

nothing to save his own soul. I must insist, however, that God does not work that way and that the Bible teaches that salvation is conditioned upon our obedience to God's will (Matthew 7:21, Mark 16:16 and Hebrews 5:9).

Three Calvinistic Proof Texts:

There are many Scriptures used by those who believe in arbitrary salvation. Among them are:

Romans 8:28-30: "and we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose. For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the first born 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."

Those who wish to insist that God foreknew those individuals who would be saved often rely upon this section of Scripture, and that He accepted them by arbitrary predetermination. The simple truth of this passage is that God foresaw in his purpose (v. 28) that certain persons would obey him; that they would comply with the conditions of justification through Christ, and be saved according to God's redemptive plan. He knew that there would be an obedient class of individuals, as there always has been, and thus, Biblical predestination is of character and not of persons arbitrarily selected.

Romans 9: 10-13: "And not only this; but when Rebecca also had conceived by one, even by our father Isaac (For the children being not yet born, neither having done any good or evil, that the purpose of God according to election might

stand, not of works, but of him that calleth;) It was said unto her, the elder shall serve the younger. As it is written, Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated."

Calvinists are proud to know that God chose Jacob over Esau. To them, such an act of the Divine Will bolsters their contention. There is no hint here, however, of individual predetermination as pertaining to personal salvation. It is simply a description of God's sovereign right to choose Israel over Edom through whom the Redeemer should come.

Acts 13:48: "And when the Gentiles heard this, they were glad, and glorified the word of the Lord: and as many as were ordained to eternal life believed."

The word, "ordained" may also mean, "determined," or "wanted." That is, these are those who wanted eternal life. The context shows that Paul is contrasting the unbelieving Jews (vs. 45-46) with the open-minded Gentiles (v. 48). It simply means that the Gentiles were interested in God's system of salvation through Christ, whereas, many of the Jews and the Judaizing teachers were not.

The effort of some to make these, and other New Testament texts, teach an arbitrary salvation technique employed by God is to completely miss the point of Biblical predestination. It is an effort to force a false doctrine in contradiction to what the Bible says in other places about the free will of man. It is a doctrine out of harmony with the fact that God is no respecter of persons (Romans 2:11).

No serious student of the Bible denies Biblical predestination. It is denied, however, that God elected certain ones regardless of character to be saved, and others to be lost, denying human freedom.

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All members of the church

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Wednesday—7:00pm

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TV Program

"The Bible Says"

Public Access
Cable Channel 16
Mon. & Thurs. @ 8:30pm
Tues. @ 2:30pm
Fri. @ 9:00am

Steps to Salvation

1. Hear the Word (Rom. 10:17)
2. Believe (Heb. 11:1,6)
3. Repent (Lk. 13:3)
4. Confess (Matt. 10:32-33)
5. Baptism (1 Pet. 3:21)
6. Remain Faithful (1 Cor. 15:58; 2 Pet. 3:14)

Jeremiah's Emphasis on Bible Reading

By Kris Groda

THE Weeping Prophet we know as Jeremiah was appointed by God to be a prophet unto the nations before he was ever born (Jer. 1:5). In fact, Jeremiah was still called a "child" when God started using him to preach the Word (Jer. 1:6-7). Jeremiah was young, devoted to God, tenderhearted, bold, and very courageous. His forty year ministry was primarily directed toward Judah. He firmly and fearlessly denounced the error of the rulers, priests, princes and false teachers of Judah. He warned them of an impending doom if they failed to repent. He rebuked their backsliding and idolatry, and he warned of the fall of Jerusalem and of the Babylonian captivity.

The Message of the Scroll

While the public style of reading Scripture isn't specifically mentioned in the book of Jeremiah, the emphasis on hearing the word of God is. In fact, the phrase, "Thus saith the Lord" appears 272 times in this book.

In chapter 36, Jeremiah is preaching during the fourth year of King Jehoiakim's reign, (the second to take the throne after Josiah) approximately 15 years and 3 months before the Jews entered the seventy year Babylonian captivity.

The Lord told Jeremiah to take him a roll of a book, and "write therein all the words that I have spoken unto thee against Israel, and against Judah, and against all the nations, from the day I spake unto thee, from

the day of Josiah, even into this day. It may be that the house of Judah will hear all the evil which I purpose to do unto them' that they may return every man from his evil way; that I may forgive their iniquity and their sin" (Jeremiah 36:2-3).

