

Fulton County Gospel News

Good News About Christ And His Church For All Of The World

“... Christ is the head of the church: and He is the Savior of the body.” - Ephesians 5:23

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“GOD IS NO RESPECTER . . .”

by Dub McClish

At the house of Cornelius (a Gentile), Simon Peter (a Jew), said, *“Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons: but in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is acceptable to him”* (Acts 10:34–35). By this statement, Peter especially referred to the racial distinction between Gentiles and Jews. Peter’s observation caused him to enter the home of this Gentile, which the Jews considered “unlawful” (verse 28).

That God is no respecter of persons has many applications:

- **Jesus’ Death:** Calvinism’s “limited atonement” heresy teaches that Jesus died for “the elect only.” The Bible teaches that He gave himself *“a ransom for all”* (1 Timothy 2:6; cf. Hebrews 2:9; 1 John 2:2). Most men reject Him, but He still died for all.
- **Jesus’ Invitation:** He invites **all** men to accept the blessings available only in His death. He invites **all** to come to Him for rest (Matthew 11:28-30). He invites *“whosoever will”* (Revelation 22:17; compare with John 3:16).
- **Jesus’ Gospel:** He ordered the preaching of the Gospel to “the whole creation” (Mark. 16:15-16). The Gospel is His sole means of inviting all men to come to Him. The Gospel is God’s power to save men (Romans 1:16). All who obey the Gospel are one, whether Jew or Greek, bond or free, male or female (Galatians 3:28). *“God is no respecter....”*
- **Jesus’ Plan of Salvation:** All must

believe in Him (John 8:24). All must **confess** Him as the Son of God (Romans 10: 10). All must **repent** of their sins (Acts 16:30). All must be **baptized** to be saved (Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38). All must **faithfully serve** Him (1 Timothy 4:16). The Lord does not save some by the “sinner’s prayer,” others by faith alone, and others by some other response. All men are subject to the **same conditions** of pardon and salvation. Paul taught the same thing “everywhere in every church” (1 Corinthians 4:17). “God is no respecter of persons” in His plan of salvation.

- **Death:** Of mankind, Solomon wrote: “All are of the dust, and all turn to dust again” (Ecclesiastes 3:20). Death is an “appointment” all of us must keep (Hebrews 9:27). Whether rich or poor, good or evil, powerless or powerful, regardless of race, “God is no respecter of persons” in death.
- **Judgment:** All—good and evil—will be raised and judged (John 5:28-29). Jesus will be the Judge (Acts 17: 31) and none will avoid it (2 Corinthians 5:10; Revelation 20:12). All will be judged by the same standard (John 12:48), and the sentences that will determine our eternal abode will all be flawless (Matthew 25:31-46, 2 Timothy 4:8).

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LOST BELIEVERS

by Nathan Brewer

If you want to be saved from your sins, just believing in Jesus is not enough.

The first time the Gospel is ever preached is in Acts chapter 2. Peter preaches Jesus as a miracle-working teacher whom the Jews had crucified. But, Peter says, God has raised Jesus from the dead (Acts 2:24).

Peter offers three forms of proof: King David prophesied the resurrection in the Psalms (Acts 2:22-31); the apostles have seen Jesus alive (Acts 2:32); and Peter says Jesus is responsible for the miracles the Jews see and hear (Acts 2:33). Then he reaches the climax of his sermon in Acts 2:36: *“Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ.”* Many of

the people in the audience believe this message and cry out, *“Men and brethren, what shall we do”* (Acts 2:37)?

These Jews *believe* the Gospel message of a crucified and resurrected savior and want to make things right. But they’re still lost. Peter tells them in Acts 2:38 to *“Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins.”* They **believe** the Gospel, but they need to **obey** the Gospel to have their sins forgiven.

Acts 2:41 says those who received Peter’s message were baptized. That day, about 3,000 souls were *“added.”* To what? Verse 47 says the Lord added daily to the church those who were being saved. When believing, repentant sinners are baptized into

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Christ, the Lord simultaneously saves them and adds them to His church.

Many New Testament passages teach the necessity of faith in order to be saved. But saving faith leads sinners to comply with the Gospel commands to repent, confess Christ, and be baptized.

Until those of you reading this article are willing to submit to Christ in Gospel obedience, you still bear the guilt of your sins. According to the Bible, even if you believe in Jesus as Savior, and even if you want to make things right, until you contact His blood in baptism you're still lost.

Faith alone is not enough. What Peter commands in Acts 2 still stands today, and will stand until the Lord comes again. *"Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins."*

If you're willing to do this, Christ will save you and add you to His church.

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FOR GOD SO LOVED A FEW**Implications of Calvinistic Predestination**

by Lee Moses

"For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life" (John 3:16).

