

Does  
the Bible Teach  
**PREDESTINATION?**

*by* David C. Pack

Herbert W. Armstrong led the Worldwide Church of God (formerly The Radio Church of God until 1968) until his death in 1986. Hundreds of millions heard his voice and read his literature. God called him in the fall of 1926 and he was converted in the spring of 1927. Over the course of Mr. Armstrong's ministry, God revealed through him a great many true biblical doctrines, which had been lost to the Church through the centuries. After his death, his successors ceased to believe and teach these doctrines. Although copyright law prohibits The Restored Church of God from reproducing and distributing literature produced while he led the Worldwide Church of God, we are committed to the preservation and teaching of all of these truths!

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What does *predestination* mean? Has the course of your life already been decided? Has God determined the fate of all men in advance? What about free moral agency? Why were you born? Does God have a plan? If so, what is it?

Many are confused and worry needlessly about those who have died in ignorance. Yet, the Bible teaching is plain—easy to understand. Here is the amazing truth about God’s plan and predestination!

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I grew up in a well-known, mainstream Protestant church. The main difference between this church and other Protestant denominations was its belief in the “predestination” of all human beings. I learned of this central teaching at an early age.

We were generally taught to believe that our entire lives had been laid out in advance by God. Supposedly, this all happened before we were born. But I was later forced to question whether the Bible says this.

### **My Mother’s Choice**

This was the church of my mother’s youth. My father grew up in a different denomination. Though my parents required me, my brother and my sister to attend, neither parent accompanied us very often. When I was about thirteen or fourteen, I decided to ask my mother why. Her answer was direct and revealing.

She explained that she could not accept the doctrine of predestination as taught by her church. She went on to explain to me, through an analogy of a man with a heart condition, why she was troubled by this doctrine. She depicted the man as being aware of his condition and yet choosing to ignore it, as he rushed up and down the stairs of his house carrying boxes of books. My mother refused to believe that such a man could suffer a heart attack without being responsible for having made the decision to ignore good judgment, thereby *putting himself* at risk. I will never forget this conversation, because we were standing at the bottom of our staircase as she described her belief. She went on to tell me that she believed that everything she decided in her life was, in fact, something that *she decided*. She felt that one who would *deliberately*

*jeopardize* his health, while well aware of his condition, was mocking God with his action. This was a *choice* the person made. On the other hand, if such a man really did not have control over his actions, in the case she described, then God was mocking this man—and all men—because He has left people powerless to take action in the face of apparent danger.

My mother made a point, and I have never forgotten it. However, it was not until four or five years later that I came to understand the Bible truth about the matter of predestination.

### Just the “Lost” and the “Saved”?

Think of it. If my mother was *incorrect*, it means that human beings do not really possess free moral agency. They cannot truly make their own choices or decide their own fate. It means that all people are simply playing a *predetermined role* in every matter that they face—even when they think that they are making their own decisions. In effect, the entire world is God’s stage and all human beings are nothing more than actors playing a scripted part!

Is this true? Is this what the Bible actually teaches when it makes reference to predestination? Did God actually pre-plan every sin, every act of immorality and every crime that has ever been committed? Is God the author of every war—every act of civil disobedience—every divorce—every suicide—every murder? Did God pre-plan every rape—every act of child abuse—every lie ever told—every time one chooses to cheat on his income taxes? Understand. If God has already charted the course, in advance of everything that will ever happen, all acts of sin and unrighteousness cannot be excluded.

Now turn the coin over. Has God predetermined which people *will* obey Him? Has He decided in advance who will be *righteous*—and thus who will become Christians and ultimately be *saved*? If this is true, we must at the same time consider whether He has also decided who will be lost. And can the “lost” not choose to repent and be saved? Can the saved not fall back into, by *choice*, the way of life that will cause them to be lost? These are important questions.

Is anything missing? Yes, a great deal has been completely overlooked from the pages of the Bible. The doctrine of predestination has been shrouded in ignorance, confusion and misunderstanding for far too long.

We must ask some basic questions. What *is* the plan of God? What exactly *is* God doing with mankind? Is He trying to save all men *now*? Are all men in the category of either “lost” or “saved”? Are there any *other* categories that must be understood to properly grasp God’s plan? Where, then, does the truth of predestination fit?

These are enormous questions. Not understanding their correct answer has caused millions to grieve needlessly about relatives who may have died in a supposed “lost” state because they never accepted Christ as their Savior.

Do not ever *assume* the accuracy of any purported understanding about a biblical matter unless you can *prove* it from scripture. On the matter of predes-

tion, people have made two common assumptions—neither of which is correct. They have *assumed* that every human being who has ever lived is predetermined to be either “lost” or “saved”—*or* they have correctly recognized that people have the power to choose their own fate but have *assumed* that all people fall into one of only these two possible categories.

