

Lesson 17

Foreknowledge

Compiled by Darrell Crow based upon personal studies, notes and prayer.

Darrell Crow

January 1, 2020

GOD'S FOREKNOWLEDGE

In this discussion I propose that we take the following track in understanding God's foreknowledge. This is largely a mystery of which only its entire scope is understood by God Almighty. What we can do is scratch at the truth and improve upon our current understanding.

1. DEFINING FOREKNOWLEDGE
2. WITHIN THE THEOLOGICAL WORLD WHAT ARE THE CURRENT POSITIONS ON FOREKNOWLEDGE AND WHICH ARE SCRIPTURALLY SOUND.
3. IS EVERYONE OR ARE ONLY SOME "DRAWN" BY THE HOLY SPIRIT?
4. FOREKNOWLEDGE AND DETERMINATION OF AN EVENT.
5. THE FIVE GREAT VERSES USING FOREKNOWLEDGE
 - Romans 8:29-30
 - Romans 11:2
 - 1 Peter 1:2
 - 2 Peter 3:17
 - Acts 2:23

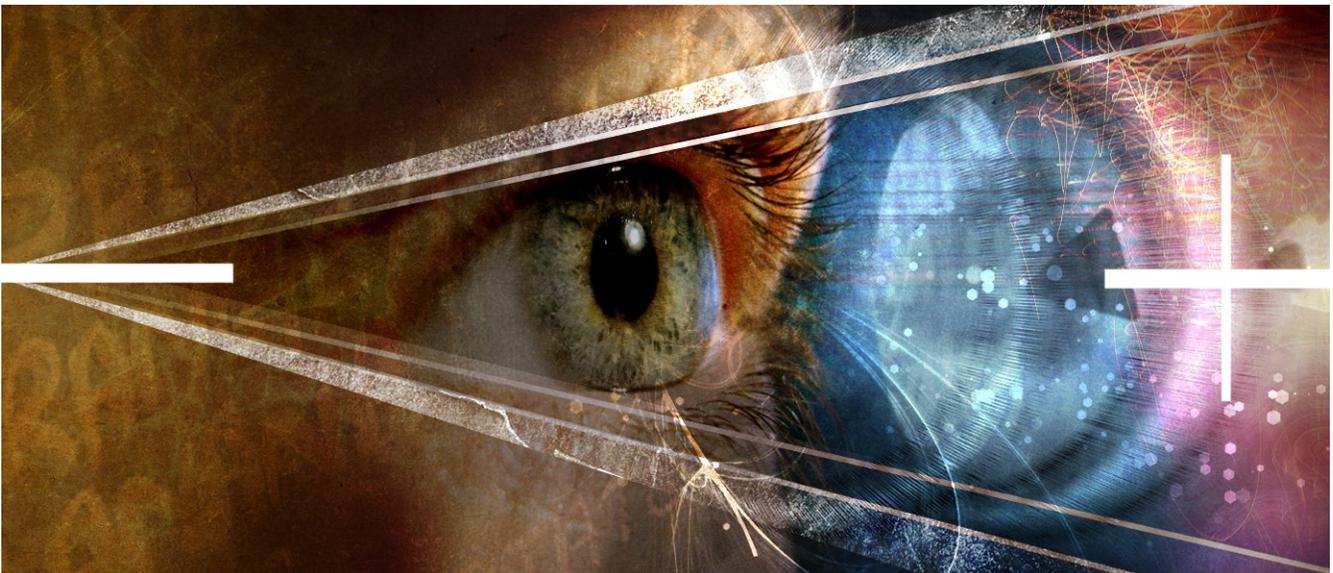
Predestination and foreknowledge are two different words with two different meanings.

Predestination means something is foreordained, predetermined, decided beforehand, or appointed beforehand.

This is different than foreknowledge which simply means pre-knowing or prior knowledge. It should come as no shock to learn that for God Omniscient 'foreknows' all things. He has foreknown all things always,

Almost all Christians agree with these 2 definitions, but the biggest disagreement is what is predestined. I found this study to be particularly enlightening in better understanding both doctrines.

One of the simplest resolutions to this division is to say predestinate really means pre-knowledge. However, this is incorrect because the definitions of the two words are very different. Furthermore, there are 2 separate words for these 2 separate concepts. If God had only wanted to convey the thought of foreknowledge, He



1. DEFINING FOREKNOWLEDGE

In a review of eight widely accepted American dictionaries, the definition of foreknowledge is reduced to “*the knowledge of something before it happens or exists.*” Foreknowledge is a concept that has meaning only within time. Foreknowledge has no meaning in relation to eternity.

The Bible tells us in the concept of “foreknowledge” that God does not just know all things that have, or ever will happen, as if they were the present moment to Him, but that He has, and always has had, the “experience” of all things, events, and people as a punctiliar present moment. God is spirit and in eternity. Therefore God has foreknowledge of all things. He does not need to look forward in time to see what will happen. God already knows. God is eternal, and therefore exists in eternity and therefore has foreknowledge of all things.

Foreknowledge simply means knowledge or awareness of something within time before its existence or occurrence; prescience. God’s foreknowledge is out of time and in eternity, therefore God’s foreknowledge is total, eternal, complete, always experienced.

God is omniscience and omnipresence; therefore He experiences time in the linear time-space continuum, but he is not limited by time’s constraints or parameters. The important thing to remember is that God exists and always has and always will exist in Eternity. This means that God has always experienced the totality of time and eternity as the present. Therefore, God knows and experiences all things simultaneously.

In the discussion on eternity, I noted ...

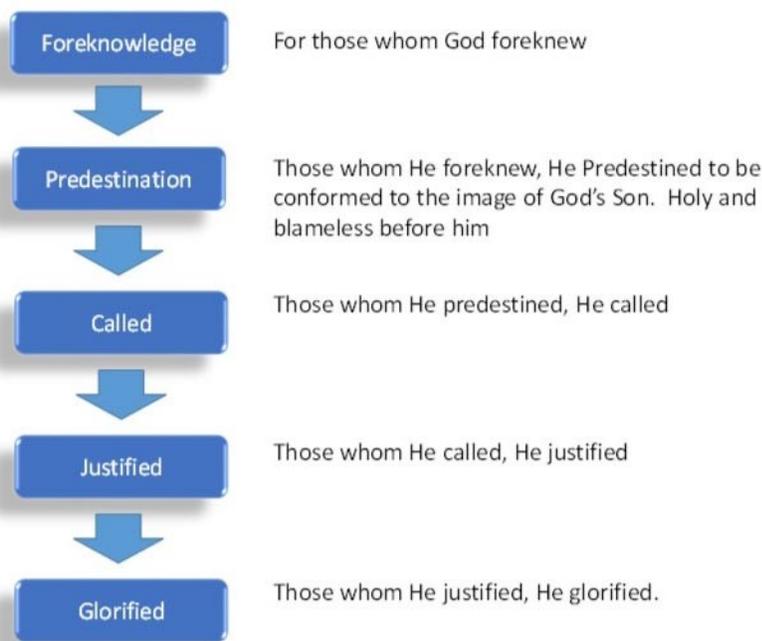
For just a moment, visualize all events, all thought, all action, everything as constantly circling around a Lemniscate at a speed much greater than the speed of light, or any speed man has been able to achieve or comprehend. And for just a moment, visualize yourself standing right in the center of the Lemniscate ribbon where all four lines intersect. This would mean that all events, thoughts, actions, everything would be passing by you so frequently, so quickly it would appear they would all be happening simultaneously. You would not need to look to the past or to the future to experience or know what would or what did happen. That is because it all happens ‘now’. This is foreknowledge, nothing has to be learned, or looked forward in order to see what will happen. God knows all things instantly, continuously.

Foreknowledge is one of the spiritual blessing bestowed upon man by God the Father. At the time of each person’s salvation, God in His Grace and Goodness bestowed some 50 plus spiritual blessings upon us as a result of our new position before God Almighty as a saved individual. God planned the program of salvation in eternity; it is being executed in our present time-and-space universe; and it is a permanent part of eternity. As a child of God, we should be aware of God’s sovereign purpose for our lives.

John Wesley in his Explanatory Notes, says, “*For, in fact, knowing and foreknowing are the same thing with God, who knows or sees all things at once, from everlasting to everlasting.*”

The Bible states that the believer was foreknown of God (Romans 8:28-29 ²⁸ *And we know that ^[a] God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose. ²⁹ For those whom He foreknew, He also predestined to become conformed to the image of His Son, so that He would be the firstborn among many brethren; 30 and these whom He predestined, He also called; and these whom He called, He also justified; and these whom He justified, He also glorified.*)

Romans 8:29-30



There is a process as we see in the chart above. We need to be very well aware of this process in order to understand the results of foreknowledge. This is primarily because foreknowledge is not action, but 'causes' action. Better put, predestination is the action of foreknowledge, the cause.

In this verse it is quite clear that the object of foreknowledge is God taking the initiative to conform 'those' whom he foreknew into the image of God's Son, and therefore 'Holy and Blameless' before God Almighty. Now, let me quickly state that God foreknew both the saved and the lost. Or mankind, if you will. Therefore God's plan for the redemption of mankind was to predestinate everyone to be conformed to the image of Christ, to become sons of God. This isn't happening except to those who are saved. The unsaved did not respond to God's universal call to salvation and lost the privilege to become conformed to the image of Christ and become an adopted son of God. This is in spite of God's stated will that He is not willing that any should perish, but that all would come to eternal life.

