be conformed to the image of His Son. At creation we were made in God's likeness. You will read that in Genesis 1:26 God ordained that through the salvation of Jesus Christ we shall be raised from our fallen condition again to be conformed to the likeness of Christ. God has called each and every one to be saved. But there is a preparation to be made; there is a standard to be met. Those who will be received into the glory land will be those only who have put on the robe of Christ's righteousness.

God says "For I know the times I am planning for you, plans of welfare and not of calamity; to give you a future and a hope." Jeremiah 29:11. Rothermans translation: "To give you a happy future hope" (Hebrew). You see God's plans for us are only the best. He wants us to be saved. God makes it difficult for us to be lost. "All along, the road that leads to death there are pains and penalties, there are sorrows and disappointments, there are warnings not to go on. God's love has made it hard for the heedless and headstrong to destroy themselves." Mount of Blessings, page 198.

Hundreds have told me they could not sleep and they were troubled about what they had heard in our campaigns. That is because God was making "it hard" for them to be lost, even giving them sleepless nights. May they know no peace, until they know the peace that only God can give.

Now, righteousness is right-doing, and it is by their deeds that all will be judged. Our characters are revealed by what we do. Our works show whether our faith is genuine. It is not enough for us merely to believe that Jesus is not an imposter and that the religion of the Bible is not "cunningly devised fables." We may believe that the name of Christ is the only name under heaven whereby men may be saved, and yet we may not through faith make Him our Personal Savior. It is not enough for us to make a profession of faith in Christ, or even have our names registered on the church roll. He said, "He that keeps His commandments dwells in Him and He in him, and hereby we know that He abides in us by the Spirit that He hath given us." 1 John 3:24. This can be done only by looking to Jesus. Take for instance one of the finest works of modern science - Star photography. Two factors are needed in this work. The telescope must be directed on to the star, then the photographic plate is exposed and the light of the star does the rest and its likeness is reproduced. So our gaze must be fixed upon Christ. We are to look to Him and by His light this likeness is reproduced. Our work is to turn the telescope, as we look to Him and He produces the picture.

This is genuine evidence of conversion.

May God help us to put on the wedding garment that we may be ready for the great marriage supper of the Lamb. Think for a moment of all that is offered in God's message so freely to every soul today - the wedding garment, provided at tremendous cost; forgiveness for our sins. The exceeding great and precious promises of God's Word; free access to our Heavenly Father by Christ; the comfort of the Spirit of God, and a well-grounded assurance of eternal life in the Kingdom of God. What more could God do for us? May God help us all to accept His wonderful invitation and put on the wedding garment of His own preparation that we may all be ready for the great marriage supper in heaven.

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