These positions are both wrong. They are based on false assumptions. Most have assumed that God is trying to save the world *now*. Most have assumed that the role—the mission—of the Church is to “get the world saved.” Most have also been led to believe that God and the devil are in a great wrestling match over the fate of the world. It is as though God is desperately trying to save people from the clutches of the devil, and the devil is, just as desperately, striving to thwart God’s plan of salvation at every turn. Of course, the devil certainly *is* striving to deceive the whole world (Rev. 12:9). He is now the god of this world, seeking to blind people to the wonderful truth of the plan of God and the true gospel (II Cor. 4:4). However, this does not mean that God’s plan is, on the one hand, out of His control—being lost to the devil—or, on the other hand, that His control means predetermining the fate of every human being.

### **Is Today the Only Day of Salvation?**

Is today the *only* opportunity for all to choose or reject Christianity? Must all people “decide now” to accept Jesus as Lord and Savior? Is this what the Bible teaches? The answer is an emphatic NO! If it were yes, then God is failing miserably in His struggle with the devil for control over the fate of humanity.

Consider! In 1920, when my father was born, there were about 2 billion people on Earth. There are now well over 7 billion—and more every day. Approximately 2 billion, or one-third, believe in the name of Jesus Christ. This represents a total that includes every conceivable *brand* of the over 2,000 *different forms* of professing Christianity. Approximately another one-third of mankind has *heard* of Christ but has not accepted Him and does not even claim to follow Him. Finally, the last one-third of all people on Earth know nothing about Christ. Many in India, Africa, Japan, China and parts of South America and Southeast Asia have never even heard of Christ, let alone know who He was, what He did, what He taught, etc. Are they condemned to be lost, having never had an opportunity to understand what they missed or why?

When speaking of Christ’s name, the Bible clearly says, “Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved” (Acts 4:12). Further, Romans 10:13 states that men must call on *this name* to be saved. Understand! All those who have not yielded to the God of the Bible and accepted Jesus as their Savior are certainly not saved! Countless billions have died in this condition. Most have assumed that the only other option for them is that they were lost to salvation and that God long ago predestined this for the vast majority who have ever lived.

On the other hand, if the war to win souls is as most professing Christian ministers depict it, then the devil is far stronger—and far more effective—in his effort than God is. Be honest and admit that this is the only other possibility, unless there is a third category containing the vast majority of people. But it must be a category that has not been recognized!

Is God a monster who would doom the great majority without offering them an opportunity for salvation? This is, however unwittingly believed, what most have concluded. They have assumed that only a relative few have been chosen to receive an opportunity to enter the kingdom of God. (To learn more about God's kingdom, read our free booklet *What Is the Kingdom of God?*)

### Seven Millennial Days

The core of God's plan encompasses 7,000 years. Few have understood this. Many *have* correctly understood at least some of the verses describing Christ's 1,000-year reign, and His Return to earth in great power and glory to rule with the saints (Rev. 20:4-6). And while most know little more than this, they know *nothing* of the fact that God has allotted 6,000 years, or six millennial days of a "seven-day week," to man's rule, prior to the seventh 1,000-year "day." The sixth "day" is about to draw to a close. Satan is soon to be bound (Rev. 20:2).

However, he has *not yet* been bound. When Christ qualified to replace him (Matt. 4:1-11; Luke 4:1-13) as the "god of this world," having overcome sin, He assured that Satan will soon no longer be present to deceive and confuse mankind (Rev. 12:9; I Cor. 14:33). But, once again, we must understand that he has *not yet* been bound and he seeks to do everything, within the great power that he does possess, to thwart God's plan. He has certainly deceived his ministers (II Cor. 11:13-15) into believing that God has failed terribly in His plan to save the vast majority. But it is only by God's permission that Satan holds sway over this "present evil world" (Gal. 1:4).

God is not losing a wrestling match over which He clearly has full control. He knows exactly what He is doing, and the beauty of His plan *can* be known. Be ensured that no true God would ever choose to condemn the vast majority who have ever lived without giving them a full opportunity for salvation. Such a God would not be worth following—He would be an unjust monster whose primary business is condemnation.

We must understand! The Bible states, "But, beloved, *be not ignorant* of this one thing, that *one day* is with the Lord *as a thousand years*, and a thousand years as one day" (II Pet. 3:8). Of course, most people *are* "ignorant" of not just this "one thing," but almost everything that the Bible teaches.

Yet, this is a fascinating verse.

Man (under the unseen direction of Satan) has been given six days, or 6,000 years, to try his own ways, governments, religions, philosophies, value systems and forms of education. He has practiced sin—disobedience to God's com-



mands—for nearly 6,000 years, under the sway of Satan. He has then tried to treat all of the ill *effects* instead of treating the *cause* of having broken God's laws.

God is allowing man to learn bitter lessons. The vast majority, who have never known the precious truth of God, are having to learn that their own ways do not work! (Read our booklet *Why Man Cannot Solve His Problems*.)

Just before mankind is about to erase himself from the earth, through a combination of weapons of mass destruction and the irreversible pollution of a planet that has limits to how much it can withstand, Christ will intervene and save mankind from itself!

Now continue with II Peter. Notice verse 9: "The Lord is not slack concerning His promise...but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that *any* should perish, but that *all* should come to repentance." Did you notice that God wants to save *everyone*? Paul, when speaking of God (Christ) states, "Who will have *all* men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth" (I Tim. 2:4). That is the plain truth of this verse. God is not, and never has been, in the "mass condemnation" business.