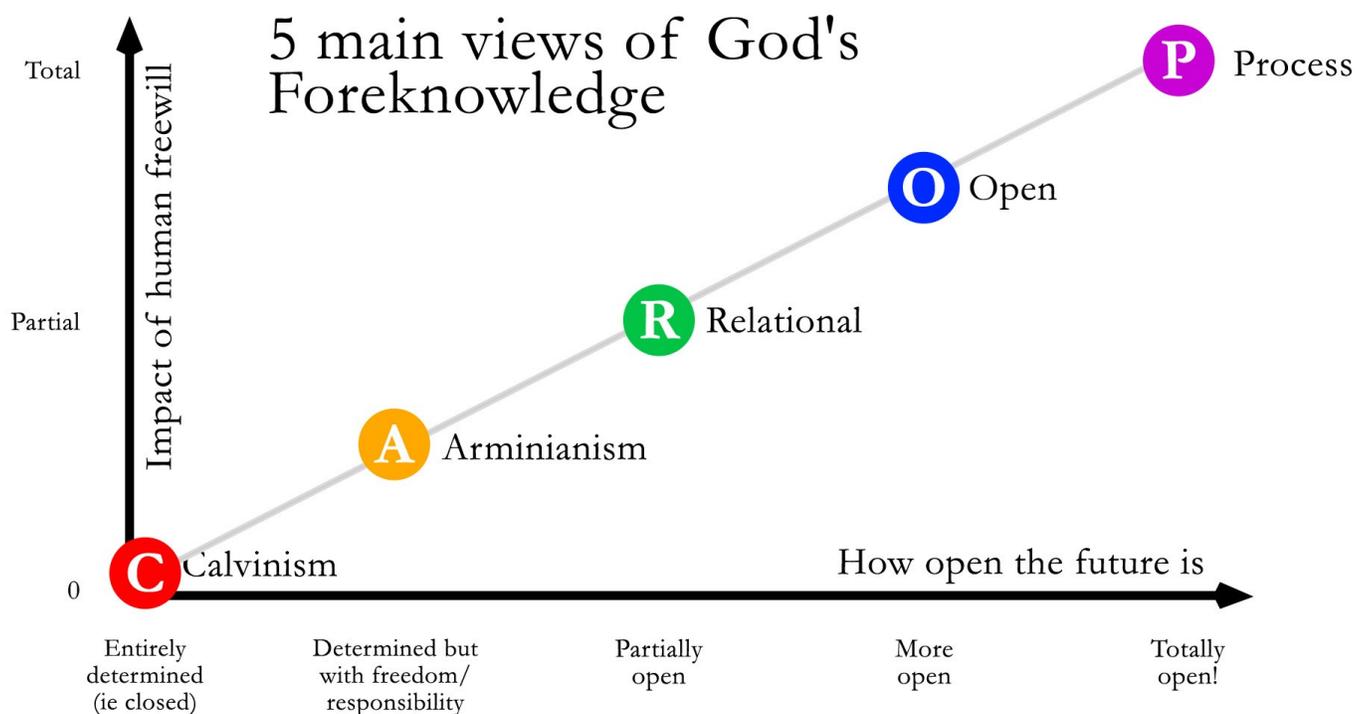
Let me give you an example. A couple invites every single relative and friend they knew to be guests at their wedding and celebration. An untold number of guests were invited. Some of those invited showed up, some did not. But both groups were invited. The invitees were predestinated to enjoy good food, drink and much dancing. Only those invitees who responded to the invitation were blessed with the predestinated festivities.

Predestination itself is not 'the act' of deciding who is and who isn't saved. But those whom God 'foreknew' He predestined each saint's life that they (saints) will conform more and more into the image of Jesus Christ. Let's just stop for a minute. Christ has paid the penalty for sin. Our sin has been imputed to Christ upon our salvation. Christ's sonship has been imputed upon us, and God the father sees us as righteous and we have been legally declared righteous and therefore justified.

2. THE FIVE MOST COMMON INTERPRETATIONS OF FOREKNOWLEDGE:

- Calvinism
- Arminian
- Relational Theology
- Open Theology
- ProcessTheology

Calvinism: In Calvin's system of thought, God knows and always has known every detail of what will happen in the future. Everything that happens is part of His original plan, and God knew and planned every detail of the future, including every single human choice. This usually goes along with an understanding that God is



'outside of time', so doesn't experience past, present and future as such, but experiences all moments and all time simultaneously. Nothing happens that is not ultimately God's will. Calvinists hold to the position that God's foreknowledge is "causative": what God foresees (decrees) He predestined (chose) to happen.

The problem I see is that things do occur that are outside of God's will.

Let's look at an example.

- God has decreed that man should obey all His laws.
- Take the example of a thief or murderer. Is it God's will that anyone should steal or kill? Yet they do.

So is it God's will? Of course not.. But if all the details of everyone's life is completely planned in advance according to God's sovereign will then we would have no choice but to commit that theft or that murder. Therefore we have no responsibility for the sin.

Only those making choices bear the responsibility for that choice. This is why God cannot and does not make the choice of who goes to glory and who goes hell. Man will be judged based on man's choices and actions, not God's plan.

- *"Let no one say when he is tempted, "I am being tempted by God "; for God cannot be tempted by evil, and He Himself does not tempt anyone." James 1:13*
- *The fear of the Lord is hatred of evil. Pride and arrogance and the way of evil and perverted speech I hate. Proverbs 8:13*

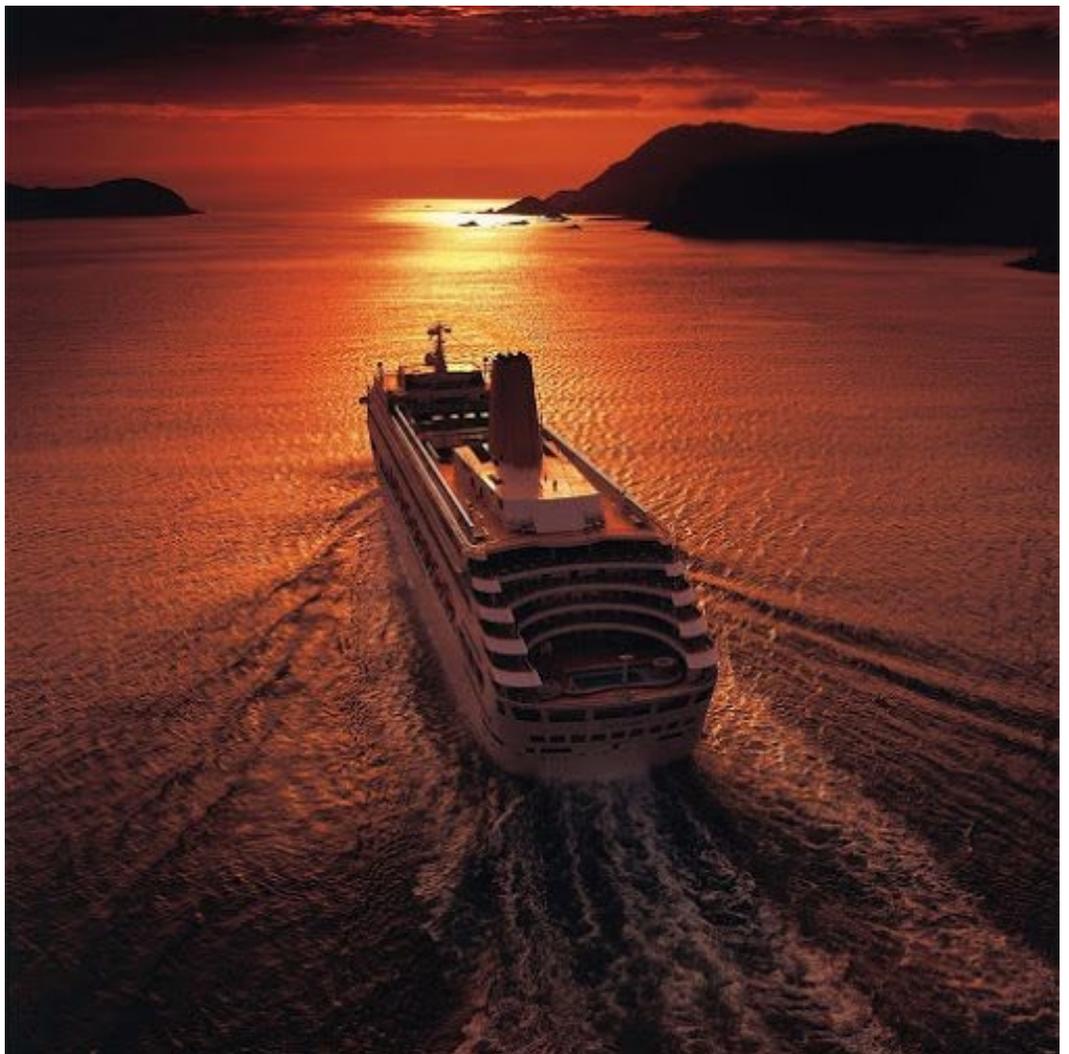
Arminian: In a classical 'Arminian' system of thought, God knows every detail of what will happen in the future (including all human choices), but these human choices are all nonetheless 'free'. Arminianism emphasises human free will and responsibility, but still asserts that God knows every choice that we will make ahead of time. People may choose and do things that were not within God's will, but He always knew that they would do them. Armenians hold to the position that God's foreknowledge is not-causative.

This position is perhaps closer to the truth, although it does have a serious flaw.

Relational Theology

Relational Theology' is a term that has been expressed by a number of scholars (such as Roger Olson and Thomas Jay Oord), This definition is primarily the work of Roger Forster.