Jeremiah commissioned Baruch to write down in a scroll all the prophetic words that he spoke (Jer. 36:4). After the scroll was completed, Jeremiah instructed Baruch to read the roll in the ears of the people at the upper court of the Lord's house upon the fasting day (Jer. 36:6). It was possible that by hearing the Word, they would present their supplication before the Lord and would repent of their evil ways (Jer. 36:7).

Michaiah told Elishama the scribe and all the princes that were sitting there everything that he had heard Baruch say. They called for Baruch to read Jeremiah's words to them. They were afraid (not a godly fear) and were compelled to tell Jehoiakim all about it.

Jehudi read the prophetic words as the princes stood beside King Jehoiakim. We don't know how long the roll was, but Jehudi was only three or four leaves into it when Jehoiakim took a knife and cut the scroll into pieces and burned it in the fire. By this they demonstrated no fear, a gross irreverence for God's Word, and repulsive lack of concern for what is right.

Application

How much different are we than Jehoiakim when we demonstrate our boredom or disinterest in God's Word? Perhaps our simi-

larities rest on how we value the Word. Jehoiakim's actions did not change or delete God's promises at all. In fact, God even had Jeremiah and Baruch make another copy of what the king destroyed (Jer. 36:27-32).

Man has tried to ignore God's Word before, some have tried to talk people out of it, cause them to doubt it and dissuade them in some way; some have even tried to destroy it. But it keeps coming back. Voltaire, the French philosopher and skeptic, liked to destroy the faith of many people. He also boasted that within 100 years of his death, the Bible would disappear from the face of the earth. Voltaire died in 1728, but the Bible lives on! The irony of history is that 50 years after his death, the Geneva Bible Society moved into his former house and used his printing presses to print thousands of Bibles.

When Peter got in so much trouble for preaching Christ, Gamaliel said, "Refrain from these men and let them alone: for if this counsel or this work be of men, it will come to nought: But if it be of God, ye cannot overthrow it; lest haply ye be found even to fight against God" (Acts 5:38-39).



True North

By David Sargent

If a person were to stand today at the North Pole and look up, there would appear to be a star directly over his head. This is aptly called a "pole star" because it is approximately aligned with the Earth's axis of rotation. The current northern pole star is the Polaris.

On a clear night in the Northern Hemisphere when the stars are shining brightly, Polaris is not difficult to spot. If one can find what many call "The Big Dipper" (part of the constellation Ursa Major, The Great Bear), he can use the "pointer stars" which are the stars furthest from the "handle" to find Polaris. Beginning from the star at the bottom of the "bowl" and imagining a line through the other star, the line will point to Polaris, a few degrees lower in the sky than the Big Dipper. Recently, the fourth grade classes of Mobile, Alabama Christian School and their chaperones (including this author and his daughter Haley) saw this demonstrated at the Montgomery City Planetarium.

Polaris is also known as the North Star, not only because it is currently the northern pole star, but also because it can be used to find the direction of north and to determine latitude. The North Star always appears due north in the night sky, and the angle it makes with respect to the horizon is equal to the latitude of the observer. Throughout the history of humanity, the North Star has been used as a point of navigation by mariners, shepherds, and travelers. For example....

*"Chaldean shepherds, ranging trackless fields
Beneath the concave of unclouded skies
Spread like a sea, in boundless solitude,*

*Looked on the pole star, as a on a guide
And guardian of their course, that never closed
His steadfast eye."
- William Wordsworth in "Excursion"*

The stars, the constellations, and their intricate design reveal the incredible power and majesty of the God who created them. "Lift up your eyes on high, and see who has created these things, Who brings out their host by number; He calls them all by name, by the greatness of His might and the strength of His power; not one is missing" (Isaiah 40:26).

Yet, God has revealed through His Word that His ultimate will for us—our "True North" - cannot be found in the STARS, but through His SON Jesus, the "Bright and Morning Star" (Revelation 22:16).

God gave His Son to die on the cross for our sins so that we might have forgiveness and live eternally with Him when this life is over (Ephesians 1:7). These blessings are available only through Christ. Jesus said, "I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life. No one comes to the Father except through Me" (John 14:6). We may follow Jesus and go to the Father when we submit our lives to Him in faith (Acts 16:30-31), and repentance (Acts 17:30-31), confessing Jesus before men (Romans 10:9-10), and being baptized (immersed) in His name for the forgiveness of sins (Acts 2:38).