Satan has proliferated many forms of false religion all over the earth. He counterfeits the truth in endless ways. He is a master deceiver and the fruit of his efforts lies all around us. However, there is coming a 1,000-year "Sabbath rest." Mankind will rest from sin and from the relentless deceit of the devil. His time will soon be up. He is angrier now than ever before.

Mark 2:28 states, "...the Son of man is Lord also of the sabbath." Satan will be cast into the outer heavens (the "wilderness" of Lev. 16:10, 21-22) during this millennial Sabbath. It is vitally important to understand this tremendous truth. Satan's dominion will come to an end and the entire world will *rest* from sin when Christ comes as King of kings and Lord of lords.

### **II Corinthians 6:2—Terribly Misunderstood!**

One verse is often cited to prove that *now* is the only opportunity for all mankind to achieve salvation. Let's read this almost universally misunderstood verse: "For He says, I have heard you in a time accepted, and in the day of salvation have I succoured you: behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation" (II Cor. 6:2).

It is critical to understand that the word "the," in the King James Version, is not found in the original Greek or Hebrew text. Translators have added it thinking that they have amplified the meaning of the verse. Instead, they have clouded and confused it.

The apostle Paul is actually quoting Isaiah 49:8: "Thus says the LORD, In *an* acceptable time have I heard you, and in *a* day of salvation have I helped you..." Neither the Greek of II Corinthians 6:2 nor the Hebrew of Isaiah 49:8 contains the definite article "the."

The Knox translation most accurately reflects the Greek meaning of the first part of II Corinthians 6:2: "I have answered your prayer, He says, in *a* [not

*the* only one] time of pardon, I have brought you help in *a* [not *the*] day of salvation.”

Those who misread this verse have not considered that if salvation was only open during the time of Paul, *then it is not opened to anyone now—including you and me!* Just as Paul lived over nineteen centuries before our time, do not forget that he also was quoting a verse that was recorded many centuries before his time. To which age should these two references to the verse be assigned?

It is certainly true that today *is* the only day of salvation for all those who have been called, having their minds opened to God’s truth. There is no escaping that all such people are having their opportunity for salvation *now!* Once people understand the truth (James 4:17; Heb. 10:26), there is no turning back. If God is revealing His truth to you at this time—then you must now ACT on it! This is, then, “a” day of salvation for all those being called today. There will be no second opportunity for people who reject God’s truth.

### **The Gospel Preached as a Witness**

Nowhere in the Bible did Christ or anyone else say that the gospel of the kingdom was to be preached by His servants for the purpose of converting the entire world now. Try to find such verses. You will see that there are none.

Notice Matthew 24:14: “And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world *for a witness* unto all nations; and then shall the end come.” This was part of Christ’s answer to a question in verse 3 of the same chapter. It is actually a prophecy of one of many great events that would precede His Return. The reference to “and then shall the end come” means the end of the age of man’s rule under the sway of the devil. But do not miss the phrase “for a witness” in Christ’s words. He did not say the gospel would be preached “for the purpose of converting all mankind” or any similar thing. It is this Church—The Restored Church of God—that is fulfilling Matthew 24:14.

Few will heed and respond to God’s wonderful truth, made available to them in this age. You have been blessed to read it now. Most will ignore the opportunity to qualify to rule with Christ over the nations (Rev. 5:10; Matt. 5:5; Luke 19:11-27). Reading the truth of a booklet such as this, or our many others, will prove to be little more than “for a witness” for many, because they will not grasp the tremendous significance of God’s plan and their potential role in it.

### **Few Now Given Understanding**

As stated, very few are being given true understanding in this age. Because most have assumed that they understand God’s purpose, they remain totally *blind* to the great truth of what it is!

I ask you a question. All who know anything of the Bible recognize that Christ spoke many principles, points and truths through the use of parables. Why do you suppose that He did this? Have you not been led to believe that

He did it to *illustrate* His purpose? This is what I was taught—and, like most, I swallowed it hook, line and sinker! This theory is false. It is *not* what the Bible says—it is **WRONG!** More importantly, the correct answer reveals a vital truth.

Christ's disciples asked Him this very question. Notice: "And the disciples came, and said unto Him, *Why speak You unto them in parables?* He answered and said unto them, Because it is *given unto you to know the mysteries of the kingdom* of heaven, but to them it is *not* given. For whosoever has, to him shall be given, and he shall have more abundance: but whosoever has not, from him shall be taken away even that he has. Therefore speak I to them in parables: because they seeing see not; and hearing they hear not, neither do they understand" (Matt. 13:10-13).

This is an amazing verse. The implications are stunning! Christ stated that He actually spoke in parables to *hide the meaning* of what He was saying. He explained that the "mysteries" of God's kingdom were "given" to some and "not given" to others. This can only mean that some are called now and others remain blind. Yet, God is perfect. In many verses, He describes His justice and fairness with all mankind, in every matter. And we have seen that He is "not willing that *any* should perish" and would "have *all* men to be saved."