Relational theology asserts that at least some of the future is genuinely open to possibility, and God does not necessarily know what the outcome of every single human choice will be. God may influence our decisions, and other humans, circumstances and spirit powers may influence our decisions, but somewhere deep down there is a fundamental core of moral choice as to how we act and react within situations that is not pre-determined or controlled by God or other causes. However much or however little God (and others) may influence us, He will never override this fundamental moral free choice.



God can still predict the future, but not all of it, as He deliberately chooses to leave some of it open to possibility. He knows every possible outcome, and can still ordain the future if He so pleases (God knows and can predict with certainty anything that He will make happen), but He has deliberately set the universe up in a way that makes genuine freedom and relationship possible. This also flows from His own nature, which is eternal relationship: Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

In this view, God experiences time differently to us, and may be greater than our concepts of the measurement of time, but sequence of past, present and future is a reality to God, because it is essential to relationship which is essential to God's own being.

In this view, plenty of things happen in the universe that are not God's will, that are against His will, and that He never intended or wanted to happen.

I find this to be a most difficult interpretation of foreknowledge because it encapsulates God's existence within time, rather than eternity with the exception of the relationship within the Godhead. While not dealing with whether God had a beginning, it relegates past, present and future as part of God's reality, and that relationships are only possible when a form of time exists.. Furthermore this position essentially claims that God does not know everything, is not in control of everything and therefore not sovereign.

This position denies the concept of eternity, God's sovereign will and that God is all knowing. This particular position on foreknowledge is not sufficiently Biblically sound to warrant serious consideration..

Open Theology

Open Theology (popularly espoused by Greg Boyd amongst others) works from the same fundamental basis of seeing the future as partially 'open' to possibilities from God's point of view. God knows every single possibility, but He has given humans (and angels) the freedom to choose between possibilities, not necessarily knowing what they will choose. Multiplied by the number of individual human wills that exist in the world, this makes for a lot of possibilities(!), and God reacts and works with these outcomes to ultimately get His will done.

Open theism may draw the lines in slightly different places to relational theology—for instance, it may struggle with highly specific and accurate long distance prophecies such as the book of Daniel, which would seem to require a great deal of involvement, influence and predictive power on God's part.

In this view — as with relational theology — plenty of things happen that are very much against God's will. Again, this position on foreknowledge is not as Biblically sound as one would desire.

Process Theology

Process Theology takes openness to another level, and at its extreme sees the future as almost entirely open and largely unknown to God. It is almost as though God is improvising and discovering as He goes along, and His plan is being shaped by the actions of others and His interaction with them. It is worth noting that this is not the case for relational or open theology, both of which see God as having a definite goal and plan which He will ultimately bring to completion, irrespective of whoever or whatever opposes Him.

I must confess that the Relational or Open and Process theology, which I've looked at in considerable detail, and discounted as scripturally unsound.

In discounting the Rational, Open, or Process Theology position on foreknowledge, a closer look at whether Calvinism or Armenians, or yet another position is scripturally sound is in order. It would have been nice to have taken this lesson directly from Jesus. But today we have the Holy Spirit to guide us through God's word.

Armenians view God's foreknowledge as simple prescience, akin to His omniscience. In relating foreknowledge to election, one Arminian author states:

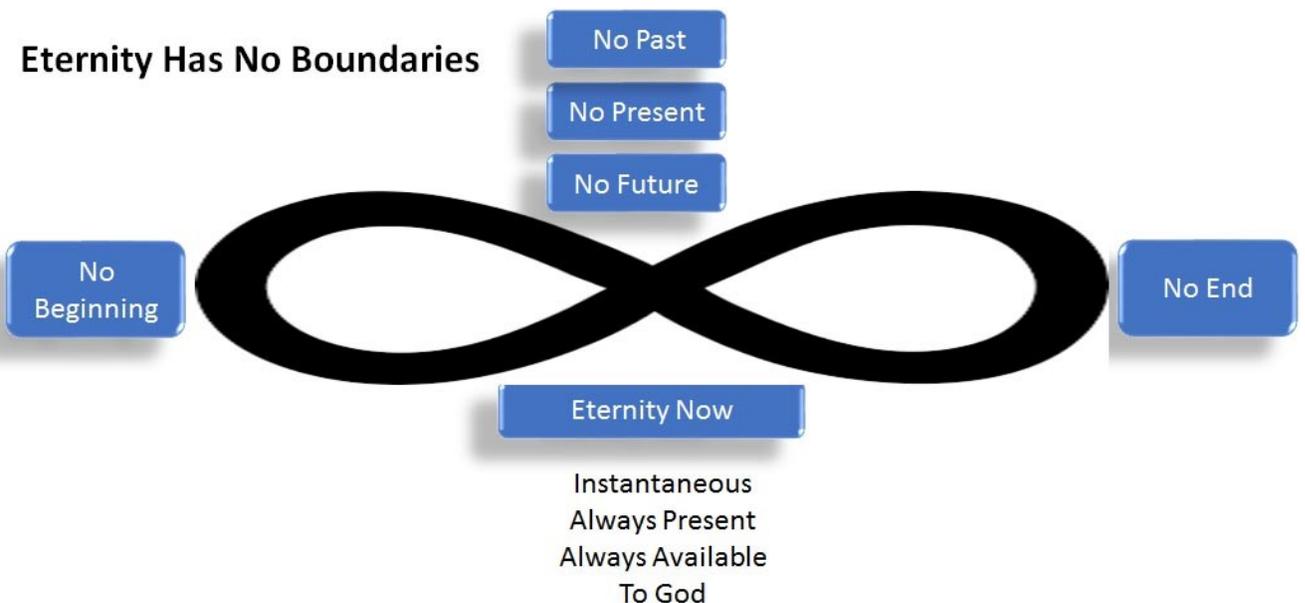
having set forth these conditions for being in Christ, God foreknows from the beginning who will and who will not meet them. Those whom He foresees as meeting them are predestined to salvation.

Therefore, according to the Arminian doctrine, foreknowledge is simply God's knowing future events apart from His having a causative relationship to them. However why God knows these things is totally ignored by the Armenian position.

In my analysis of scripture, it appears that neither the Calvinists nor the Armenians have the correct understanding of the relationship of foreknowledge to predestination.

Here's why

1. Calvinists state that foreknowledge is the cause of God predestining (choosing) some to salvation, the other to hades. Predestination in Romans 8:29-30 is not addressing the unsaved at all. These two verses are concerned only with the believers. The object of predestination is that 'believers' foreknown will be conformed to the image of God and will become the adopted sons of God. Thus the point of the verses is that those who are foreknown are predestined to justification, a gift from God at salvation. ***(Justification is God's legal proclamation that Jesus Christ's righteousness has been imputed to the believer and therefore that believer will be glorified. This is a magnificent gift!)*** Who is or isn't saved is not the intent of this verse. Let me illustrate. If I receive the call of a wedding invitation to attend the ceremony and celebration I am foreknown. If I choose to attend, then I am predestined to enjoy the ceremony and the celebration. If I do not attend, then I cannot receive the predestined ceremony and celebration irrespective that the bride and groom's will is that I attend. Therefore the elect, the attendees, are the only ones who can enjoy the fruits of the invitation. In Romans 8:28-30, the attendees are the saved.
2. Again the Armenians have missed the intent of predestination, but they did correct the object of predestination, which is the saved that God foreknew (invited attendees to the wedding)



In conclusion both Calvinism and Armenians are more scripturally sound than the other three positions. Eventhough they have not fully defined foreknowledge, but have rather limited Almighty God's 'ilities'. The following is hopefully a more complete definition,

That is what is suggested by the biblical concept of foreknowledge.

God is eternal and knows all things. He knows all things before they happen. God has always had the totality of His experience (mankind's individual acceptance and after, or their rejection and after) with each and every human being as part of His "present" eternal experience and knowledge. God is always experiencing those accepting Him and praising Him in the New Heaven and New Earth; as well as those who are rejecting Him and have been condemned to hell.

Thus, the ones He has always experienced accepting and worshipping Him are elect and He works in an especially solicitous fashion to make everyone's call *effectual* and they will believe as opposed to must believe.

Conversely, God has always experienced the rebellion and the rejection of those who are lost and will not accept His invitation and call (as opposed to cannot accept, as in the Calvinist model).

3. IS EVERYONE OR ARE ONLY SOME "DRAWN" BY THE HOLY SPIRIT?



The biggest problem I see is that in trying to prove or defend one side of the equation, we are tempted to minimize the other. The Bible proclaims both, and so should we.

God Calls. God the Holy Spirit Draws. Man responds yeah/nay.

The chosen ('yeah' respondents) enter into eternal life. The rejecters enter into eternal Damnation for their refusal to respond to the gospel, not because God chose them before the foundation of the earth to be damned.

Many people get hung up on the predestination/election debate, struggling to reconcile in their own minds this idea that God only chooses certain people. Yet the Bible clearly teaches that God's desire is for everyone to come to Him and say 'yeah' to His calling. John said, speaking of Jesus, "*He is the atoning sacrifice for our sins, and not only for ours but also for the sins of the whole world*" (1 John 2:2). He has offered this gift to the entire world even knowing that not everyone would choose Him. However even with this knowledge, He still chose to be the propitiation for all sins, for all time, for everyone. Hebrews speaks of this when it says, "*And where these have been forgiven, there is no longer any sacrifice for sin*" (Hebrews 10:18). He took care of the sin problem for all time, so that we could be reconciled to God the Father through the gift of His grace. Understanding how this gift extends to everyone even when people do not choose Him, will settle this question in your heart and mind. God's desire is for everyone to come to Him, but He leaves the decision to us.

The Holy Spirit's ministry to the lost is to 'draw' the lost to Christ because no prior decision for who is/isn't saved. So what is God doing through the Holy Spirit to 'draw' new life out of all mankind? This would be an unnecessary task for the Holy Spirit were the "selection process" of the lost/saved already concluded.

