

Ephesians 1:4 and I Peter 1:20
"before the foundation of the world"
"pro katabolēs kosmou"

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The scriptures used throughout these study notes are quoted from the Authorized or King James Version unless otherwise noted.

Notation **N2577/S2889** means word numbering from Novum 2577 and Strong's 2889.

All non-English (typically either Hebrew or Greek) words are written with English letters, in boldface and in italics, e.g. ***kosmos***.

All explanatory insertions within a scripture verse are enclosed in square brackets.

Ephesians 1:4 and I Peter 1:20

”before the foundation of the world”

”pro katabolēs kosmou”

Introduction

There are at least two things which hinder the faith of believers in the western countries. One is the theory of evolution and the other one is the doctrine of predestination. Now we will concentrate on the latter one. The following is a quote from **Wikipedia**.

Predestination, in theology, is the doctrine that all events have been willed by [God](#), usually with reference to the eventual fate of the individual [soul](#). Explanations of predestination often seek to address the "[paradox of free will](#)", whereby God's [omniscience](#) seems incompatible with human [free will](#). In this usage, predestination can be regarded as a form of religious [determinism](#); and usually [predeterminism](#).

Then a quote from **The New Bible Dictionary**.

...The Old Testament assimilates election to God's historical 'calling' (cf. Ne. ix. 7), but the New Testament distinguishes the two things sharply, by representing election as God's act of predestinating sinners to salvation in Christ 'before the foundation of the world' (Eph. i. 4; cf. Mt. xxv, 34; 2 Tim. i, 9); an act correlative to His foreknowing Christ 'before the foundation of the world' (1 Pet. i, 20)...
(**The New BIBLE Dictionary**, WM. B. EERDMANS PUBLISHING CO. GRAND RAPIDS, MICHIGAN page 1025)

The origin of this kind of thinking is in Greek philosophy. The following are quotes from **Wikipedia**.

Free will in antiquity was not discussed in the same terms as used in the modern [free will](#) debates, but historians of the problem have speculated who exactly was first to take positions as [determinist](#), [libertarian](#), and [compatibilist](#) in antiquity. There is wide agreement that these views were essentially fully formed over 2000 years ago. Candidates for the first thinkers to form these views, as well as the idea of a non-physical "agent-causal" libertarianism, include [Democritus](#) (460-370 BC), [Aristotle](#) (384-322 BC), [Epicurus](#) (341-270 BC), [Chrysippus](#) (280-207 BC), and [Carneades](#) (214-129 BC).

Pre-Socratic thought

Early religious accounts of man's fate explored the degree of human freedom permitted by superhuman gods. A strong fatalism is present in tales that foretell the future, based on the idea that the gods have foreknowledge of future events. Anxious not to annoy the gods, the myth-makers rarely challenged the idea that the gods' foreknowledge is compatible with human freedom...

This thinking was developed and introduced to Christianity by the church father Augustine. The following are quotes from the **New World Encyclopedia**.

[Saint Augustine](#)'s (354-430) view of predestination is somewhat complex...

The theology of Augustine influenced both [Catholicism](#) and [Protestantism](#)... Augustine developed his doctrine of predestination during and after the Pelagian controversy...

God determines the destiny of humans, even choosing a certain number of people for salvation beforehand...

Augustine said: "I speak thus of those who are predestined to the kingdom of God, whose number is so certain that one can neither be added to them nor taken from them." This does not mean that fallen humans have no free will at all; according to Augustine, they still have the ability to sin (*posse peccare*).

Martin Luther started his Christian studies at an Augustinian Monastery and he studied the writings of Augustine. The following is a quote from **Double or nothing: Martin Luther's doctrine of Predestination** by Brian G. Mattson 1997.

"All things whatever arise from, and depend on, the divine appointment; whereby it was foreordained who should receive the word of life, and who should disbelieve it; who should be delivered from their sins, and who should be hardened in them; and who should be justified and who should be condemned." - Martin Luther

Luther wrote a book (**The Bondage of the Will**) on this subject addressing it to Erasmus of Rotterdam and he considered this his best work along with the **Catechism**. The following is a quote from the conclusion of this book.

Sect. CLXVII. - I SHALL here draw this book to a conclusion: prepared if it were necessary to pursue this Discussion still farther. Though I consider that I have now abundantly satisfied the godly man, who wishes to believe the truth without making resistance. For if we believe it to be true, that God fore-knows and fore-ordains all things; that He can be neither deceived nor hindered in His Prescience and Predestination; and that nothing can take place but according to His Will, (which reason herself is compelled to confess;) then, even according to the testimony of reason herself, there can be no "Free-will" - in man, - in angel, - or in any creature!

Hence:- If we believe that Satan is the prince of this world, ever ensnaring and fighting against the kingdom of Christ with all his powers; and that he does not let go his captives without being forced by the Divine Power of the Spirit; it is manifest, that there can be no such thing as - "Free-will!"