Consider Paul's instruction to the Corinthians: "But unto them *which are called*, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God...For you see *your calling*, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, *are called*" (I Cor. 1:24, 26).

Several times Paul speaks of a "calling." There are those who are called and those who are not. He explains that those called now are generally not the "wise, mighty and noble." Most of those people would not listen to what God tells them because they do not think they need Him. For now, God is willing to let them have their way and learn bitter lessons that will later help them grow and learn faster, when He *does* call them.

In John 6:44, and 65, Christ stated, "No man can come to Me, except the Father which has sent Me *draw him*: and I will raise him up at the last day" and "...no man can come to Me, except it were *given unto him* of My Father." Only through God's Spirit can one be drawn into and be given God's truth. Without this calling, "drawing" or giving of the truth to a person, "no man *can*" come to the truth. It is that simple.

### **There is No Second Chance**

Ezekiel 37 reveals a prophecy of how many millions—indeed billions—will be given a full opportunity first to learn, and then act upon, the truth of God. This foreshadows an opportunity later given to scores of billions. The devil's constant deceiving and tempting of mankind will cease with his being bound. All those who appeared to die "without a chance" will be given their *first* chance

to learn the truth. Some have portrayed this as a “second chance.” We have been accused of believing the doctrine of a second chance. But this will be the first opportunity—the first chance—for many to be called.

If people do not know God’s truth, how can they be judged as having rejected or disobeyed it? On what basis could God condemn anyone who never knew that what they were doing was wrong or sin? What does the Bible actually say on this critical matter?

Consider! James 4:17 states, “Therefore to him that *knows* to do good [God’s law: Rom. 7:12], and does it not, to him it is sin.” The key is *knowledge*—what one *knows* about right and wrong—that gives God a basis for evaluating how a person has or has not yielded to Him.

Further, Hebrews 10:26-27 states, “If we sin wilfully after that we have received the *knowledge of the truth*, there remains no more sacrifice for sins, but a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries [of God].” There is no misunderstanding this plain verse. Willful sin against God can only occur “after” one has “received the knowledge of the truth”—or *after* one has been called by God to understand His plan. Once again, it is clear that God considers what you do with what you know to be the standard for measuring Christian conduct.

In order to make His point, Christ often had to speak very bluntly to the Pharisees. Notice: “Jesus said unto them, *If you were blind, you should have no sin*: but now you say, *We see*; therefore your sin remains” (John 9:41). Later, in John 15:22, he added, “If I had not come *and spoken unto them* [Christ had given them knowledge—He had “spoken unto them”], they had not had sin: but now they have no cloke [margin: *excuse*] for their sin.” This is strong language about the importance of having true knowledge and then properly using it.

No wonder Christ also said, “And that servant, which *knew* his Lord’s will, and *prepared not himself*, neither did according to His will, shall be beaten with *many stripes*” (Luke 12:47). There are those who know God’s will and those who do not. Punishment will be meted out according to who did, and who did not, understand what was required of them.

The Bible states, “For the time has come that judgment must begin at the house of God [God’s true Church]: and if it first begin *at us*, what shall the end be of them that obey not the gospel of God?” (I Pet. 4:17). It is the Church of God, and not the world as a whole, that is now being judged. Christians must recognize that it is their own actions that they should be concerned about at this time. God is evaluating, assessing, their conduct daily. (See inset.)

The majority in today’s world simply do not understand the Plan of God. It has not yet been shown to them. They do not grasp what God is doing with mankind—either individually or collectively. Spiritual things cannot be discerned through the five physical senses (I Cor. 2:9-11). The world is blinded and will remain so until God reveals His truth to all—at the time when it shall be “given” to all to understand, instead of just a few. God is not so unjust and cruel a parent as to condemn His children when He has not told them what He

expects of them, any more than would a human parent punish a child when the child was never told what was expected of him. That would be grossly unfair!

Remember, since all must receive an opportunity to “come to repentance,” then this present age cannot possibly be the time when God is seeking to save all human beings. And remember, if it is, then He is failing on a grand scale at the most important endeavor He has ever entered. Someday, all mankind *will* come to completely understand the beautiful plan of God and *why* the world must be blinded at this time! But you can understand this plan now!

### **All Israel Blinded—Then Saved**

The entire eleventh chapter of Romans offers much insight into how those blinded now will be saved later. This inspiring chapter should be carefully studied. We will briefly examine it now.

It speaks of all of the tribes of Israel. Almost none understand who the tribes of Israel are. They suppose that the Jews, just one tribe out of twelve, comprise all of Israel today. Because many Jews have continued, to some degree, to loosely keep God’s Sabbath and annual festivals, they have retained their identity in a way that the other tribes have lost.

Romans 11 describes how God will one day call and save the entire twelve tribes of Israel. Verse 26 states, “And so *all Israel shall be saved*: as it is written, There shall come out of Sion [Zion] the Deliverer [the soon-coming Jesus Christ], and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob.”

