

# Novatianus

by John Gill

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*This sermon explores the theological contributions and controversies surrounding Novatianus, particularly his views on predestination and the nature of Christ's glory.*

**Scripture:** John 17:5, Romans 8:30, Ephesians 1:4, 2 Timothy 1:9, 1 Peter 1:20

**Topics:** "Predestination", "The Deity of Christ"

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## Description

John Gill discusses Novatianus, a presbyter of Rome, who, despite some controversies regarding his views on apostasy and church communion, is recognized for his orthodox beliefs and his esteemed work on the Trinity. Novatianus emphasizes the doctrine of predestination, arguing that a significant number of individuals were chosen for glory before the foundation of the world, and he defends the deity and eternal glory of Christ, asserting that Christ's glory is not merely a result of predestination but a reality that existed before time. This understanding of predestination highlights the divine order and the significance of Christ's position in relation to humanity and the angels.

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## Transcript

The

CAUSE OF GOD AND TRUTH.

Part 4

Chapter 1--Of Predestination

Section 10--Novatianus. A.D. 250.

Novatian,[1] a presbyter of Rome, was contemporary with Cyprian. He is not so well spoken of by some, partly because of his disagreement with Cornelius, bishop of Rome, about the succession in that see; and partly because he held that such who apostatized, though they repented, were not to be received again into the communion of the church; but, in other points, he was judged to be orthodox, and his book, De Trinitate, is highly esteemed of; in which stands a full and memorable testimony to the doctrine of predestination of a certain number of men to glory, before the foundation of the world; for, proving the deity and eternity of Christ from John 17:5, Glorify thou me with the glory which I had with thee before the world was, he shows, that this is not to be understood of predestination, or of Christ's having this glory only in the purpose and decree of God: "For, says he,[2] if he is said to be glorious in predestination, and

predestination was before the foundation of the world, the order must be kept, and before him there will be, multus numerus hominum in gloriam destinatus, a large number of men appointed to glory;" for by this appointment Christ will be thought to be lesser than the rest to whom he was pointed out last. For if this glory was in predestination, Christ received this predestination to glory last of all; for Adam will be perceived to be predestinated before, and so Abel, Enoch, Noah, Abraham, and the rest; for since, with God, personarum et rerum omnium ordo digestus sit, "the order of all persons and things is digested," many will be said to be predestinated before this predestination of Christ to glory, and by this means he will appear to be lesser than other men, who is better and greater, and more ancient, than the angels themselves. His meaning is, that if the passage of Scripture cited, is only to be understood of the predestination of Christ to glory, and not of his having a real glory; then since there is a large number of men who also are predestinated to glory before the foundation of the world, whose predestination, as Adam's, and others after him, cernetur, to use his own word, "will be perceived" before the predestination of Christ; not that the act of their predestination itself was before his, but the manifestation of it in time; it would cast some reflection upon him, and make him look as though he was inferior to other men, as a man.

#### ENDNOTES:

[1] Vide Hieron. Catalog. Scrip. Eccl. s. 80.

[2] Novotian, de Trinitate, c. 24, p. 755.

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