



# The Good News

January 28th, 2018

Volume 18, Issue 4

## ***Fate vs. the Bible***

By Michael McCleary

When reading books, watching movies, or maybe even speaking with people you know, you will inevitably hear some reference to “fate”. There are four main definitions used to define “fate”. We want to look at these four definitions and compare them to what the Bible teaches.

**“Fate” – Definition #1:** “something that unavoidably befalls a person; fortune; lot”. Does the Bible teach anything about fortune? Indeed it does in **Eccl. 9:11** where Solomon says, *“I returned and saw under the sun that – The race is not to the swift, nor the battle to the strong, nor bread to the wise, nor riches to men of understanding, nor favor to men of skill; but time and chance happen to them all.”* Is Solomon teaching us that God is not in control but has rather left everything to chance? Consider the next verse: (**Eccl. 9:12**) *“For man also does not know his time: Like fish taken in a cruel net, like birds caught in a snare, so the sons of men are snared in an evil time, when it falls suddenly upon them.”* Notice the attention is not on God’s perspective but rather on man’s. Solomon observed that, for instance, while the strong should win the battle, it does not always happen. While the swift should win the race, it does not always happen. This is in a context of death. For instance, while the good should live longer than the evil, it does not always happen. Chance and fate happen to all of us and it often happens “suddenly”. It does not mean that God is not in control or is not paying attention...it simply means that from man’s perspective things may often appear to happen by chance or fate...but it is still within the plan of God.

**“Fate” – Definition #2:** “the universal principle or ultimate agency by which the order of things is presumably prescribed; the decreed cause of events; time.” Does the Bible teach that there is some “ultimate agency” by which the order of things is prescribed? Indeed, it does in **Psalms 8:3** where David says, *“When I consider Your heavens, the work of Your fingers, the*

*moon and the stars, which You have ordained, what is man that You are mindful of him...?”* Again, in **Psalms 19:1** David says, *“The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament shows His handiwork.”* And again in **Eccl. 3:1-8** Solomon observes that there is a “time” for all things, an order to life. When we read these words, we realize that God is the “fate” or “ultimate agency” by which all things in this life are prescribed. The natural order of things that exist was set by God from the foundation of the world. Paul observes in **Rom. 1:20**, *“For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead, so that they are without excuse,”*

**“Fate” – Definition #3:** “that which is inevitably predetermined; destiny” and “a prophetic declaration of what must be”. I have combined the final two definitions into one because ultimately they are both the same from a Biblical point of view. We understand that the things that have been predetermined were prophesied in the Bible. For instance, Peter says in **II Pet. 3:7** *“But the heavens and the earth which are now preserved by the same word, are reserved for fire until the Day of Judgment and perdition of ungodly men.”* It has been predetermined by God (and thus prophetically declared) that the world and everything in it will be burned up one day. In **Eph. 1:3-6** Paul says that those who are faithfully obedient to Christ are “predestined” to adoption as sons and that this “predestination” took place “before the foundation of the world”. He did not predestine individuals, but rather the kind of individuals that He would accept.

Most people believe that to believe in fate is to not believe in God because that is the implication it carries within our society. Now we can teach our friends that the Bible teaches concerning every aspect of “fate” ...it’s just that God is in control of it while leaving us to decide how we will conduct ourselves and obey (or disobey) Him. Will you obey Him today?