Never have lips uttered a more poignant statement. This verse has been called "the Bible in miniature," because it sums up the message of the entire Bible. It has been called "the golden text of the Bible," indicating its preeminent place within the incomparable Book. Yet the doctrine of Calvinistic predestination effectively changes the glorious first clause—"For God so loved **the world**"—to a far less impressive "For God so loved **a few**."

One can find the term "predestinate" used a few times in the Bible to refer to actions of God. This term simply means to "decide upon beforehand," or "predetermine."¹ That God *decided upon* some things *beforehand* cannot be denied—the question is, "Which things did He decide upon beforehand?" He clearly decided beforehand that there will be a Judgment Day, and that in the days shortly following Christ's resurrection until that Judgment Day He would have a special people on the earth, a spiritual body known as the church (Ephesians 1-3). He clearly decided beforehand that He would send His Son into the world to die, that the church might be established, and that souls might be saved in it (Acts 2:23, 41, 47).

But Calvinists, who follow the teachings of John Calvin, say that God predetermined much more than this. As Calvin expressed it himself,

Predestination we call the eternal decree of God, by which he has determined in himself the destiny of every man. For they are not all created in the same condition, but eternal life is foreordained for some, and eternal damnation for others. Every

man, therefore, being created for one or the other of these ends, we say, he is predestinated either to life or to death.

The Westminster Confession of Faith—which is the basis for the creeds of the Anglican, Baptist, Presbyterian, and numerous other Protestant denominations—followed Calvin's lead; describing predestination thusly:

III. . . . By the decree of God, for the manifestation of his glory, some men and angels are predestinated unto everlasting life, and others foreordained to everlasting death.

IV. These angels and men, thus 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.

V. Those of mankind that are predestinated unto life, God, before the foundation of the world was laid, according to his eternal and immutable purpose, and the secret counsel and good pleasure of his will, hath chosen in Christ unto everlasting glory, out of his mere free grace and love, without any foresight of faith or good works, or perseverance in either of them, or any other thing in the creature, as conditions, or causes moving him thereunto . . .

This doctrine carries with it certain implications; that is, further conclusions that **must** be true if Calvinistic predestination is true. Let us consider a few of these implications.

God is a Respector of Persons

God has always forbidden one to use respect of persons, or partiality, in one's judgment and treatment of others. The Israelites were commanded, "Ye

shall do no unrighteousness in judgment: thou shalt not respect the person of the poor, nor honour the person of the mighty: but in righteousness shalt thou judge thy neighbour" (Leviticus 19:15). The apostle Paul instructed the younger preacher Timothy, "I charge thee before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, and the elect angels, that thou observe these things without preferring one before another, doing nothing by partiality" (1 Timothy 5:21). When the church shows respect of persons, the question is asked, "Are ye not then partial in yourselves, and are become judges with evil thoughts?" (James 2:4). God can demand such holy conduct of His people because He is holy (1 Peter 1:14-16), and holiness excludes the injustice of showing respect of persons.

However, if Calvinistic predestination were true, God would be guilty of that which He forbids to others. According to this doctrine, no matter how much someone wants to be saved he cannot be saved. No matter how much someone conforms his life to the teachings of the Bible, he cannot be saved. If he is not in that "certain and definite" number of the elect, he can do nothing to receive salvation and avoid condemnation. Contrariwise, regardless of how much someone has **no** desire to be saved, if he is among the elect, he has no say in the matter. Regardless of how disobediently and wickedly he may live, there can be no alternative but that he will be saved. This while countless others who do all that they can to be saved have no chance.

Can you imagine standing before a judge who sentences based on nothing but an arbitrary predetermination? Conduct has no consequence; facts do not matter. God is **not** that kind of judge, as Paul makes clear when he writes of

the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God; Who will render to every man according to his deeds: To them who by patient continuance in well doing seek for glory and

honour and immortality, eternal life: But unto them that are contentious, and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, indignation and wrath, Tribulation and anguish, upon every soul of man that doeth evil, of the Jew first, and also of the Gentile; But glory, honour, and peace, to every man that worketh good, to the Jew first, and also to the Gentile: For there is no respect of persons with God (Romans 2:5-11; all emphases mine, LM).

God is **not** a respecter of persons, because the doctrine of Calvinistic predestination is false. Every person will be judged by what he **does**. Beyond this, every person has the ability to receive His grace and mercy for the wrongs one has done. As Jesus said, "And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And **whosoever will**, let him take the water of life freely" (Revelation 22:17). **Whosoever will**—anyone with the desire—has free access to the water of life that is the salvation found in Jesus Christ. Do you want to be saved? If you will, you may—because God is no respecter of persons.

God is a Liar

Let it be emphasized and underscored that we are **not** affirming that God is a liar—such a statement would be thoroughly blasphemous and false. But the notion that people are predetermined to be saved and lost with no individual accountability or ability to change their destinies, if true, would demand that God is a liar.

