

John Calvin and Calvinism – No. 2

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The first of the five points of classic Calvinism is Predestination. This word simply means to decide beforehand, to foreordain, to prejudge. Based on a misunderstanding or misapplication of certain passages (i.e., Rom. 8:29-30; Eph. 1:4-5), Calvin concluded that before creation, God chose (elected) certain ones to be saved and all the rest to be lost. This election involved both angels and men and it was unconditional and unchangeable. This doctrine is reflected in the Presbyterian confession of Faith as follows: “By the decree of God...some men and angels are predestinated unto everlasting life, and others foreordained to everlasting death. These ...thus predestinated... are particularly and unchangeably designed, and their number is so certain and definite that it cannot be either increased or diminished” (Ch. III, Sec. 3-5). An even broader statement of Calvin’s predestination theory is stated in the same creed, Ch. III, Sec. 1: “God, from all eternity did, by most wise and holy counsel of his own will, freely and unchangeably ordain whatever comes to pass.”

Why would Christ invite **all** men to come to Him and teach His disciples to take the Gospel to the whole creation, promising to save **all** who believe and are baptized (Mat. 11:28; Mark 16:15-16), if the number of both saved and lost has been predetermined from eternity? If “God did unchangeably ordain whatever comes to pass,” then man is a helpless puppet, incapable of determining his own eternal fate. But, if this is so, he is not responsible for his actions, because God controls them. If the theory be true, then no man is accountable for sin, be it murder, rape, or whatever – it is ordained of God! Further, God is made an utter contradiction by this doctrine: He ordains that man shall not steal, but He also ordains that certain men shall steal! The predestination taught in the Bible does not relate to eternal destinies, but to earthly life. Men are elected of God as they **hear and obey** His Word. This is open for all (Acts 10:34-35).

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