God's Desire Is For Everyone To Come And Say "Yes" To His Calling

God has willingly taken the initiative because God ardently desires that all mankind come to everlasting life.

- Jesus is not willing that any should perish, but all should come to everlasting life. (*2 Peter 3:9 The Lord is not slow about His promise [to return], as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing for any to perish but for all to come to repentance.*). So God's will is pretty clear. He wants all of mankind to repent and come to everlasting life.
- *John 3:16 "For God so loved the world, that He gave His [a]only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life.* God will allow anyone who believes in him to have eternal life. As we read this verse note that it is God who is taking the initiative, not man. The Bible does not say that man saw that he was lost, needed a savior and therefore talked God into sending His only son to earth so that whomever believed would be saved.
- The Holy Spirit's role for non-believers is equally clear. In the light of the role of the Holy Spirit when it comes down to driving people to Christ, it can be summed up to these three major functions:
 - Convicting the world of its sin, of God's righteousness, and of the coming judgment.
 - In order for the message of the Gospel to make sense to sinners, they have to be able to realize that there is something that they have to be saved from which is their sins.
 - Everyone who has come to Christ did so under the conviction that the Spirit of God brought upon them.
- The Holy Spirit makes it clear that we are sinners in the eyes of a holy God, that there is absolutely nothing we can do to earn His acceptance in our human ability, and we are on our way to hell and deserve every bit of it.

- The Holy Spirit points us to Christ who is waiting for us to come to Him with open arms. For this reason, anyone who is saved is clear evidence of the Spirit of God at work.
- On the other hand, sinners also have a critical responsibility they must take after being convicted of their sins. In other words, they have a **highly critical decision** they must make which will determine where they will spend their eternity. So it is imperative for people to always make sure that they respond the right way by coming to Christ in order to escape God's wrath that will be poured out on unrepentant sinners.
- God is faithful; He does not just leave us on our own after saving us from our sins. The same Spirit that led us to salvation indwells us, so that we are able to live the kind of fruitful, victorious, and successful life God desires us to live. This is the second role of the Holy Spirit, ministering to the saved.
- Many tend to give the excuse when presented with the Gospel that they don't think that they can live a holy life because they are not good enough. Well, nobody can ever be good enough as far as God's holy standard is concerned,. Mainly one would have to be as perfect as God. The Christian's life is not your life; in other words, it's not your battle but what God will do through you by His Spirit if you are just willing to let Him do so.



Let's look at a Biblical example of the Holy Spirit's of two roles.

(Acts 8:26-40) 26 But an angel of the Lord spoke to Philip saying, "Get up and go south to the road that descends from Jerusalem to Gaza." ([h]This is a desert road.) 27 So he got up and went; and there was an Ethiopian eunuch, a court official of Candace, queen of the Ethiopians, who was in charge of all her treasure; and he had come to Jerusalem to worship, 28 and he was returning and sitting in his [i]chariot, and was reading the prophet Isaiah. 29 Then the Spirit said to Philip, "Go up and join this [j]chariot." 30 Philip ran up and heard him reading Isaiah the prophet, and said, "Do you understand what you are reading?" 31 And he said, "Well, how could I, unless someone guides me?" And he invited Philip to come up and sit with him. 32 Now the passage of Scripture which he was reading was this:

*“He was led as a sheep to slaughter;
And as a lamb before its shearer is silent,
So He does not open His mouth.*

*33 “In humiliation His judgment was taken away;
Who will [k]relate His [l]generation?
For His life is removed from the earth.”*

*34 The eunuch answered Philip and said, “Please tell me, of whom does the prophet say this? Of himself or of someone else?” 35 Then Philip opened his mouth, and beginning from this Scripture he preached Jesus to him. 36 As they went along the road they came to some water; and the eunuch *said, “Look! Water! What prevents me from being baptized?” 37 [[m]And Philip said, “If you believe with all your heart, you may.” And he answered and said, “I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.”] 38 And he ordered the [n]chariot to stop; and they both went down into the water, Philip as well as the eunuch, and he baptized him. 39 When they came up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord snatched Philip away; and the eunuch no longer saw him, [o]but went on his way rejoicing. 40 But Philip [p]found himself at [q]Azotus, and as he passed through he kept preaching the gospel to all the cities until he came to Caesarea.*

This divine direction is given through the “angel of the Lord” (8:26) and through the Holy Spirit (8:29, 39). I think it is significant that both the “angel of the Lord” and the Holy Spirit are employed in guiding Philip to the eunuch. The “angel of the Lord” is perhaps God’s primary means of specifically guiding individuals in the Old Testament, while the Holy Spirit is the more dominant instrument of guidance in the New.

God intended to save this one individual. He was an Ethiopian, a high government official, an eunuch. (I dare say God;s intentions are to save all individuals.)

Had this man been saved in Jerusalem, it might have been looked upon as a kind of fluke, an exception. But this man was being sought by God. Here, in the midst of a Samaritan revival, and before the accounts of wide-spread evangelism of Gentiles, this Gentile was sought and saved by God, a kind of “first-fruits” of that which was to come. According to church tradition, this man was to become an evangelist among his own people; however there is no mention of this in the Scriptures.

Obediently, Philip went to the place he was directed by the “angel of the Lord.” It was at this place that he saw the eunuch and the Holy Spirit directed Philip to hitch a ride on the chariot (8:29), and talk to its rider.

While Philip was very precisely guided to the man, he was not told what to say. His message was to be indicated by the passage the eunuch was studying, and the question which he asked.

Used together, the guidance of Philip and the salvation of the Ethiopian is shown to be the fulfillment of Old Testament prophecies and promises, pertaining to the salvation of Gentiles, as well as a New Testament phenomenon, brought about by means of the Holy Spirit. Thus the Old and New Testaments are demonstrated to be in harmony in this matter of the eunuch’s salva-



It would seem that the eunuch had a strong commitment to Judaism (his pilgrimage to Jerusalem was no small effort), and that he also had a strong sense of messianic expectation.

- Would the eunuch not have asked about Jesus?
- Would the eunuch not wish to look into this matter of Messiah personally, to see for himself what the Old Testament prophets had written?
- Did the eunuch purchase his copy of the Isaiah scroll (an expensive gesture) so that he could read the prophecies about Messiah?
- And who told the eunuch about baptism? We all assume that Philip did, but we do not know.
- The apostles had preached that Israelites must repent and be baptized, calling upon the name of the Lord to be saved.
- Is this why the eunuch was so eager to be baptized, when he saw the water?



There must have been a great deal of groundwork already accomplished in the eunuch's life by the Holy Spirit, so that the Eunuch was ready to receive the message which Philip would disclose to him, from the Scriptures. All of this 'groundwork ' was the work of the Holy Spirit in drawing the lost to Christ. This work was done prior to the meeting with Philip or in the Chariot with Philip.

What a thrill it must have been for Philip to hear the eunuch reading aloud from the prophecy of Isaiah. What an evidence of God's leading. Indeed, this was the right man. When Philip ran alongside the eunuch's chariot and asked if he understood what he was reading, the Ethiopian quickly accepted his help.

He needed, as he said, someone to guide him. This illustrates an amazing thirst to know the truth and to understand God's will that is only given and directed by the Holy Spirit. The Old Testament only went so far as to prophecy concerning things to come. The gospel was the record of these prophecies having been fulfilled.

Philip was about to tell this man that the prophecies of Isaiah concerning Messiah were fulfilled in the person of Jesus. Thus, he began with this text, proclaiming Jesus to him.

The prophecy which the eunuch was reading included these words, words which greatly perplexed him:

*7 He was oppressed and He was afflicted,
Yet He did not open His mouth;
Like a lamb that is led to slaughter,
And like a sheep that is silent before its shearers,
So He did not open His mouth.
8 By oppression and judgment He was taken away;
And as for His generation, who considered
That He was cut off out of the land of the [a] living
For the transgression of my people, to whom the stroke was due? (Isaiah 53:7-8)*

The problem the eunuch had with this passage was wrapped up in the identity of the one referred to in the text:

“Please tell me of whom does the prophet say this? Of himself, or of someone else?” (Isaiah 53:34).

If the prophet was referring to himself, his suffering (and death) would not come as a surprise. After all, the prophets were rejected, despised, and persecuted (cf. Stephen's words in 7:52). But how could Isaiah be speaking of himself? The immediately preceding verses spoke of the death of this mysterious figure, but a substitutionary death—a death for the benefit of others:

*Surely our [a] griefs He Himself bore,
And our [b] sorrows He carried;
Yet we ourselves esteemed Him stricken,
[c] Smitten of God, and afflicted.
5 But He was [d] pierced through for our transgressions,
He was crushed for our iniquities;
The chastening for our [e] well-being fell upon Him,
And by His scourging we are healed.
6 All of us like sheep have gone astray,
Each of us has turned to his own way;
But the Lord has caused the iniquity of us all
To [f] fall on Him. (Isaiah 53:4-6).*

If Isaiah could not be referring to himself, and he was referring to another, than was this person not Messiah?

But if this was the Messiah, He was not the kind of Messiah that Israel was looking for. They looked for a hero, to rid Israel of her oppressors.

In fact, this description perfectly portrayed the coming of Jesus, and His rejection by Israel.

Jesus' message, was rejected by Israel, just like the rest of the prophets (Isaiah 53:1). Jesus was not outwardly attractive, and indeed, He was rejected by men, who viewed His suffering and death as deservedly from God.

He was, however, from God's point of view, sinless. His suffering and death were for the sins of others, rather than His own.