God tells mankind that we will be accountable for our actions. Moses instructed certain of the Israelites of God's commandment to them, warning, "But if ye will not do so, behold, ye have sinned against the LORD: and **be sure your sin will find you out**" (Numbers 32:23). This theme continues throughout Scripture—God exhorts man to do what is right, warning man that he will be called to

account for wrongdoings (Ecclesiastes 12:14; Romans 14:12; 2 Corinthians 5:10). But if Calvinistic predestination is true, there is no accounting for **anything** we have done—all depends on the arbitrary pre-selection God made for us, everlasting life or everlasting death. This would make all God's warnings of judging mankind for our actions empty threats—this would make them **lies**.

God also tells mankind that we can take steps to be forgiven of our sins. Jesus said, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned" (Mark 16:16). When asked by those convicted of sin, "Men and brethren, what shall we do?"; Peter by inspiration of the Holy Spirit responded, "Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost" (Acts 2:37-38). God promises that anyone who is in a lost condition can **do** something about his lost condition—he does not have to remain there. Jesus rebuked His adversaries, "And ye will not come to me, that ye might have life" (John 5:40). Even these wicked men, had they so chosen, could have **come** to Jesus and **received life**. Jesus said, "Come unto me, **all** ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls" (Matt. 11:28). There is no willing soul whom the Lord would exclude from this invitation: "And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And **whosoever will**, let him take the water of life freely" (Rev. 22:17). "Him that is athirst" describes all those in need of salvation, and the Lord tells us "*whosoever will*" can have access to that water of spiritual life. But if Calvinistic predestination is true, God's assurance in this passage rings hollow—he that is athirst **cannot** necessarily come; whosoever **cannot** necessarily take the water of life freely. If Calvinistic predestination is true, God is a liar.

God Does Not Love the World

For God to lie to us in such a way described above could not describe a loving God. It could only describe a sadistic tyrant who delights in the torment of His creation. Can you imagine? “Come unto me (but you really can’t).” “Take the water of life freely (which I have put completely out of your reach).” It is as if one were to take a man dying of thirst, tie him to a chair bolted to the floor, put a glass of water on a table six feet in front of him—and tell him, “Come, drink freely.” And if we served such a god, what kind of heaven could anyone anticipate?

According to John 3:16, the golden text of the Bible, God demonstrated His love by giving up His Son to die. God did this so that the sins of those who believe in His Son—that is, those who hear and submit to the terms of His message (Mark 16:15-16)—might be saved. And according to John 3:16, what prompted that sacrifice was God’s love **for the world**. This includes every human being, as Christ *“taste[d] death for every man”* (Hebrews 2:9). This sacrifice demonstrated God’s supreme love, as Christ died not only for the good or righteous, *“But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us”* (Romans 5:8). God loves all; therefore, He wants all to be saved (1 Timothy 2:4; 2 Peter 3:9). If Calvinistic predestination were true, He would **not** want all to be saved. May God be praised for His love for the world!

Conclusion

God is a respecter of persons, God is a liar, God does not love the world—all of these conclusions are false, yet they are all implications of Calvinistic predestination. One rule of logic observes, “Any premise that implies a false conclusion must itself be false.” Thus, Calvinistic predestination is indisputably false. And how thankful each of us can be that it is false! Any person who is willing can be saved, and enjoy eternal life with his Creator.

1 *Proorizō*, in Bauer, Danker, Arndt, and Gingrich, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, 3rd ed. (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 2000), p. 873.

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GOD’S PLAN OF SALVATION

1. Hearing the word of God (Romans 10:17; Acts 16:32).
2. Believing what is taught (Mark 16:16; Hebrews 11:6).
3. Repentance (Acts 2:38; Luke 13:3; Acts 17:30).
4. Confession (Romans 10:9, 10; Acts 8:37).
5. Baptism (Acts 2:38; Mark 16:16; I Peter 3:21; Romans 6:3, 4).
6. After the above five steps, faithful Christian Living (I Peter 2:11, 12; Revelation 2:10).

THE CHURCH OF CHRIST

1. The Bible is its only guide (Romans 1:16; I Thess. 2:13).
2. Wears a Biblical Name (Romans 16:16).
3. Established at the right place (Isaiah 2:2, 3; Acts 2).
4. Established at the right time (Joel 2:28-32; Acts 2).
5. Established on the right person (Matthew 16:18; Acts 2:36).
6. Saved are in it (Ephesians 5:23; Acts 2:47).
7. Its members are enrolled in heaven (Hebrews 12:23).
8. Membership in it is obtained by obedience to God’s commands including baptism (Acts 2:41-47; I Corinthians 12:13).

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