The modern-day nations (tribes grown large) of Israel have not yet had ungodliness removed from their spiritual condition. Soon they will. They are now blinded. Soon they will see.

Many hundreds of millions of Israelites, past, present and future, will soon come to understand the glorious purpose of God’s plan. Though it is coming soon, that time is not here. God is not now working with the nations of Israel. They are not receiving their chance for salvation. Part of the reason is explained in verse 25, where Paul warns the Gentile Romans to be careful: “For I would not, brethren, that you should be *ignorant* of this mystery, lest you should be wise in your own conceits; that *blindness in part* is happened to Israel, *until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in*.” Most people *are* “ignorant” of God’s plan, but He may not want *you* to be ignorant of this “mystery.”

God is first dealing with many Gentiles in this age, along with many physical Israelites scattered through the nations. But He will in the future deal with “all Israel” to the end that they will be saved! And, we will see that He will also deal with all Gentile nations.

### **The Christian Calling and Purpose**

The subject of predestination and God’s plan would not be complete without some considerable explanation of why God is only calling a few now into His

truth. We must ask, *why*—for what *purpose*—is God calling a few at this time? We have already established that He is not trying to save the whole world today. Then what *is* He doing?

Most professing Christians believe that when they die, they will “go to heaven.” While this has been a nice thought for millions, it is not biblical—and it has never been God’s plan! God’s purpose for mankind is far greater, infinitely more glorious. It involves reigning—rulership—with Christ. Many verses make this truth plain to all whose eyes God is opening.

The Christian is in training to become a teacher in the world tomorrow. He or she is one who will guide, direct, rule and teach, starting with all those who are alive at Christ’s Return. Only at that time will all Israel and, soon after, the rest of the world, begin to be saved.

## The Parable of the Pounds

A vitally important parable illustrates the Christian’s responsibility to grow, if he or she is to enter the kingdom of God. In Luke 19:11-27, Christ compared Himself to a Nobleman who went to a “far country,” a type of joining the Father in heaven for nearly 2,000 years, until His Return. The disciples believed that the kingdom of God would “appear immediately,” and Christ wanted to illustrate that much time would pass before it did.

The “Nobleman” of the parable instructed His “ten servants” (a type of Christians being called out of this world by God) to increase the worth of a “pound” (money) that He gave to each one of them for investment. The *pound* actually represented a kind of symbolic unit of basic spiritual worth or value. Remember that it was a parable, so Christ was not referring to any kind of literal money. He told His servants, “Occupy till I come”—or to “grow” the pound into more money. While the Nobleman was gone, several of the servants said, “We will not have this man to *reign* over us.” It is important to understand the intent of this statement.

These “citizens” understood that the Nobleman (Christ) was coming to “reign” on Earth. They wanted no part of this and rejected His government (reign) over them—and, thus, their future part in it (vs. 27). They understood that the kingdom of God would be a government ruling over the earth. Remember, the parable had begun with the Nobleman (Christ) going to heaven to “receive for Himself a *kingdom* and to *return*.”

Upon the Nobleman’s return, He called each of the servants into His presence to give Him an accounting of how each had increased the pound that he had been given. Some had gained five pounds, others ten, etc., but one servant had buried his pound in the ground

In the meantime, Christians are themselves training to be those who will train others. They are being taught to be teachers. They are learning to receive direction from God in His Word and through His Church, so that they are later qualified to give direction. They are learning to be ruled by God now so that they can reign and rule *with* Christ later.

Peter stated that Christians are to “...grow in grace, and in the knowledge of...Jesus Christ” (II Pet. 3:18). Christians do not merely accept Jesus and believe “once saved, always saved.” They know they must “grow” and “overcome” to be given “power over the nations” (Rev. 2:26-27). It is in this lifetime that a true Christian qualifies to receive great power. Notice: “To him that overcomes will I grant to sit with Me in My throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with My Father in His throne” (3:21).

and produced nothing with it. Christ wanted to know how much “each man had *gained*” while He had been away.

The first servant had gained *ten* pounds and Christ explained his reward by saying “you good servant: because you have been faithful in a very little, have you *authority over ten cities*” (vs. 17). The servant who had gained *five* pounds was put “*over five cities*.” Because the second servant produced half as much, his reward was half as great. So, these men were given “authority”—they were put into a position of great rulership—“over cities.” Their reward was to “reign” with Christ (Jude 14) in His world-ruling kingdom.

The servant who buried his pound in a napkin had wasted a great opportunity to qualify for rulership in the kingdom of God: “And He [the Nobleman, Jesus] said to him, Out of your own mouth will I judge you, *you wicked servant*” (vs. 22). This servant had not grown. He had not produced anything with his life and had not qualified for rulership over cities in the kingdom of God. Christ gave the wicked servant’s reward to the one who had gained ten pounds—so that the latter had even more than his own reward. The cities that this man’s conduct had caused him to lose would have to be ruled by someone. Otherwise, they would be left out, with no ruler assigned authority over them.

No one will be given rulership before he has proven that he can be ruled. No one can be part of God’s *world-ruling government* unless he has learned to submit to the *government of God* and to be ruled by God and Jesus Christ in this life. This is the all-important lesson of the parable of the pounds.

