

The Catholic Company presents



Do Catholics Believe in Predestination?

Why do some Protestants believe in Double Predestination, and what does the Church teach about predestination? Find out more here.

A lot of people associate the term “*predestination*” with John Calvin, the founder of Calvinism. Most Presbyterian churches champion Calvinism. Non-Calvinist Christians often call Calvin’s theology “double predestination,” or Election, which teaches that before a soul is created, God has already predestined some souls for Heaven and some souls for Hell. This view rejects free will; that is, our ability to freely choose to follow God and live for Heaven.

Now, the Catholic Church does recognize predestination—but not the Calvinist understanding of predestination.

You could summarize it this way: Calvinist predestination says that God only chooses to save a few elect persons, and that anyone else—regardless of their works—is predestined for Hell with no chance of being saved.

But the Catholic Church champions an important teaching in Sacred Scripture, which says that even though some people go to Hell, God is merciful and does not *want* people to suffer eternal damnation, as stated in Ezekiel 18:23 and 1 Timothy 2:4. Indeed, God wants all souls to be happy with Him in Heaven, but we have the freedom to reject God—which means that Hell can also be freely chosen. Because He is all-powerful and all-knowing, God *foresees* our choices, but He does not compel anyone to make these choices.

The Catholic Church teaches that we must freely choose God in order to build a relationship with Him. Receiving the Sacraments is necessary for our salvation, but we are not forced to go to Confession or to receive the Eucharist at Mass every Sunday. We have to choose to do so on our own. While God knows what we will ultimately choose and where we will go when we die, we ourselves must willingly cooperate with the graces that can lead us to Heaven. He respects our personal freedom even if we choose to use it against Him. As C. S. Lewis wrote in one of his novels, “There are only two kinds of people in the end: those who say to God,

'Thy will be done,' and those to whom God says, in the end, *'Thy will be done.'* **All that are in Hell, choose it.**

Since only God's will for us is truly good, that is the choice we should make. May God grant us the grace to always want what He Himself wants for us—which is to be happy with Him in Heaven forever.

To learn more about Catholic doctrine, [check out Monsignor Charles Pope's *Catholic And Curious: Your Questions Answered*, here.](#)