If these words of Isaiah were a description of Messiah, then Jesus was the Messiah. No wonder the identity of this One was so important to the eunuch.

Philip's answer was to proclaim Jesus as the Messiah, beginning with this text, and then from the rest of the Old Testament (Acts 8:35).

The eunuch joyfully accepted Philip's words. When he saw water (a rare thing in this desert place) he wished to make the best use of it. He wanted to be baptized.¹²³ Who told him of the need for baptism is not stated, but he was right in seeing it as an important responsibility for a true believer. When the chariot stopped, both got out, and Philip baptized him

Even more quickly than he appeared on the scene, Philip disappeared.

Some may doubt the fact of a miraculous disappearance and transporting of Philip, but the words strongly imply such. Philip was "snatched away" by the Holy Spirit, in a way that is similar to the transporting of Old Testament saints like Elijah, and even of New Testament personalities. Philip found himself at Azotus, some twenty or so miles distant, from which place he passed on to other cities, preaching the gospel as he went on his way to Caesarea (Acts 9:40)

The Ethiopian, on the other hand, proceeded in a more normal way, back to his native land. We are told no more of this man in the New Testament, although some ancients viewed this man as the father of evangelism in Ethiopia.

What we are told is that this man went his way rejoicing (8:39). When the gospel comes and is received, there is great joy. Such was the case in the city of Samaria (8:8). It is always the case (cf. 1 Thessalonians 1:6). This is, I believe, the "joy of our salvation" (cf. Psalm 51:12). Sin may rob of this joy for a season, but repentance will restore it to us, and us to God. It is difficult to believe that salvation has come when there is no joy.



God's ultimate
will for us:
to become like
Jesus

4. FOREKNOWLEDGE AND DETERMINATION OF AN EVENT.

An event can be certainly known without necessarily being determined by the one who certainly knows. To suggest otherwise is a modal fallacy which combines unnecessarily certainty with necessity.

You and I may know for a certainty that I wrote this discussion in 2017, but only one of us determined to do that. Knowledge of the event does not necessarily have a causal link to the determination of that event.

But what about future events known by an omnipotent Creator? Are all events that God foreknows only fore-known because He Himself has determined them to come to pass, as many Calvinistic scholars imply in their argumentation? Let's examine this.

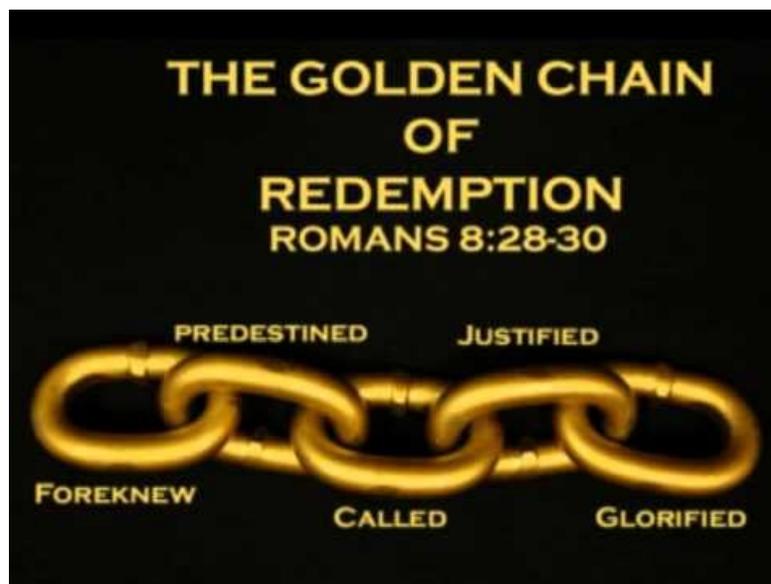
Consider this passage as just one of many examples:

“David knew that Saul was plotting harm against him. And he said to Abiathar the priest, “Bring the ephod here.” Then David said, “O Lord, the God of Israel, your servant has surely heard that Saul seeks to come to Keilah, to destroy the city on my account. Will the men of Keilah surrender me into his hand? Will Saul come down, as your servant has heard? O Lord, the God of Israel, please tell your servant.” And the Lord said, “He will come down.” Then David said, “Will the men of Keilah surrender me and my men into the hand of Saul?” And the Lord said, “They will surrender you.” Then David and his men, who were about six hundred, arose and departed from Keilah, and they went wherever they could go. When Saul was told that David had escaped from Keilah, he gave up the expedition.” -1 Samuel 23:9-13 ESV

The passage above proves that God foreknew of an expedition that did NOT come to pass, therefore demonstrating that exhaustive divine foreknowledge of all things does not equal exhaustive divine predetermination of all things.

A Calvinist may rebut by saying, “But God also foreknew David would ask these questions and leave the city after being told Saul was coming.”

I would respond by saying, “so what?” The fact is that God foreknew an event that did not come to pass. That is all that is needed to establish that foreknowledge doesn't necessitate determinism. Plus, the point of our disagreement is not over whether or not God foreknew of David's questions and his response, the real disagreement is over whether the foreknowledge itself necessitated or determined David's choices. There is nothing logically or biblically to suggest that it did. After all, God also foreknew of Saul's expedition and that never came to pass.



Side Discussion

Why God Hates Sin

God hates sin because it opposes His very nature and is the work of the devil. God describes sin as wounds and bruises, as a burden, as something that defiles, a heavy debt, a stain, and as darkness.

- *John 8:44 "You are of your father the devil, and you want to do the desires of your father. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth because there is no truth in him. Whenever he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own nature, for he is a liar and the father of lies.*
- *Isaiah 1:4-7 4 Alas, sinful nation, People weighed down with iniquity, Offspring of evildoers, Sons who act corruptly! They have abandoned the LORD, They have despised the Holy One of Israel, They have turned away from Him. 5 Where * will you be stricken again, As you continue in your rebellion? The whole head is sick And the whole heart is faint. 6 From the sole of the foot even to the head There is nothing sound in it, Only bruises, welts and raw wounds, Not pressed out or bandaged, Nor softened with oil. 7 Your land is desolate, Your cities are burned with fire, Your fields -strangers are devouring them in your presence; It is desolation, as overthrown by strangers.*
- *Psalms 38:4 For my iniquities are gone over my head; As a heavy burden they weigh too much for me.*
- *Titus 1:15 To the pure, all things are pure; but to those who are defiled and unbelieving, nothing is pure, but both their mind and their conscience are defiled.*
- *Matthew 6:12-15 12 'And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors.13 'And do not lead us into temptation, but deliver us from evil. [For Yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen.]14 For if you forgive others for their transgressions, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. 15 But if you do not forgive others, then your Father will not forgive your transgressions.*
- *Isaiah 1:18 "Come now, and let us reason together," Says the LORD, "Though your sins are as scarlet, They will be as white as snow; Though they are red like crimson, They will be like wool.*
- *1 John 1:6 If we say that we have fellowship with Him and yet walk in the darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth;*

God created the world and called it good. Soon, however, Adam and Eve sinned, bringing judgment. Sin disrupted Adam and Eve's fellowship with God and their relationship with each other, as well as their relationship with creation. Sin is a perversion of the good God created. God hates sin because it brings death and separation whereas He longs to bring us life.

- *Genesis 3*
- *Romans 6:23 For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.*
- *John 10:10 The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly.*

Cain brought an unacceptable offering and then killed his brother Abel in jealousy. His sins were despised or hated by God and brought judgment upon him.

- *Genesis 4*

The sins of the world led to God's judgment through a Great Flood during the time of Noah. Only eight members of Noah's family escaped this wrath. Even following the Flood, God judged the pride of men at the Tower of Babel. He would soon call Abraham to begin a people who would be devoted to Him, later known as Israel.

- *Genesis 6—8*
- *Genesis 11*
- *Genesis 12:1-3* Now the LORD said to Abram, “Go forth from your country, And from your relatives And from your father’s house, To the land which I will show you;2 And I will make you a great nation, And I will bless you, And make your name great; And so you shall be a blessing;3 And I will bless those who bless you, And the one who curses you I will curse. And in you all the families of the earth will be blessed.”

The Israelites would serve as an example of God's hatred of sin and His forgiveness when they repented. When Jesus came, He gave His very life to pay the price of sin.

The sins of humanity cost God greatly. However, He offers us forgiveness and eternal life through faith in His Son Jesus Christ. He longs to remove our sin and restore us to a right relationship with Himself.

- *John 3:16* “For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life.”

All have sinned and fall short of God's glory. (Romans 3:23). This sin leads to death and eternal separation from God for those who do not believe in Jesus by faith. *Isaiah 59:2* notes, “But your iniquities have made a separation between you and your God, And your sins have hidden His face from you so that He does not hear.” Yet Paul stated the change Jesus can bring: “Wretched man that I am! Who will set me from this body of death? Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord!” (*Romans 7:24-25*).

- *Romans 6:23* For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.
- *Ephesians 2:8-9* 8 For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; 9 not as a result of works, so that no one may boast.