Luther went through terrible pains trying to accept this point of view. He finally accepted it and then he said that he understood God's grace.

So, if we think, that God knowingly already before the foundation of the world chose all and predestinated all things according to his own pleasure, we will end up with the same heart breaking ponderings as Luther did. These thoughts have been proven using Eph. 1:4 and I Peter 1:20. Therefore we now need to examine what they deal with.

”before the foundation of the world” – ”*pro katabolēs kosmou*”

Ephesians 1:4

According as he hath chosen us in him **before the foundation of the world**, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love:

I Peter 2:19 & 20

But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot:

²⁰Who verily was foreordained **before the foundation of the world**, but was manifest in these last times for you,

the world – *kosmos* N2577/S2889 – It is used 187 times in the NT and it is always translated by the word “*world*” except in I Peter 3:3 where it is translated “*adorning*”. The word “*cosmetic*” comes from this Greek word. Originally it meant “*order*”.

In the NT, it means “*the order of the world*” and very often “*mankind*” especially in its state after the fall being separated from God. Keep this in mind! (**Look up John 3:16!**)

the foundation – *katabolē* N2307/S2602 – Now we need to examine what it means.

This is a noun and it is used in the NT altogether 11 times. From the same root, there is a verb *kataballō* [N2303/S2598]. This verb has been used 3 times in the NT. Now we will look these up.

II Cor. 4:8 ja 9

We are troubled on every side, yet not distressed; we are perplexed, but not in despair;

⁹Persecuted, but not forsaken; **cast down** (*kataballō*), but not destroyed;

Rev. 12:10

And I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, Now is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of his Christ: for the accuser of our brethren is **cast down** (*kataballō*), which accused them before our God day and night.

Hebr. 6:1

Therefore leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on unto perfection; not **laying** (*kataballō*) again **the foundation** of repentance from dead works, and of faith toward God,

“the foundation” – ”*themelios*”

Hebr. 6:1

Therefore leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on unto perfection; not **laying** (*kataballō*) again **the foundation** of repentance from dead works, and of faith toward God,

The word **foundation** in this verse is **themélios** [N2086/SW2310], which is used 16 times in the NT. There is a verb from this same root and it is **themelióō** [N2087/S2311]. It is a verb which means “to lay” or “to build the foundation”. According to **Thayer** it means “to lay the foundation, to found”. This verb has been used in the NT 6 times.

Matthew 7:25

And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell not: for it was **founded** (**themelióō**) upon a rock.

I Cor. 3:10-12

According to the grace of God which is given unto me, as a wise masterbuilder, I have **laid** (**tithēmi**) **the foundation** (**themeliós**), and another buildeth thereon. But let every man take heed how he buildeth thereupon.

¹¹For other **foundation** (**themeliós**) can no man **lay** (**tithēmi**) than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ.

¹²Now if any man build upon this **foundation** (**themeliós**) gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble;

Here is the verb **tithēmi** [N4449/S5087], which means “**1. to set, put, place a. to place or lay**” (**Thayer’s**). The noun **themeliós** has been used several times with the verb **tithēmi** and a few times with the verb **oikodoméō** [N3103/S3618]. **Oikodoméō** means “to build” (**Thayer’s**). Only once the verb has been **kataballō**, and that is in Hebr. 6:1. Therefore the translators probably have concluded, that **katabolē** means foundation.

Now we need to go back to Hebr. 6:1.

Hebr. 6:1

Therefore leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on unto perfection; **not laying** (**kataballō**) **again the foundation** of repentance from dead works, and of faith toward God,

The word **again** is the Greek word **palin** [N3304/S3825]. This means “*anew, again*” ... with verbs of going, coming, departing, returning where “again” combines with the notion of “back”... (**Thayer’s**). So, when the verb is **kataballō** “throwing down” it well can combine the same notion of “back”. With this meaning in mind we could translate this verse like this:

Therefore leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on unto perfection; **not throwing down** (**kataballō**) **back the foundation** of repentance from dead works, and of faith toward God,

Here are now all the places where the noun **themeliós** has been used in the NT: Luke 6:48, 6:49, 14:29, Acts 16:26, Romans 15:20, I Cor. 3:10, 11, 12, Eph. 6:19, II Tim. 2:19, Hebr. 6:1, 11:10, Rev. 21:14 and 19 (2x). Look from the interlinear with which word it is used in each place!

Then here are all the places where the verb **themelióō** has been used: Matthew 7:25, Luke 6:48, Eph. 3:18, Col. 1:23, Hebr. 1:10 and I Peter 5:10.

This is the only word or root of a word in the entire New Testament which can be translated by the words “to found” or “foundation”.

Katabolē?

