

More Predestination

Vocation, not salvation

Vocation simply means: **a calling, role, or purpose** — what someone is *set apart to do*.

It does **not** mean:

- where someone goes when they die
- whether they are saved or not
- their eternal destiny

So, when I say “*this is vocation, not salvation*,” I mean: The passage is about **what someone is called to do in life**, not **what happens to their soul in eternity**.

Let’s use the Jeremiah verse as the example

*“Before I formed you in the womb I knew you;
before you were born I set you apart;
I appointed you as a prophet to the nations.”* (Jeremiah 1:5)

Notice what God says:

- “I knew you” → relationship
- “I set you apart” → purpose
- “I appointed you **as a prophet**” → job / role / mission

I don’t think God is saying:

- “I chose you for heaven”
- “Your eternal fate is fixed”
- “Your salvation was decided before birth”

This is God saying: “*Jeremiah, your life has an assignment.*”

That’s vocation.

From my research, the Bible often talks about **calling** — what people are meant to do. And, it talks far less about **pre-assigning eternal destinations**.

Being chosen for a task I don’t think is the same thing as being assigned a final destination.

Biblical examples

- **Moses** was called to lead Israel — but wrestled, resisted, and even disobeyed.
- **Jonah** was called to Nineveh — and tried to run the other direction.
- **Peter** was called to follow Jesus — and still denied him.
- **Paul** was called to preach — after actively persecuting Christians.

All of them had **vocations**.

None of them had lives without struggle, choice, or growth.

Calling did not override their humanity.

Why this matters for the predestination discussion

When people hear verses like Jeremiah 1:5 and think *salvation*, they often assume: “If God knew me before birth, then everything — including heaven or hell — must already be decided.”

But, from my research (and personal opinion) Scripture doesn’t make that jump.

Instead, it consistently shows:

- God calls
- humans respond (sometimes well, sometimes poorly)
- God remains faithful throughout

That’s a relationship — not a prewritten script.

Some verses are about **what God calls a person to do**, not **where God sends a person when they die**.

What do I mean by “corporate, communal language”?

From my perspective and research, when Paul uses predestination language (especially in **Ephesians 1**), he is *not* talking about:

- individual babies
- individual souls
- individual destinies assigned at birth

He is talking about **a people**, not an isolated person.

Think “us,” “we,” “in Christ,” “the church,” “the body.”

That’s corporate language.

*“He chose **us** in Christ before the foundation of the world...”*

— Ephesians 1:4

Notice what Paul does *not* say:

- “He chose each individual soul before birth”
- “He assigned eternal destinations in advance”
- “He wrote heaven or hell on people at birth”

Instead, Paul is saying something like: *“God decided, before anything else existed, that there would be a people shaped by Christ.”*

What I take from that is, it is a **community-level decision**, not a prewritten biography for each human being. That’s where **communal** comes: **Jesus talks almost entirely in communal terms** (kingdom, flock, vine, body)

It’s the difference between choosing a **team** and choosing which **players make the roster before they’re born**.

Paul is saying:

- God chose **the team**
- God defined **what the team would look like**
- God committed to **the team’s purpose**

I don't believe He is *not* saying: Every individual player was assigned a fixed fate at birth. Again, this is me talking here.

Paul repeats the “in (or through) Christ” phrase constantly:

- “in Christ”
- “through Christ”
- “in him”

That means:

- Christ is the *center*
- Christ is the *container*
- Christ is the *means*

So, the logic is: God predestined that **those who are in Christ** would be adopted, redeemed, and transformed.

I don't think it says: God predestined who would or wouldn't get to be in Christ before they were born. It doesn't appear that Paul ever crosses that line.

But, it's strong predestination language because Paul is saying:

- God's plan is not reactive
- God didn't improvise salvation after things went wrong
- Grace comes first, not last

Predestination here (in my opinion) means: *The plan was set before the people were.*

To me, it doesn't appear that it's saying: *The people were fixed before they lived.*

I believe, Paul is saying God decided **what kind of future God wanted**, not **which babies would get which ending**. The destination was prepared before the travelers — but people still choose whether to walk the road.

Why this matters

When predestination is heard as *individual soul-labeling*, it tends to produce:

- fear
- fatalism
- spiritual passivity
- quiet judgment of others

When it's heard as *corporate calling*, it produces:

- humility
- gratitude
- responsibility
- belonging

Paul's tone in Ephesians 1 is **celebratory**, not anxious. He's praising God!

How I interpret this, Paul's predestination language is about God committing to a people and a purpose — not about assigning eternal fates to newborns.

Research the Research

When I say, “Let me listen, acknowledge, and come back with research,” I’m trying to Model three things at once:

- *Humility* — faith isn’t threatened by questions
- *Care* — people are heard before they’re corrected
- *Integrity* — beliefs are worth checking, not just repeating

I can’t mistake confidence for faith.

Well, that’s just what I believe.

I appreciate that. Belief and interpretation aren’t always the same thing — and both deserve honesty.

So what do I believe?

I believe Scripture points us toward a faithful God who calls people into relationship and growth — and I’m careful about claiming more certainty than the text itself gives.

I’m less interested in winning an argument than in being faithful to the text — and sometimes faithfulness means sitting with tension.

- We’re not “behind.”
- We’re not “catching up.”
- We’re doing the work most people skip.

Faith that’s never examined is fragile.

Faith that’s examined together becomes shared.