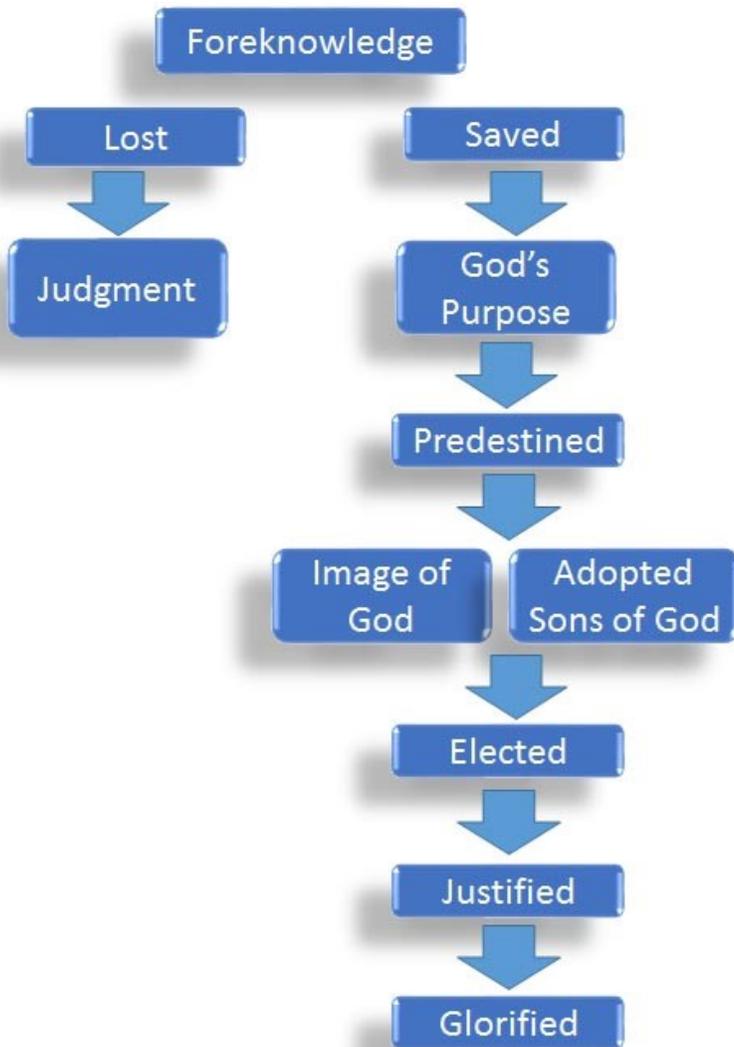
As Christians, we should also hate sin as God does. Sin is deceitful and brings about death. We are called to be “sons of light and sons of day. We are not of night nor of darkness;” (*1 Thessalonians 5:5*). God has called us to be holy (

- *James 1:14-15* But each one is tempted when he is carried away and enticed by his own lust. Then when lust has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and when sin is accomplished, it brings forth death.
- *1 Peter 2:9* But you are A CHOSEN RACE, A royal PRIESTHOOD, A HOLY NATION, A PEOPLE FOR God’s OWN POSSESSION, so that you may proclaim the excellencies of Him who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light;

God will ultimately conquer sin when He makes all things new at the end of time. There will be a new heaven and new earth, with the end of the curse of sin on God's people.

- *Revelation 21—22*

THE FIVE GREAT VERSES OF FOREKNOWLEDGE



Five verses in the New Testament uses the word foreknew or foreknowledge: The verb *proginosko* is used in Romans 8:29, 11:2; Acts 26:5; 1 Peter 1:20; 2 Peter 3:17. In each we have found the following meanings of foreknowledge or to foreknow.

(1) Romans 8:28-30

It's often said that Romans is the greatest book in the Bible, and if Chapter 8 is the high-watermark, then verse 28 is the pinnacle.

These three verses give the '*ascending process of salvation*'.

In these verses God is addressing only the believers that He foreknows.

Romans 8:29-30 is the key for understanding the doctrines of predestination, foreknowledge and the process of salvation.

²⁸And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose. ²⁹For those whom He foreknew, He also predestined to become conformed to the image of His Son, so that He would be the firstborn among many brethren; ³⁰and these whom He predestined, He also called; and these whom He called, He also justified; and these whom He justified, He also glorified.

In Romans 8:29, foreknowledge is explicitly connected with God's decree of predestination. Saints are predestined to become conformed to the Image of God and therefore able to be adopted into God's family as sons.

God determined their (believers He foreknew) destiny, namely conformity of the believers to the image of Jesus Christ. By all saints being made like Christ, Christ will be exalted as the firstborn among many brothers. The resurrected and glorified Lord Jesus Christ will become the Head of a new race of humanity purified from all contact with sin and prepared to live eternally in His presence ("*So also is the resurrection of the dead. It is sown a perishable body, it is raised an imperishable body; ⁴³ it is sown in dishonor, it is raised in glory; it is sown in weakness, it is raised in power; it is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body. If there is a natural body, there is also a spiritual body. So also it is written, "The first MAN, Adam, BECAME A LIVING SOUL." The last Adam became a life-giving spirit. However, the spiritual is not first, but the natural; then the spiritual. The first man is from the earth, earthy; the second man is from heaven. As is the earthy, so also are those who are earthy; and as is the heavenly, so also are those who are heavenly. Just as we have borne the image of the earthy, we will also bear the image of the heavenly.*" 1 Corinthians 15:42-49).

As the firstborn, He is in the highest position among others. *“He is also head of the body, the church; and He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, so that He Himself will come to have first place in everything.”* Colossians 1:18.

Between the start and finish of God’s plan are three steps:

- **Being called**

- *“among whom you also are the called of Jesus Christ;”* Romans 1:6
- *“And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose.”* Romans 8:28

- **Being justified**

- *“being justified as a gift by His grace through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus;”* Romans 3:24
- *“For we maintain that a man is justified by faith apart from works of the Law.”* Romans 3:28
- *“For if Abraham was justified by works, he has something to boast about, but not before God.”* Romans 4:2
- *“Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ,”* Romans 5:1
- *“Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from the wrath of God through Him.”* Romans 5:9

- **Being glorified**

- *“and if children, heirs also, heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him so that we may also be glorified with Him.”* Romans 8:17
- *“to whom God willed to make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory.”* Colossians 1:27
- *“When Christ, who is our life, is revealed, then you also will be revealed with Him in glory.”* Colossians 3:4

And in this entire process, not a single person is lost. God completes His plan without slippage.

Glorified is in the past tense because this final step is so certain that in God’s eyes it is as good as done. To be glorified is another way of saying that God’s children will be “conformed” to His Son and brought to heaven; and that is God’s ultimate purpose.

The Bible clearly teaches that God's desire is for everyone to come to Him and say yes to His calling. John said, speaking of Jesus, *“and He Himself is the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for those of the whole world.”* (1 John 2:2). He has offered this gift to the entire world even knowing that not everyone would choose Him.

Even with this foreknowledge, God still chose Jesus to be the propitiation for all sins, for all time, for everyone. Hebrews speaks of mankind being reconciled to God the Father through the gift of His grace. *“Now where there is forgiveness of these things, there is no longer any offering for sin.”* (Hebrews 10:18). He took care of the sin problem for all time. God's desire is for everyone to come to Him, but He leaves the decision to us.

Look at the second word in verse 29 is the key....‘those’. Who are the those’? Are they mankind? Everyone? Believers? Non-Believers?

Verse 28 says *“those who love God”* Therefore God in Verses 29-30 describes the blessings that are being poured out on ‘Believers’ i.e. Those Who Love God. They can be none-other than ‘Believers’.

It is significant that a believer’s love for God follows God’s calling of him and is undoubtedly the product of the indwelling Holy Spirit. (*“and hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out within our hearts through the Holy Spirit who was given to us.”* — Romans 5:5, *“We love, because He first loved us.”* — 1 John 4:19)

Thus the correct reading of this critical verse is ...

that those Believers God foreknew in eternity (NOW/ALWAYS), he predestined to become conformed to the image of His Son and adopted as His sons, so that He (Jesus) would be the first born among many brethren, and those whom He predestined, He also called (or elected) to be saved, and those whom he called He also justified, and those whom He justified, He also glorified.

Predestination in this verse IS NOT the selection, of who is saved and who is lost. What this verse is saying is



that the saved are to become conformed to the image of His Son. This is the gift of God to man., full membership in the family of God The saved will become the adopted sons of God. So every believer God foreknew, he predestined to be adopted into His family and conformed into the image of His Son, Jesus, and those whom He predestined He will glorify.

Paul is pretty clear with what he is saying in this verse. And let us be equally clear about God’s foreknowledge, He foreknew every believer and every non-believer. This does not mean that God simply fore-knows what all people will do,, but that God foreknows them. Nor does divine foreknowledge merely mean an awareness of or acquaintance with an individual. What it does mean is God elected to have a meaningful relationship with all God has called. This is God’s eternal choice. Therefore, God has elected these gifts only for the believers.

And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose. (Romans 8:28)

Notice that for good to result there are a few prerequisites.

- First of all Paul is tying this back to his previous statement about our active involvement in intercessory prayer with the Holy Spirit. When we pray, the Spirit intercedes for us, searches our hearts and makes supplication to God on our behalf. When we pray, all things work together for good. This helps us to become bolder and more active in partnering with the Holy Spirit in intercessory prayer. Paul is encouraging us that when Believers join with the Holy Spirit in intercessory prayer we can be confident that everything will work together for good. This is because God is a partner in our labor. As we work together, the Holy Spirit intercedes for us and releases His power to operate on our behalf. Since this power works in accordance with God's will for our life, His will for His church and His will on the earth, we can rest assured that good will come out of it no matter the circumstances.
- Secondly, for all things to work together for good, we must love God. This promise is for those who love God. Love is not a passive thing, love is a choice, an action. John reminded us to show our love, *"Little children, let us not love with word or with tongue, but in deed and truth. " (1 John 3:18)*. Love is more than a feeling, love propels us to do as the Lord directs. Love is what drove God to send Jesus to die for us. So, in the same way, for all things to work together for good we must love God and be willing to go and do as he directs.