Now what will *you* do? Will you make your calling and election sure (II Pet. 1:10)? Will you grow, qualify, and develop in spiritual character—gain more pounds than when you started? Will God get a “return” on His investment in you? Or will you bury your pound, and with it your opportunity to rule and teach in the kingdom of God?

God cannot give power to those who have not learned how to use it. He has to first insure that the power will not be abused. A true Christian studies God's word on a regular basis to understand all of the ways and laws of God. He also prays daily, on his knees, pouring out his needs and concerns in a fervent way (James 5:16), in full confidence that God is hearing, guiding and answering him in his everyday life.

A Christian "seeks *first* the kingdom of God" (Matt. 6:33), knowing that all of his daily cares and concerns will be taken care of. He must remember to grow and overcome because he is qualifying to one day lead great numbers of people.

When the time comes for "all Israel to be saved" (Rom. 11:26), God must have a team of resurrected saints (Jude 14-15) already prepared to be part of the great revealing process to the blinded millions who are prophesied to then be able to see God's truth. God explains this in Romans 11:31. When speaking of blinded Israel, Paul wrote, "Even so have these also now not believed [margin: obeyed], *that through your mercy they also may obtain mercy.*"

It is through God's mercy, working in the few who are qualifying to rule and teach as KINGS and PRIESTS (Rev. 5:10), that others will eventually have an opportunity to learn the same precious truth. This is because those who receive mercy *now* will extend mercy to the masses of Israel and the rest of the world *later*. What an amazing opportunity for those God is calling to His truth now! (To learn more about this subject, read our book *The Awesome Potential of Man.*)

### **When God Calls the Masses**

Remember that two-thirds of those alive today are not even *professing* Christians, with half of this number completely unfamiliar with even the name of Jesus Christ. If "all Israel" is foretold to be saved, what of the many hundreds of millions and billions who have ever lived, from the time of Adam? Will they also receive an opportunity? When do they receive their opportunity? A number of important scriptures must be considered.

The prophet Daniel reveals the scope of Christ's rule at His Return. Daniel 7:14 speaks of Christ coming to rule: "...*all* people, nations, and languages, should serve Him: His dominion is an everlasting dominion." Verse 18 explains the role of the saints who "take" and "possess the kingdom" with Christ. While verse 22 further confirms this, verse 27 states, "and *all dominions* [rulers] shall serve and obey him [Christ]." When placed together, it is seen that the kingdom of God encompasses the entire earth. All nations are included under its authority. Today's saints are in training for GREAT POWER!

A number of passages speak of the time when all the Gentiles who have never heard of the name of Christ will receive an opportunity for salvation. Let's examine several.

Notice in Isaiah: "For, behold, the LORD will come with fire, and with His chariots like a whirlwind, to render His anger with fury [last plagues]...And I



will set a sign among them, and I will send those that escape of them unto the nations, to Tarshish, Pul, and Lud [Gentile nations]...and Javan, to the isles afar off, *that have not heard My fame*, neither have seen My glory: and they shall declare My glory *among the Gentiles*” (66:15, 19). Truly, most today “have not heard [Christ’s] fame, neither seen [His] glory.”

The book of Micah describes the time when all nations, certainly including all Gentiles, will be taught—and will even *seek* to be taught—the ways and truths of God: “*And many nations shall come*, and say, Come, and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, and to the house of the God of Jacob; and *He will teach us* of His ways, and *we will walk in His paths*: for the law shall go forth of Zion, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem” (4:2).

There is no misunderstanding the clarity of this prophecy. The nations of the earth will seek the true God for the first time in history. The scope of real conversions will be unprecedented.

Now return to Isaiah 11:9-11: “They shall not hurt nor destroy in all My holy mountain: *for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the LORD*, as the waters cover the sea. And in that day there shall be a root of Jesse, which shall stand for an ensign of the people; to it [Christ is the root of Jesse] *shall the Gentiles seek*: and His rest shall be glorious. And it shall come to pass in that day, that the Lord shall set His hand again the second time to recover the remnant of His people, which shall be left...”

This verse further confirms that the nations of the earth will seek God. The true knowledge of the right way to live will completely blanket the earth. This verse is plain. It is also plain that the earth is not *now* blanketed by the truth of God. Only when this happens will all nations have an opportunity to understand that to which they are blinded now. These prophecies contain a wonderful picture of universal understanding and the removal of the ignorance, confusion and terrible religious disagreement so prevalent on Earth today!

These last verses above show that all nations will seek Christ as their Deliverer. Take time to read this entire chapter. It describes a time of universal peace, where even the temperament of animals will be dramatically changed from their current aggressive and dangerous nature.

### **The Resurrection of the Dead**

The Bible teaches that a resurrection of the dead is coming. While many are familiar with this term, few know what it means or when it shall occur—or who will be included in it. These questions must be understood to properly comprehend the plan of God.