Don't look to the STARS to find "True North." Rather, "fix your eyes on JESUS, the author and perfecter of our faith...., who for the joy set before Him endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God" (Hebrews 12:2), and thereby opened the Way to the Heaven of heavens for YOU and me.



Truth Never Dies

Author unknown

**Truth never dies. The ages come and go,
The mountains wear away; the stars retire,
Destruction lays the mighty cities law,
And empires, states, and dynasties expire;
But caught and handed onward by the wise;
Truth never dies!**

**Though unreceived and scoffed at through the years,
Though made the butt of ridicule and jest,
Though held aloft for mockery and jeers,
Denied by those of transient power possessed,
Insulted by the insolence of lies,
Truth never dies!**

**It answers not, it does not take offense
But with a mighty silence bides its time
As some great cliff that braves the elements
And lifts through all the storms its head sublime
It ever stands, uplifted by the wise.
Truth never dies!**

**As rests the Sphinx amid Egyptian sands,
As looms on high the smoky peaks and crests
As firm and patient as Gibraltar stands,
So, truth, unwearied, waits the era blest
When men shall turn to it with eager eyes—
Truth never dies!**



The Biblical Doctrine of Predestination

By Dennis Gullede

HERE have been many doctrines in the Bible that men have corrupted by their efforts to teach something completely alien to the truth. Predestination is one such doctrine. Thrilling and heart touching is Paul's description of God's chosen people, "predestined," (foreordained, ASV), "unto the adoption of children of Jesus Christ to himself" (Ephesians 1:3-5 and 11). However this doctrine has been twisted, perverted and wrenched so that its true meaning is largely distorted in the eyes of truth-seeking people. The conflict which exists over this principle centers between the advocates of human free-will and the advocates of deterministic predestination.

The position of the latter is given in the Presbyterian Confession of Faith, chapter 3, section 3-5, which says in part: "By the decree of God, for the manifestations of his glory, some men and angels are predestinated unto everlasting life, and others foreordained to everlasting death. These angels and men predestinated and foreordained are particularly and unchangeably designed, and their number is so certain and definite that it can not be either increased or diminished..."

Most influential in spreading this view is John Calvin (1509-1564). His theology, known as Calvinism, which still wields a strong influence in the religious world, holds that God, from eternity has predetermined every individual who will ever be saved or lost, and absolutely denies the free-will of man, that is, if you are among the "non-elect" you cannot be saved, and if you are among the "elect" you cannot be lost.

Did God arbitrarily predetermine the destiny of every person? Many insist that He did and that man can do absolutely

Remember in Prayer

Special Prayers

- Jane Berns—Thyroid problems
- Naida Williamson—broken hip
- Julie Bender—Cellulitis
- Brother Prasad (India)- is facing many trials
- Brother Odom (Abilene)—COPD
- Russell Bender
- Laurie Davis—Multiple Sclerosis
- Cody Ledesma—Drug Rehab
- Eric Boor—blood disease
- Lyra Grochmal (7 yrs)—spine cancer
- Melissa McClish—Depression
- Lilly Rucker and family—
- Mamie Dennis—
- Rockfalls church of Christ
- Platteville church of Christ
- TV Program & Advertiser Ads
- State of our Nation
- The closing of Planned Parenthood
- The church
- The erring & the Lost

Evangelizing the World

- Garret Derouin—Webster, Wisc.
- Scott Nedland—Rice Lake, Wisc.
- Brian Sherrell—LaCrosse, Wisc.
- Bernie Guzman—Philippines
- Fred Rhodes—Newton, Iowa
- Johnny Robertson— Martinsville, Vir
- James Oldfield—Riedsville, NC
- Derrick Brown —Jamaica
- Gary Workman—Ukraine
- Kolakaluri Prasad—Nalgonda, Dist., India
- G. Prabhu Kumar—Chennai, India
- John O'Neal—India & Ghana
- Tom Wacaster—India & Russia
- Holger Neubauer—South Haven, Michigan

Military

- Chip O'Neal—Afghanistan
- Jonathan Duckstein—Afghanistan
- Michael Chlamon—Ft. Drum, NY
- Daniel Heflin—Ft. Drum, NY
- Jason Cunningham—Stateside
- Jon McCain—Basic Training
- Military families who are coping while loved ones in harms way