- Finally, for all things to work together for good, we must be called according to His purpose. No matter what circumstances come our way, God is able to make all grace abound. When we are operating in God's will (that means being obedient to God's laws) then we can be confident that He will work it out in the midst of the situation.

Remember that old 1887 hymn by John Samuis

When we walk with the Lord
In the light of His Word
What a glory He sheds on our way!
While we do His good will,
He abides with us still,
And with all who will trust and obey.

Refrain: Trust and obey,
for there's no other way
To be happy in Jesus,
but to trust and obey.

Not a shadow can rise,
Not a cloud in the skies,
But His smile quickly drives it away,
Not a doubt or a fear,
Not a sigh or a tear
Can abide while we trust and obey.

Not a burden we bear,
Not a sorrow we share,
But our toil He doth richly repay,
Not a grief or a loss,
Not a frown or a crow,
But is blessed if we trust and obey.

But we never can prove
The delights of His love
Until all on the altar we lay;
For the favor He shows,
For the joy He bestows,
Are for them who will trust and obey.

Then in fellowship sweet
we will sit at His feet,
Or we'll walk by His side in the way;
What He says we will do,
where He sends we will go;
Never fear, only trust and obey

We have been called into a wonderful relationship with the Lord. As His church we are His footprint in the world today. We have been commissioned and set apart for this specific purpose. We can know God's will for our lives and we can operate in accordance to that will through the power of the Holy Spirit. As we do this, we can constantly remind ourselves, "... *that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to His purpose*" (Romans 8:28).

Although this doctrine will be covered in much greater detail in a later discussion, I believe its important to take a moment and analyze what it means to be called. We have already discussed how a bridegroom and bride will send out invitations for their wedding and celebration. Every single person who received an invitation is "called." But only those who attend the wedding actually benefitted from the call.

Dr. J. Vernon McGee in his 5-volume series, *Through the Bible*, gives a great explanation of God's calling which I have included below

"Suppose you go down to a swamp and there are ten turtles. You say to the turtles, "I'd like to teach you to fly." Nine of them say, "We're not interested. We like it down here; we feel comfortable in this environment." One turtle says, "Yes, I'd like to fly." That is the one which is called, and that is the one that is taught to fly. Now that doesn't have anything in the world to do with the other nine turtles because they are turtles. My friend, the lost are lost because they want it that way. There is not a person on topside of this world that is being forced to be lost. They are lost because they have chosen to be lost." (J. Vernon McGee, Vol 4 pg 705)

²⁹ For those whom He foreknew, He also predestined to become conformed to the image of His Son, so that He would be the firstborn among many brethren; (Romans 8:29)

It is amazing that God's desire has always been to have a close relationship with us. The God (creator) of this universe wants a personal relationship with each and everyone of us. Have you ever had a relationship with a well known person or superstar? Was it because they wanted to know you and initiated contact with you?

Peter said, "*The Lord is not slow about His promise, as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing for any to perish but for all to come to repentance.*" (II Peter 3:9). The Amplified Bible says that He is *hoping that all should turn to repentance*, denoting that this is a choice of free will. God does not force you to choose Him. However, He has made it possible to be reconciled to Him through the death and resurrection of His son Jesus. He did everything possible to restore us to the state mankind was in before the fall and then He left each of us with a choice. Deuteronomy 30 says, "...*I call heaven and earth to witness against you today, that I have set before you life and death, the blessing and the curse. So choose life in order that you may live, you and your descendants,*" (Deuteronomy 30:19). He has given us a choice, but in His mercy He has also given us the answer to the question... choose life so that you may live.

Many people get hung up on the predestination/election debate, struggling to reconcile in their own minds God only choosing certain people to be saved and certain people to be lost. This is a valid concern.

The Bible clearly teaches that God's desire is for everyone to come to Him and say yes to His calling. John said, speaking of Jesus, *"and He Himself is the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for those of the whole world."* (1 John 2:2).

Jesus has offered this gift to the entire world, even knowing that not everyone would choose Him. Even with this knowledge, He still chose to be the propitiation for all sins, for all time, for everyone. Hebrews speaks of this when it says, *"And where these have been forgiven, there is no longer any sacrifice for sin"* (Hebrews 10:18). Jesus took care of the sin problem for all time, so that we could be reconciled to God the Father through the gift of His grace.

Understanding how this gift extends to everyone even when people do not choose Him, will settle this question in your heart and mind. Understand this; God's desire, God's will is for everyone to come to Him, but He leaves the decision to us.

Paul is encouraging us when he tells us that *"for those God foreknew he also predestined..."* (Romans 8:29).



It is amazing to know that in eternity God thought, think, thinks about me. He knew who I would be and what it would take to bring me unto himself.

This is part of the Holy Spirit's function before salvation. Jesus said in John 16, *"And He, when He comes, will convict the world concerning sin and righteousness and judgment; concerning sin, because they do not believe in Me; and concerning righteousness, because I go to the Father and you no longer see Me; and concerning judgment, because the ruler of this world has been judged."* (John 16:8-11).

This is a powerful statement. The Holy Spirit convicts and convinces the world of its guilt before God in hopes mankind will come to Jesus and receive grace and mercy. Once we have done that, He speaks righteousness to our hearts because we have an advocate with the Father through Jesus (*Hebrews 9:24 For Christ did not enter a holy place made with hands, a mere copy of the true one, but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us;*), so we will never stand in condemnation (*Romans 8:1 Therefore there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus*).

And lastly He speaks of judgment, but this judgment is against His defeated foe, which already stands condemned.

So before Salvation, the Holy Spirit was given to show the way to Jesus. He shows, convicts and drives the desire to know God. Even in children this is evident from the earliest of ages. God not only choose us but sent the Holy Spirit to show us the way, *"for those God foreknew he also predestined..."*, what an amazing blessing this is.

He chose us to be conformed and molded into the likeness of His son Jesus. This is an amazing product of salvation. Once we are saved we are given the Holy Spirit as a deposit living inside of us so that we would inwardly have His likeness. Paul said in Ephesians, *"and put on the new self, which in the likeness of God has been created in righteousness and holiness of the truth."* (Ephesians 4:24).

We have been made completely righteous and holy through Jesus. Everything God is, He has placed inside of our new born again spirit so that we would experience the victory that Jesus accomplished. Not only did God choose us, not only did God bring us to the point of choosing Him, but once we did, He has given us an amazing gift so that our physical present realm would be transformed into the likeness of our born again spirits, the likeness of Jesus.

Through Jesus we can be confident in all of these things. We also know that since he is the firstborn among the dead, we too will experience a bodily resurrection and this is cause to rejoice (Romans 8:11 *But if the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who dwells in you.*).



(2)Romans 11:2

Rom 11:2 God has not rejected His people whom He foreknew Or do you not know what the Scripture says in the passage about Elijah, how he pleads with God against Israel?

Romans 11:2 refers to God's people Israel whom He "foreknew". .

God is pleased to call us His own. He made for Himself a people comprised of sons and daughters, we are His inheritance. He has chosen and predestined us to be a part of his family. He foreknew us and accepted us on the basis of Christ. Paul is explaining that this is true even in the midst of Israel rejecting the Messiah.



In this verse Paul explains who he meant by the people God has not rejected, namely, those which were "foreknown" by Him.

All mankind is, in a sense, His people, having been made and sustained by Him. Paul's discussion in Romans 8, are for believers, not the lost. The believers, the elect, are predestinated, called, conformed to the image of Christ, declared righteous, justified, adopted as God's sons and glorified. The lost will be cast away, being bad and wicked, and will be sent to hell for everlasting punishment.

The Jews *in general* were the people of God, being in a sense chosen, known, and distinguished by Him from the rest of the world, yet individually, they were not all a "foreknown" people. In the same sense the apostle uses the word; that a great number of gentiles and Jews were cast away.

John Gill, (born in 1692) an English Pastor for 51 years and considered one of the foremost writers of the early 1700s was uniquely gifted in his commentary on the book of Romans and had the following to say regarding Paul's thinking in this verse,

" ... but then there were a people among them, that were the people of God in a more special sense; they were chosen by Him from everlasting to be His people; they were taken into the covenant of His grace as such; they were given to Christ as His people, and were redeemed

and saved by Him on that account; and were, or were to be called, with an holy calling, when they are openly declared to be the people of God, whom He foreknew: He not merely knew them before, by His general prescience and foreknowledge, which extends to all persons and things; or foresaw their faith, holiness, and good works, and so chose them for Himself; for faith, holiness, and good works, are fruits and effects of electing grace; but He so knew them before, even from all eternity, as that He approved of them, liked them, loved them, and took delight and complacency in them: now these His people he never did, nor never will cast away. Their numbers may be but very small in some periods of time, yet none of them are cast away; God may not immediately arise to their help and assistance in time of distress, or so soon as they desire and expect; He may withdraw His presence, hide Himself, and stand at a distance from them; He may afflict them in a fatherly way, when they may think He has cast them off, or cast them away; whereas He never casts any of them away, nor out of His heart's love, nor out of His sight, nor out of the covenant of His grace, nor out of the hands of His Son, nor out of His family, or so as that any of them shall perish eternally; so far from it, that He takes the utmost delight in them, grants them the greatest nearness to Himself, bears the strongest affection for them, and takes the most diligent care of them; whoever casts them out of their affection and company, He will not; the reasons are, because His love to them is unchangeable, His purpose concerning their salvation stands firm and sure, His word and oath are unalterable, His gifts and calling are without repentance; and they are His jewels, portion, and inheritance; they are as the apple of His eye, and continually held by His right hand. ...”