Paul spoke of the time when true Christians will be resurrected. Flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God. Only those who are *born* of Spirit—*made* of Spirit—will be in the kingdom of God. (First, carefully read John 3:6.) Now notice how Paul explains the moment when true Christians will be resurrected from the dead: “Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot

*inherit the kingdom of God; neither does corruption inherit incorruption. Behold, I show you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump [the moment of Christ's Return]: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed"* (I Cor. 15:50-52).

At His Return, true followers of Christ who have died will be resurrected to a glorious new life, ruling the entire earth with Him. Also read an account in I Thessalonians 4:13-18. These verses describe many saints rising to meet Christ in the air and who then spend eternity *with* Him. The saints will eventually be composed of spirit, as very members of the world-ruling Family of God. Other verses make this even plainer.

Everyone who has ever lived will be resurrected—but not all at the same time. This phase of God's plan will start with the saints' resurrection to immortality and eternal life at Christ's Return. However, another resurrection occurs later, which includes *all* those who have ever lived throughout *all* ages. Notice: "Verily, verily, I say unto you, The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God: and they that hear shall live...Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which *all that are in the graves* shall hear His voice, And shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the *resurrection of life*; and they that have done evil, unto the *resurrection of damnation* [Greek: judgment, not condemnation or damnation]" (John 5:25, 28-29).

Did you notice that Christ said "all" in the graves shall come forth? All means all! If, as we have seen, judgment is now on the house of God (the Church), then this describes a different time when the process and time of judgment occurs for all people. And, just as the judgment of the Church could certainly not be referring to God *condemning* it, so it is with the time of judgment for the whole world.

Another important and lengthy scripture must be read here. It is found in Matthew 11:21-25. Read it slowly and carefully, focusing on the references to various famous cities of the past entering "the day of judgment": "Woe unto you, Chorazin! woe unto you, Bethsaida! for if the mighty works, which were done in you, had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes. But I say unto you, It shall be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon at the *day of judgment*, than for you. And you, Capernaum, which are exalted unto heaven, shall be brought down to hell: for if the mighty works, which have been done in you, had been done in Sodom, it would have remained until this day. But I say unto you, That it shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom in the *day of judgment*, than for you. At that time Jesus answered and said, I thank you, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because you have hid these things from the wise and prudent, and have revealed them unto babes."

Truly, this knowledge *is* hidden to most.

The only way that these cities can be judged in the future is if there is a coming general resurrection of the people from previous ages—to a "day of judgment." There is no other possible meaning for this scripture.

Christ will come to first sit on the very throne of David (Luke 1:32). Zechariah 14:1-4 also describes the precise moment when His feet touch the Mount of Olives. It is at this moment that Christ defeats the armies of the earth, which oppose Him. Take time to read these verses.

Notice what happens at the beginning of Christ's rule: "When the Son of man shall come in His glory, And all the holy angels with Him, then shall He sit upon the throne of His glory: and before Him shall be gathered *all nations* [Gentiles and Israelites]: and He shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divides his sheep from the goats: And He shall set the sheep on His right hand, but the goats on the left. Then shall the King say unto them on His right hand, Come, you blessed of My Father, *inherit the kingdom* prepared for you... Then shall He say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, you cursed, into everlasting fire..." (Matt. 25:31-34, 41).

This is a remarkable series of scriptures, offering much insight into the way God's plan will develop as He works with all nations. Those who served God (the sheep on the right hand) "inherit the kingdom." Recall from I Corinthians 15:50 that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom. So these are spirit immortals who are now ruling with Christ over all nations. This parable of the sheep and the goats pictures a *judgment* of all people on Earth and separating them into those who "inherit the kingdom" and those who chose the way of life that leads to being cursed with "everlasting fire." (Read our booklet *The Truth About Hell* to learn what the Bible actually says about this subject.)

### Two Harvests

We have just described two separate times in God's plan to harvest all mankind into His kingdom. God's seven annual Holy Days describe His plan and are an annual rehearsal of its meaning so that the Christian never forgets what God is carrying out on Earth.

In ancient Israel, now called Palestine, there was an early spring harvest of grain. The Feast of Pentecost describes this first, small, preliminary "spring" harvest of Christians, which precedes the great "fall" harvest foretold to come later when God calls and judges all mankind as He is doing now with the Church.

The apostle James wrote that Christians today are "a kind of *firstfruits* of His creatures" (James 1:18). They are those who are in training to be kings and priests (rulers and teachers) over all people in the WORLD TOMORROW!

### Just What Does *Predestination* Mean?

It is time to answer this important question. We have clearly seen that predestination does *not* mean that God has determined the fate of all human beings in advance—that the entire course of their lives has been decided for them. It does *not* mean that all human beings who have ever lived were chosen to be either lost or saved. This should now be abundantly clear.

Then what *does* predestination mean?

There are only four places where the King James Version of the Bible uses either the word “predestinate” or “predestinated.” So, we must certainly admit that the word *is* in the Bible. It is only its meaning that is still in question. Let’s read the four verses and then return to them for explanation.

The first two places are in Ephesians 1:4-5 and 11-12: “According as He has 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 [Greek: sonship] of 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.”