Then what does the noun ***katabolē*** mean?

The answer to this question is in Hebr. 11:11.

Hebr. 11:11

Through faith also Sara herself received strength to **conceive** [***katabolē***] **seed** [***sperma*** N4075/S4690], **and was delivered of a child** when she was past age, because she judged him faithful who had promised.

The context beginning with verse 8 deals with Abraham who believed. Sara’s faith is not mentioned in the book of Genesis. In verse 12 it says: “Therefore sprang there even of one, and **him** as good as dead, so many as the stars of the sky in multitude,...” The pronoun **him** refers to Abraham. Let’s read verses 8 – 12! (*Look at the Companion Bible Appendix 146!*)

This verse 11 is in all the texts quite difficult. The clue to the original understanding is given by the nouns ***sperma*** and ***katabolē***.

seed – ***sperma*** N4075/S4690 – According to ***Thayer*** this is “*a. the seed* from which a plant germinates... *b. the semen virile...*” This means man’s semen.

Katabolē is the throwing down of the semen i.e. ejaculation. Only the man can do that.

and was delivered of a child – These words are missing in most of the critical Greek texts.

This verse should be understood like this:

Through faith he (*Abraham*) received strength to ejaculate seed into Sara herself, when he was past age, because he judged him (*God*) faithful who had promised.

All the other occurrences of the noun ***katabolē*** are together with the noun ***kosmos***. When we remember the meaning of the word ***kosmos*** representing the people or the mankind in the world, we understand that the words ***katabolē kosmou*** mean *the begetting* or *the conceiving of the mankind*.

In the Greek language, there is an expression with the noun ***katabolē***. It means the beginning or conception of a war. In English, we speak about the seeds of war.

The following is a title in the journal ***Colonial Williamsburg*** on their net pages the year 2011:

How the Founders Sowed the Seeds of Civil War

Now we look up the remaining 10 places where the noun ***katabolē*** has been used in the NT.

Matthew 13:34 ja 35

All these things spake Jesus unto the multitude in parables; and without a parable spake he not unto them:

³⁵ That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, saying, I will open my mouth in parables; I will utter things which have been kept secret **from the foundation of the world** (*apo katabolēs kosmou – from the begetting of mankind*).

Matthew 25:34

Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you **from the foundation of the world** (*apo katabolēs kosmou – from the begetting of mankind*):

Luke 11:49-51

Therefore also said the wisdom of God, I will send them prophets and apostles, and some of them they shall slay and persecute:

⁵⁰ That the blood of all the prophets, which was shed **from the foundation of the world** (*apo katabolēs kosmou – from the begetting of mankind*), may be required of this generation;

⁵¹ From the blood of Abel unto the blood of Zacharias which perished between the altar and the temple: verily I say unto you, It shall be required of this generation.

Joh. 17:24

Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me: for thou lovedst me **before the foundation of the world** (*pro katabolēs kosmou – before the begetting of mankind*).

Hebr. 4:3

For we which have believed do enter into rest, as he said, As I have sworn in my wrath, if they shall enter into my rest: although the works were finished **from the foundation of the world** (*apo katabolēs kosmou – from the begetting of mankind*).

Hebr. 9:25 ja 26

Nor yet that he should offer himself often, as the high priest entereth into the holy place every year with blood of others;

²⁶ For then must he often have suffered **since the foundation of the world** (*apo katabolēs kosmou – from the begetting of mankind*): but now once in the end of the world hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself.

Rev. 13:8

And all that dwell upon the earth shall worship him, whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb slain **from the foundation of the world** (*apo katabolēs kosmou – from the begetting of mankind*).

Rev. 17:8

The beast that thou sawest was, and is not; and shall ascend out of the bottomless pit, and go into perdition: and they that dwell on the earth shall wonder, whose names were not written in the book of life **from the foundation of the world (*apo katabolēs kosmou – from the begetting of mankind*)**, when they behold the beast that was, and is not, and yet is.

We can now go back to Eph. 1:4 and I Peter 1:20. Let's first look up I Peter!

I Peter 1:18-20

Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers;

¹⁹ But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot:

²⁰ Who verily was **foreordained (*proginoskō*) before the foundation of the world (*pro katabolēs kosmou – before the begetting of mankind*)**, but was manifest in these last times for you,

Ephesians 1:4

According as he hath chosen **us** in him **before the foundation of the world (*pro katabolēs kosmou – before the begetting of mankind*)**, that **we** should be holy and without blame before him in love:

We now need to read the whole first chapter of Ephesians. The name of Jesus Christ is mentioned directly 10 times and in addition to that he is referred to by pronouns or other epithets. In verse 4 we are mentioned collectively as a group of people by the pronouns **us** and **we**. None of us is mentioned by name. Therefore God's choosing refers to all those people, who believe in Jesus Christ, the Son of God. When they believe, they become like their Lord Jesus and they will be saved.

