

Recognising predestination

When the Scripture speaks of predestination, it is referring to those things that God Himself has determined for us. They are foreknown and predetermined. Our predestination is a blueprint and prescription of our potential. We might suggest it is a *theory*, in so far as it is not substantial until we fulfill it. In the same way, all of our personal attributes and abilities are only potential until we apply them in life. So it is that Paul speaks of ‘works’ ordained for us that we should walk in them.

The impressions that we give to others regularly confuse these matters. Nevertheless, we are thankful that the Lord is never confused. He knows the hearts of all men. And He does not judge by what the eye sees. Accordingly, Jesus admonishes us not to judge according to appearance, but to judge righteously. Of course, we know that the penalty for disobedience and unbelief is a spirit of stupor and eyes that do not see. Alternatively, Jesus spoke to the disciples and encouraged them saying, ‘Blessed are the eyes that see the things you see’.

We are directed on more than one occasion to lift up our eyes and see. At times we all offend, in so far as we do not view one another correctly. And conversely, we are often seen and perceived in ways that are not commensurate with our predestination. Even Jesus Himself was forced to overcome the false judgements and opinions directed toward Him. They said, His ‘father and mother we know’. To those who did not recognise Him, He was the carpenter’s son. Even John the Baptist did not recognise Jesus for who He was, until he saw the dove descending and remaining upon Him.

References:

Eph 2:10 John 12:40
Zech 5:5 John 7:24
Mark 8:18 John 6:42
Rom 11:8, 10 Luke 10:23
Acts 28:27 John 1:33

Further Study

Eph 1
Rom 8:29-30

Daily Psalm

Psalm 83

We are known

We recall that Nathaniel asked Jesus, 'How do you know me?'. Of course, Jesus was not yet known to Nathaniel. So it is for us. Jesus comes to us and demonstrates His intricate knowledge of us before we know Him. King David said in the psalms, 'You have searched me and known me'. This is the mystery of predestination. Even before we were formed in the womb, He knew us. He saw our unformed substance, and in His book all our days were ordained for us. David said also, 'How precious are Your thoughts to me'. We should consider that our predestination has come forth from His thoughts toward us. He has ordained our days, and likewise, He has ordained our works.

Having considered this, the words of the apostle Paul make even more sense. We 'come to know God', but firstly we are 'known by God'. Certainly, His knowledge of us is implicit within our predestination. At times, this is a most confronting reality. Early in His ministry, Jesus encountered a Samaritan woman. She was indeed confronted by the dawning realisation that He knew her. She quickly left her water pot, went into the city and said to the men, 'Come and see a man who told me all the things that I have done'.

Nevertheless, the truth of His knowledge is most reassuring. If we walk by faith and not by sight, we will encounter nothing outside of the will of God. We can say like David, 'You have enclosed me behind and before, and laid Your hand upon me'. We may conclude that His predestination for us is a safe and secure pathway.

References:

John 1:48 John 4:29
Gal 4:9
Psa 139:1, 5, 16-17

Further Study

Psa 139

Daily Psalm

Psalm 84

Not according to the flesh

Even Christ Himself is now not known according to the flesh. As Paul said, 'We know Him thus no longer. He has been raised from the dead, eternal and immortal. Death and corruption had no power over Him. Accordingly, they have no power over us if the life of Jesus is coming into our mortal bodies. Nevertheless, we face a certain crisis. Do we know and recognise one another according to the flesh or according to the power of an endless life? Do we recognise the predestination of our brothers and sisters in Christ? Or do we judge in the flesh? Certainly, a prophet is not without honour except in his own country.

Jesus said in the temple, 'You both know Me and know where I am from and I have not come of Myself'. But they only knew Him according to the flesh. They did not recognise Him as the Son of the heavenly Father. So He said later, 'You know neither Me nor My Father. If you knew Me, you would know My Father also'. This crisis of knowing and recognising Him is itself the crisis of predestination. Paul made it his constant goal to 'know Him and the power of His resurrection'. This is the heart of the Christian life.

We must continually lift up our eyes to behold Him. In so doing, we know Him, and we know one another as the new creation. We must walk by faith and not by sight with the love of God controlling us. Faith works by love, and this is the measure and rule of the new creation. When the love of God controls us, then we are indeed recognising one another according to the new creation.

References:

Phil 3:10 Mark 6:4
John 7:28 Gal 5:6
John 8:19 Gal 6:15
2 Cor 5:7, 14, 16

Further Study

2 Cor 5

Daily Psalm

Psalm 85

Former things

The amazing thing about resurrection life is that He is alive from the dead, and we are alive in Him. Because of the resurrection, former things have passed away. In the ultimate sense, the bride of Christ and the New Jerusalem deem that former things pass away and all things are made new. While we wait in hope for this day, we have been begotten to a living hope by the resurrection of Christ. Having received Him, we have apprehended the authority of our own sonship. 'Therefore if any man is in Christ, he is a new creature; old things have passed away; behold, new things have come.'

This is our confidence. We are not putting any trust in the flesh. Nor should we compel others to live by the flesh. We must judge righteous judgements, and thus dignify the predestination of every individual son of the Father. Likewise, we must not be estranged from Christ as if His life can come to us apart from our fellowship with one another. This fellowship is indeed the community of the new creation, where every individual is fulfilling the predestination and works ordained for them.

The fact of former things passing away is contingent upon us putting on the new man and putting off the old. This was the Galatian problem. Paul was perplexed. Having begun in the Spirit, why were they reverting to the flesh? This is the problem of all religion. It is religion without *zoe* life. If we seek to lay hold of the life of Jesus, without participation in His death, then there is no new life coming to us. And we remain in the bondage of former things.

References:

Rev 21:1,4-5
1 Pet 1:3
2 Cor 5:17
John 7:24

Further Study

Eph 4:14-32

Daily Psalm

Psalm 86

Treasure in earthen vessels

Resurrection life is treasure in our earthen vessels. Paul calls it the surpassing greatness of the power of God. It is most certainly evident that this power is not from ourselves. Jesus also spoke of treasure in heaven. As we 'lay down' our lives to Him, He is 'laying up' for us treasure in heaven. Consequently, our citizenship is in heaven.

The life we now live in the flesh is the resurrection life of Jesus. We carry about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our body. And further to this, we are constantly being delivered over to death for Jesus' sake, that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our mortal flesh. Accordingly, the apostle John said, 'As He is, so also are we in this world'. At first consideration, this is a remarkable thought. However, if the Christian life is anything other than this, then we have no power to live. Our strength is in the arm of the flesh and our thoughts are from beneath.

The contradiction and paradox of our lives is that we are dying in a mortal body. Our flesh is subject to corruption. The tent of our mortal bodies is being torn down. Nevertheless, we hope for our dwelling from heaven, and we live by the power of God. We are a new creation in Him and Christ is our life. We must, therefore, consider the members of our earthly bodies to be dead to sin and alive to God. Our life is hidden with Christ in God. And when Christ who is our life is revealed, we will be revealed with Him in glory.

References:

Col 3:3-5 Eph 1:19
Rom 6:11, 13 1 John 4:17
2 Cor 4:7, 10-11

Further Study

2 Cor 4

Daily Psalm

Psalm 87