

Predestine

The verb “predestine” comes from the Greek term “prohorizō,” which is the compound of “pro” and “horizō.” Grammatically, in the active voice, the verb “prohorizō” portrays God as initiating this action.

“Pro” means “in front” in a spatial sense or “before” in a temporal sense.

“Horizō” means “to determine or ordain” or “to appoint.”

Combined as “prohorizō,” the meaning of “decide upon beforehand, foreordain” or “pre-appoint” is derived. Through the influence of Jerome, who is largely responsible for the Latin Vulgate, “prohorizō” developed a sense of “destiny” which led to the English translation of “predestine.”

From a variety of linguistic studies, “prohorizō” is more accurately understood as “pre-appoint” or “determine beforehand.”

1. Carefully observe these two passages. In the first passage, Acts 2:22-23, the apostle Peter is speaking to a large group of Jerusalem Jews. In the second passage, the apostles Peter and John are with a group of Believing friends and together they are praying. What do you observe about what God determined beforehand?

“Men of Israel, hear these words: Jesus of Nazareth, a man attested to you by God with mighty works and wonders and signs that God did through him in your midst, as you yourselves know - this Jesus, delivered up according to the definite plan and foreknowledge of God, you crucified and killed by the hands of lawless men. (Acts 2:22-23, ESV)

for truly in this city there were gathered together against your holy servant Jesus, whom you anointed, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, along with the Gentiles and the peoples of Israel, to do whatever your hand and your plan had **predestined** to take place. (Acts 4:27-28, ESV)

Here are some sample questions that will help you with your observation of the text:

Did God determine beforehand the manner, exact date, and time of His Son’s death and crucifixion?

Herod and Pontius Pilate were anointed. What does anoint mean? Were they Believers?

What did God determine beforehand of Jews and Gentiles of Israel? What did God foreknow?

How much did God determine beforehand His plan? What did His plan entail? When did it begin? When did it end?

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Teacher Notes

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Help the student gain an appreciation for the scholars who devoted their lives to linguistic studies – word studies, lexicons and concordances. Take a moment to review what each type of reference does. Without their work, we would have an impossible time understanding God’s word.

Review the above introduction. Predestine is a challenging word to understand. Looking into the Greek basis of the English word “predestine” and all the ways it is used in the Bible are good methods of Bible study.

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Here are some sample questions that will help you with your observation of the text:

Did God determine beforehand the manner, exact date, and time of His Son’s death and crucifixion?

Ask the student: what celebration was taking place when Jesus died?

Passover was taking place. The night before the Exodus, God instructs the Hebrews to sacrifice a year old male lamb or goat without any blemishes (Ex 12:5) and use its blood as protection against God’s judgment and final plague against Pharaoh (Ex 12:13). This feast would become a lasting memorial (Exodus 12:14), celebrated annually (Lev 23:4-6) and testament of the historical reality of God (Ex 20:2; Deut 5:6).

The apostles associate Jesus as the paschal lamb (Passover lamb); thus, Jesus’ sacrifice takes on special significance.

Paul calls “For Christ our Passover also has been sacrificed” (1 Cor 5:7).

Peter sees Jesus as having the characteristics of the paschal lamb with an emphasis on His blood: unblemished and spotless (1 Pet 1:19).

John sees Jesus as the "Lamb standing, as if slain" (Rev 5:6).

Edification for the teacher: while the timing of Jesus' death associated it with Passover, New Testament writers also associated Jesus' sacrifice with elements of the Day of Atonement. The Day of Atonement (Yom Kippur) is the only day that the high priest can enter the Holy of Holies and is the only day that the nation of Israel can make atonement for all their sin of the year (Lev 16:1-34).

But when Christ appeared as a high priest of the good things that have come, then through the greater and more perfect tent (not made with hands, that is, not of this creation) he entered once for all into the holy places, not by means of the blood of goats and calves but by means of his own blood, thus securing an eternal redemption. (Heb 9:11-12, ESV)

Just like the blood of the sacrificed unblemished goat was sprinkled on the Mercy Seat, Jesus provided the blood for the place of propitiation (Rom 3:25; Heb 9:12-14).