Ephesians 1:1 – 23

Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, to the saints which are at Ephesus, and to the faithful in Christ Jesus:

² Grace be to you, and peace, from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ.

³ Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ:

⁴ According as he hath chosen us in him (*Christ*) **before the foundation of the world (*pro katabolēs kosmou – before the begetting of mankind*)**, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love:

⁵ **Having predestinated (*prooridzō*)** us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will,

⁶ To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved (*Christ*).

⁷ In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace;

⁸ Wherein he hath abounded toward us in all wisdom and prudence;

⁹ Having made known unto us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure which he hath purposed in himself:

¹⁰ That in the dispensation of the fulness of times he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; even in him:

- ¹¹In whom also we have obtained an inheritance, **being predestinated** (*prooridzō*) according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will:
- ¹²That we should be to the praise of his glory, who first trusted in Christ.
- ¹³In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise,
- ¹⁴Which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory.
- ¹⁵Wherefore I also, after I heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus, and love unto all the saints,
- ¹⁶Cease not to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers;
- ¹⁷That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation (*spiritual wisdom and knowledge by revelation*) in the knowledge of him:
- ¹⁸The eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints,
- ¹⁹And what is the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power,
- ²⁰Which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places,
- ²¹Far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come:
- ²²And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church,
- ²³Which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all.

Let's look now at the beginning chapters of the book of Genesis.

Genesis 1:1, 2, 3, 6, 9 – 10, 11 – 20, 21 – 31. (No evil.)

Genesis 2:16 & 17, Genesis 3: (The Fall which lead to death.)

Genesis 3:8 – 10 (Fear first time.), 11 – 15, 16

Genesis 4:1 (The begetting of the mankind begins here.), 5:4 & 5

Some significant words in this context

proginōskō – N3725/S4267 – This means *to have knowledge of beforehand; to foreknow (Thayer's)*. This has been used in the following places: Acts 26:5 (1 – 2, 5), Romans 8:29 (26 – 30), 11:2 (2 – 4), I Peter 1:20 and II Peter 3:17 (14 – 17).

prognōsis – N3726/S4268 – This is the corresponding noun to ***proginōskō*** and it means *foreknowledge (Thayer's)*. This has been used in the following places: I Peter 1:2 (1 & 2) and Acts 2:23.

Acts 2:22 – 24

Ye men of Israel, hear these words; Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among you by miracles and wonders and signs, which God did by him in the midst of you, as ye yourselves also know:

²³Him, being delivered by the **determinate counsel** and **foreknowledge** (*prognōsis*) of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain:

²⁴Whom God hath raised up, having loosed the pains of death: because it was not possible that he should be holden of it.

determinate – *horidzō* – N3207/S3724 – This is a verb which means *to mark out the boundaries or limits; to determine, appoint (Thayer's)*.

counsel – *boulē* – N903/S1012 – This is a noun and it means *counsel, purpose (Thayer's)*.

prooridzō – N3767/S4309 – This is a verb, which means *to predetermine, decide beforehand (Thayer's)*. This has been used in the following places: Acts 4:28 (26 – 28), Romans 8:29, 8:30, I Cor. 2:7 (6 & 7), Eph. 1:5 and 1:11.

Then there are three verses in the King James Bible which we need to examine.

II Tim. 1: 8 & 9

Be not thou therefore ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me his prisoner: but be thou partaker of the afflictions of the gospel according to the power of God; ⁹Who hath 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,**

Titus 1:1 & 2

Paul, a servant of God, and an apostle of Jesus Christ, according to the faith of God's elect, and the acknowledging of the truth which is after godliness; ²In hope of eternal life, which God, that cannot lie, promised **before the world began;**

before the world began – *pro khronōn aiōniōn* – *khronos* – N4862/S5550 – This is a noun and it means *time, duration, time in general, any time; the time in which anything is done (Bullinger's)*. This is used 53 times in the NT. The English word “chronometer” i.e. a sophisticated clock comes from this Greek word.

aiōnios – N140/S166 – This means *constant, abiding, eternal (Bullinger's)*. This is used 71 times in the NT.

These words *pro khronōn aiōniōn* should be translated: “*before eternal times*”. Eternity is in the future and it is provided for all the troops of God, the people, the angels and other spirit beings of God together with God and Jesus Christ for ever and ever.

Romans 16:25

Now to him that is of power to stablish you according to my gospel, and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery, which was kept secret **since the world began,**

since the world began – *khronos aiōniois* – These words are in the *dative case* in the Greek and they should be translated: *through the eternal times*. So, this is a *figure of speech* which is exaggerating and thereby emphasizing that it was truly kept secret.

Let's finish with Matthew 22! Matthew 22:1 – 2 and 8 – 14.