(3) 1 Peter 1:2

*1 Peter 1:2 according to the **foreknowledge** of God the Father, by the sanctifying work of the Spirit, to obey Jesus Christ and be sprinkled with His blood: May grace and peace be yours in the fullest measure.*

In Peter's greeting he ensures that the audience understands that this letter is addressed to the saints (all) whom God has foreknown. Since God knows who has, is, and will be saved, then He has always known the saved and constantly sees the moment of salvation for all; that's God's eternal foreknowledge.

The results or goal of that foreknowledge, knowing those that would respond to His love and to His grace through Jesus Christ, He elected that they should be the children of God, and so the election according to foreknowledge. He predestined them to be conformed to His son's image and to adopt them as sons of God.

Peter greets his readers with the command that they, the saints, to let the Holy Spirit fulfill its sanctifying work in them, to obey Jesus Christ and be sprinkled with the blood.

The Holy Spirit is God living within us, counseling us, praying for us, interceding for us and completing the work of salvation.

Obedying Christ is following His commandments and teachings and being a disciple of God's grace to the world around us. God foreknows the church saints and we see a transition from the OT covenant to the NT covenant.

Sprinkled with the blood of Christ had a special significance to the Jews, as it was an integral part of their sacrificial system.

- *"So Moses took the blood and sprinkled it on the people, and said, "Behold the blood of the covenant, which the LORD has made with you in accordance with all these words." Exodus 24:8,*
- *"Then you shall take some of the blood that is on the altar and some of the anointing oil, and sprinkle it on Aaron and on his garments and on his sons and on his sons' garments with him; so he and his garments shall be consecrated, as well as his sons and his sons' garments with him. Exodus 29:21*

The sprinkling of the blood accomplished two primary objectives. (1) It sealed the covenant (agreement) between God and His people, and (2) it was the means by which God's people secured atonement in the Old Testament,

Sacrificed animal blood, no matter how much blood was sprinkled, could not permanently erase sin.

- *"For it is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins. " (Hebrews. 10:4).*
- *"For if the blood of goats and bulls and the ashes of a heifer sprinkling those who have been defiled sanctify for the cleansing of the flesh, how much more will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without blemish to God, cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?" (Heb. 9:13-14).*

Like the blood of bulls and goats sprinkled the unclean, the blood of Christ will "cleanse your conscience" completely to serve the living God! According to 1 Peter 1:2, the blood of Christ is applied to us figuratively in the same manner the blood was applied literally in the Old Testament—by sprinkling.

It is by the blood of Jesus that we have access directly into the presence of God by a new and living covenant. As the old covenant required a High Priest for one to have access to God, the new covenant does likewise; however, it is Jesus who is our High Priest. He is the only way to God. We have access to God (draw near to God) through faith, So, in this passage, is faith, turning from an evil conscience and baptism (washed with pure water. When we are baptized, we "appeal to God for a good conscience," and God cleanses us with the blood of His Son . The blood of Christ is figuratively sprinkled on our hearts to cleanse us from an evil conscience when we repent and are baptized. Only then is one elect, sanctified, consecrated and cleansed, in order to serve the living God!

- *Therefore, brethren, since we have confidence to enter the holy place by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way which He inaugurated for us through the veil, that is, His flesh, Hebrews 10:19-20*
- *Jesus said to him, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father but through Me. (John 14:6)!"*
- *let us draw near with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water. Hebrews 10:22*
- *so that He might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, Ephesians 5:26*
- *He saved us, not on the basis of deeds which we have done in righteousness, but according to His mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewing by the Holy Spirit, Titus 3:5*
- *Corresponding to that, baptism now saves you-not the removal of dirt from the flesh, but an appeal to God for a good conscience -through the resurrection of Jesus Christ, 1 Peter 3:21*
- *'Now why do you delay? Get up and be baptized, and wash away your sins, calling on His name.' Acts 22:16*



The divine order is foreknowledge, election, predestination. That foreknowledge determines the election or choice is clear from 1 Peter 1:2 and predestination is the bringing to pass of the election. "election looks back to foreknowledge; predestination forward to the destiny." But Scripture nowhere declares what it is in the divine foreknowledge which determines the divine election and predestination. The foreknown are elected, and the elect are predestinated, and this election is certain to every believer by the mere fact that he believes.

(4) 2 Peter 3:17

2 Peter 3:17¹⁷ You therefore, beloved, knowing this beforehand, be on your guard so that you are not carried away by the error of unprincipled men and fall from your own steadfastness,

The primary message in this verse is for every Christian to be on their guard, not to fall victim to the evils of the world and to stay steady in the Lord. In the last days, and we are living in them, unschooled, evil and depraved men will distort the Scriptures. God foreknows the problems we will have in fulfilling the Great Commission and arms us with this foreknowledge so that saints will not become victims.



John Gill notes in his exposition, “.... *unlearned and unstable men that will deprave the Scriptures, and wrest them in such a miserable manner: beware lest ye also, being led away with the error of the wicked; from the simplicity of the Gospel, along with such wicked men, that wax worse and worse, deceivers and being deceived, by giving into any of their errors which respect the grace of God, or the person and offices of Christ, or particularly his second coming; be upon the watch and guard against them, having previous notice of them, for they lie in wait to deceive: lest ye fall from your own steadfastness;*”

Christians can never finally and totally fall back into the lost position of sin, or from the truth, yet they can fall from their steadfastness, both as to the exercise of the grace of faith, and as to their profession of the doctrine of faith; and to be fluctuating, hesitating, and doubting in either respect.

Peter warns that Christians have already been taught the Christian doctrines and warned about false teachers and therefore with this foreknowledge, we are to live our lives in steadfastness to God. Peter’s argument is solid and we need to always be on guard.

(5) Acts 2:23

this Man, delivered over by the predetermined plan and foreknowledge of God, you nailed to a cross by the hands of godless men and put Him to death.

Luke speaks about how it was through God's predetermined plan that He sent Jesus to die by the hands of godless men. God had it all planned, so obviously he foreknew the plan of salvation.

The question, How Peter could say to those present: Ye have put Him to death, is solved by the remark that the execution of Christ was a public judicial murder, resolved on by the Sanhedrim in the name of the whole nation, demanded by and agreed to by the Gentiles, and accomplished under the direction of the Sanhedrim

- *So he then handed Him over to them to be crucified. (John 19:16);*
- *"The God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, the God of our fathers, has glorified His servant Jesus, the one whom you delivered and disowned in the presence of Pilate, when he had decided to release Him. Acts 3:13*

Thomas Coke, Pastor, scholar and author of the Thomas Coke Commentary on the Holy Bible, (1801-1803) notes,

“rendered being delivered, signifies one given or surrendered up into the hands of an enemy; and Luke intimates by it the free and gracious donation of God the Father, whereby he delivered up his only begotten Son for the redemption of mankind. By wicked hands the Romans are meant, who were the immediate agents in the crucifixion of Christ, yet were only the instruments of the Jewish rage and cruelty in what they did. Heylin renders the verse rather more clearly thus: Him (who was given up by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God) you have taken and put to death upon the cross, by the hands of wicked men. Pyle would read, Him, who by the determinate counsel—of God, was given [to you as a Saviour], ye have taken, and crucified.

- *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 purpose predestined to occur. Acts 4:27-28.*

IN CONCLUSION

Foreknowledge is everything instantly known, past, present and future now. It is always experienced, always known. Yes God does make decisions and plans. Predestination and election are tied to foreknowledge. When it comes to Believers, God predestines them to become conformed to the image of His Son and to adoption into God's family with full rights as a legal son. When it comes to plans, God predestines events and people to carry out His will.

We have examined the five great verses of foreknowledge and discovered ...

Romans 8:28-30, God foreknows Believers

Romans 11:2, God foreknows His people; Jews and Gentiles

1 Peter 1:2, God foreknows the 'Plan of Salvation' and the ongoing work of Israel and His church

2 Peter 3:14, God foreknows the evil of this world and its intent to destroy the work of God and destroy the Believers lives and effective witness. Therefore God warns us and arms us in advance with this foreknowledge.

Acts 2:23, God foreknew and yet surrendered His son to pay the price for mankind's salvation.

We have said much about being predestinated to be conformed to the image of Christ and being adopted as a son of God. Adoption (huiiothesia, "placing as a son") is not so much a word of relationship as of position. The believer's relation to God as a child results from the new birth whereas adoption is the act of God whereby one already a child is, through redemption from the law, placed in the position of an adult son.

The indwelling Spirit gives the realization of our adoption, but the full manifestation of the believer's sonship awaits the resurrection, change, and translation of saints, which is called "the redemption of the body".

- **John 1:12-13** *But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in His name, who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God.*
- **Galatians 4:1-6** *Now I say, as long as the heir is a child, he does not differ at all from a slave although he is owner of everything, but he is under guardians and managers until the date set by the father. So also we, while we were children, were held in bondage under the elemental things of the world. But when the fullness of the time came, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the Law, so that He might redeem those who were under the Law, that we might receive the adoption as sons. Because you are sons, God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into our hearts, crying, "Abba! Father!"*
- **Romans 8:23** *And not only this, but also we ourselves, having the first fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting eagerly for our adoption as sons, the redemption of our body.*
- **1 Thessalonians 4:14-17** *For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so God will bring with Him those who have fallen asleep in Jesus. For this we say to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive and remain until the coming of the Lord, will not precede those who have fallen asleep. For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive and remain will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we shall always be with the Lord.*
- **Ephesians 1:14** *[Holy Spirit] who is given as a pledge of our inheritance, with a view to the redemption of God's own possession, to the praise of His glory.*
- **1 John 3:2** *Beloved, now we are children of God, and it has not appeared as yet what we will be. We know that when He appears, we will be like Him, because we will see Him just as He is.*