Just like the Mercy Seat received the blood to appease God, Jesus was the place of propitiation (1 John 2:2; 1 John 4:10).

Just like the High Priest, who alone enters the Holy of Holies and the presence of God with the blood of the goat he sacrificed, Jesus became the High Priest and mediator of the New Covenant (Heb 9:15, 24-26).

When John the Baptist saw Jesus as the "Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world!" (John 1:29), he prophetically saw Jesus' atonement as linking together Passover and the Day of Atonement.

Herod and Pontius Pilate were anointed. What does anoint mean? Were they Believers?

Inform the student that they can use a Bible dictionary to help him understand the word "anoint." For example, he can search "studylight holman" to find the online Holman Dictionary.

While anoint usually refers to rubbing oil on a person to heal or set someone apart, in this instance, it means that Herod and Pontius Pilate were officially appointed to their position by God! And they were not Believers!

What did God determine beforehand of Jews and Gentiles of Israel? What did God foreknow?

Ask the student: did God dictate what each person would do during the events of Jesus' last days? Or did people behave according to circumstances?

Ask the student: what did God foreknow? What do you think Jesus is saying here?

Jesus answered them, "Did I not choose you, the twelve? And yet one of you is a devil." He spoke of Judas the son of Simon Iscariot, for he, one of the twelve, was going to betray him. (John 6:70-71, ESV)

God foreknew, under what circumstances, how and when a person would behave in the course of precisely fulfilling His plan and His covenant promises to Abraham.

Matthew 26:59-68 is a good example for the student to see:

Now the chief priests and the whole council were seeking false testimony against Jesus that they might put him to death, but they found none, though many false witnesses came forward.

At last two came forward and said, "This man said, 'I am able to destroy the temple of God, and to rebuild it in three days.'"

And the high priest stood up and said, "Have you no answer to make? What is it that these men testify against you?" But Jesus remained silent. And the high priest said to him, "I adjure you by the living God, tell us if you are the Christ, the Son of God."

Jesus said to him, "You have said so. But I tell you, from now on you will see the Son of Man seated at the right hand of Power and coming on the clouds of heaven."

Then the high priest tore his robes and said, "He has uttered blasphemy. What further witnesses do we need? You have now heard his blasphemy. What is your judgment?"

They answered, "He deserves death." Then they spit in his face and struck him. And some slapped him, saying, "Prophecy to us, you Christ! Who is it that struck you?" (Matt 26:59-68, ESV)

Throughout His ministry, Jesus always identified Himself as the Son of Man. Jewish religious authorities never had eyewitness testimony of Jesus' claim as the Messiah or Son of God. When Jesus makes the association at His trial, it puts in motion His death and crucifixion at a certain time in history.

How much did God determine beforehand His plan? What did His plan entail? When did it begin? When did it end?

Ask the student: is there any mention of Jesus Christ's death in the Old Testament? Encourage the student to think or peruse the Bible. Suggest a concordance search!

There are several possible answers that the student may offer. Here is an example:

In his prophecy of the Messiah, the Old Testament prophet Isaiah provides the significance of the Messiah's sacrifice within the context of the Levitical sacrificial laws (Isaiah 53:1-12).

The Servant's sacrifice was for iniquity (Isa 53:5, 6, 11), transgression (Isa 53:5, 8) and sin (Isa 53:12).

The Servant's offering was a guilt offering (Isa 53:10).

The death of the Servant was substitutionary in nature, and it was in substitute for human beings (Isa 53:5, 11, 12).

With some thought and discussion, the student may realize that the first outlines of God's plan is revealed with the Abrahamic Covenant. Subsequent divine covenants, Mosaic, Land, King, and New Covenants, reveal more details of God's plan. Complete fulfillment of the Abrahamic Covenant is revealed in the book of Revelation.