The other two places are in 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* [step one], He also did *predestinate* [step two] 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* [step three]: and whom He called, them He also *justified* [step four]: and whom He justified, them He also *glorified* [step five].”

We can already draw two conclusions. Did you see anything about people being predestinated to be either “lost” or “saved”? Emphatically, NO! This idea is just not there and any honest reading of the scriptures cannot make it say this. There is no reference to anyone having their fate predetermined through any supposed doctrine about predestination.

*When* did God decide to call those who are alive in this age?

Now notice II Timothy 1:9: “Who has saved us, and *called us* with an holy calling, not according to our works, but *according to His own purpose* and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus *before the world began.*” This verse does tell us that God decided to call some in this age “before the world began.” This answers the question of *when* God chose to call us but Ephesians 1:5 explains *what* was the purpose of our calling.

Ephesians 1:5 said, “Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children [Greek: *spirit of sonship*],” and verse 11 added, “being predestinated according to the *purpose* of Him who works all things.” These two verses, coupled with II Timothy 1:9, make absolutely plain that God has predestinated certain people to the purpose of becoming *sons of God*! There is nothing here about being predestinated to be lost or, for that matter, saved—though salvation is described here as the *purpose* offered to people that God calls.

Carefully notice verse 12 and the phrase “being predestinated...That we should be to the praise of His glory, who *first* trusted in Christ.” Paul is recording the fact that God is harvesting a few “firstfruits” now—of those “who *first* trusted in Christ.” The world will come *second*, but a few are being called and trained now to be *first* in God’s plan! This is an amazing and wonderful under-

standing. Do you grasp it? Can you see the potential within this understanding for how God might use *you*?

Romans 8 requires some further explanation. It actually describes five separate steps or stages as God works with a Christian from the very beginning all the way to the completion of his salvation. To “foreknow” just means to know before. There is nothing mysterious in the word and, of course, God did know us before we knew Him. At some point in God’s examination and foreknowing of any single person, He predestines, or determines, that person to be “called.” When God’s predetermined time arrives, He calls the person. The person now comes to know who God is (remember, God “foreknew” him, knew him before the one called was aware) because He is revealing Himself during the calling process. If a person responds to the call, and is converted, then that one becomes “justified”—forgiven of his sin and made just before God. Likewise, if the person continues to yield to God throughout his or her life, it will lead to “glorification”—salvation. These are the five steps describing how God works with each person—*foreknow, predestine, call, justify* and *glorify*.

Therefore, the subject of predestination has nothing whatsoever to do with being saved or lost, but with being called. More specifically, it has to do with those who are called FIRST.

So then, God decided long ago (“before the world began”) to call a group, over a 6,000-year period, to be trained to rule with Christ. He did not know their names in advance or He would have had to cause all of the fornication, rape, incest and interracial marriage that, to a certain degree, would have been involved in the 6,000 years of events required to produce any particular person. God determined to call the *weak, foolish, base* and *despised* of this world to “confound the wise...[and the] mighty” that God will call later (I Cor. 1:26-29).

### **You Have a Choice**

God, through Moses, told ancient Israel that they had a choice concerning whether to obey Him. Notice: “I call heaven and earth to record this day against you, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing: therefore CHOOSE life, that both you and your seed may live” (Deut. 30:19). God does not mock people or nations. He would not indict all those who “did not CHOOSE the fear of the LORD” (Prov. 1:29) if they really had no *power* to make this choice.

You have the power to choose (Deut. 30:18-19). What will *your* choice be?

### **Judgment Now Upon the Church**

To conclude his booklet *Predestination—Does the Bible Teach It?*, Herbert W. Armstrong summarized the correct biblical teaching about predestination:

“God does not decide for you, in advance, whether you shall be saved or lost. He *did* decide far in advance which ones He would call in this *first* calling, to be a priest or a king in His Kingdom—to have part in the saving of others.

“How wonderful are God’s ways, when He opens our understanding to reveal them to us.

“Let us make our calling and final election sure. Let us not grieve over departed loved ones who probably were not called, in this life. God is able to raise them up again...[Most] will come up in the Great White Throne Judgment [but many others before this in a way that this small booklet is too short to explain]. And in that judgment, the book of life shall be opened, and many shall then find it. Judgment, now, is upon the true Church of God—those now called (I Pet. 4:17). And we are later to judge the world!

“The overwhelming majority on earth today are neither saved nor lost. Their chance has not yet come. This is not their time. But it is coming as certainly as God’s Word is true.

“This is *not* the age when Christ is desperately contesting Satan as to whether all humanity shall be saved or lost. If it were, as most seem to believe, a controversy for souls now, between Christ and Satan, then Satan surely is winning the contest, and a one-sided contest it is.

“But Satan is not more powerful than God. We near, now, the close of the sixth working day of Satan’s week. Soon will come ‘the Sabbath of the Lord thy God.’ Satan shall be chained, Christ shall rule—and preach, and save!”

**The following literature expands  
on topics discussed in this booklet:**

- The Awesome Potential of Man
- What Is the Kingdom of God?
- *Why* Man Cannot Solve His Problems
- The Truth About Hell

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