

Title: Foreknowledge and Predestination
Text: Romans 8: 29
Date: November 16, 2014
Place: SGBC, New Jersey

Romans 8: 29: For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate *to be* conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren.

The Holy Spirit gives this in answer to the verse just before it. This is the reason why the believer knows that God is working all things together for good for us. Everything that comes to pass in this earth is worked together by God for those God loves, for those who are “the called.” The “called” are those called in eternity, in God’s eternal purpose of grace who also shall be called in time, out of darkness into his marvelous light.

Everything God does is according to his eternal purpose. With God, before God, there are no accidents. Everything is coming to pass and being worked together exactly according to God’s purpose.

Ephesians 1: 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: 11: In whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will:

So the Holy Spirit says through Paul the way that “we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to *his* purpose” is “For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate *to be* conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren.” (Rom 8: 28-29) We will take this verse, phrase by phrase.

FOR WHOM HE DID FOREKNOW

The false doctrine of fallen, unregenerate man makes salvation to be by the will and works of the sinner. This is the primary difference between the truth and lies. Man says that God’s “foreknowledge” is something like that of a “fortune teller.” Man says that before the foundation of the world, God looked into the future, seeing that some would believe. Therefore, God chose them. No!

If God chose his people because he foresaw we would believe then the sinner would have room to boast: election would not be according to God’s will, but according to the sinner’s will; election would not be according to God’s grace, but according to the sinner’s works; election would not be of God who calls the sinner, but of the sinner who calls on God. Salvation is by God’s grace according to God’s will not by man’s will or works.

This is the difference between the truth and lies. Will-works religion makes man to be the cause of salvation. The gospel declares God is the cause of salvation.

THE PURPOSE OF ELECTION

The very purpose of God’s sovereign election is so that salvation is not of man’s works but of God who calls whom he will. Read Romans 9,

Romans 9: 10...when Rebecca also had conceived by one, *even* by our father Isaac; 11: (For *the children* being not yet born, neither having done any good or evil, that the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works, but of him that calleth;)

There is the purpose of God in electing his people—that salvation be not of works but of God that calleth. Read on.

Romans 9: 12: It was said unto her, The elder shall serve the younger. 13: As it is written, Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated. 14: What shall we say then? *Is there* unrighteousness with God? God forbid.

Why would the Holy Spirit move Paul to raise that question? It is because when sinners hear that God's foreknowledge and election of his people is not according to any foreseen good or evil in them, not of their works at all, but of God who calls, then they say, "God is not fair!" They say, "That's not right for God to do that!" God answers through Paul,

Romans 9: 15: For he saith to Moses, I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion. 16: So then *it is* not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that sheweth mercy. 17: For the scripture saith unto Pharaoh, Even for this same purpose have I raised thee up, that I might shew my power in thee, and that my name might be declared throughout all the earth. 18: Therefore hath he mercy on whom he will *have mercy*, and whom he will he hardeneth. 19 Thou wilt say then unto me, Why doth he yet find fault? For who hath resisted his will? 20 Nay but, O man, who art thou that repliest against God? Shall the thing formed say to him that formed *it*, Why hast thou made me thus? 21 Hath not the potter power over the clay, of the same lump to make one vessel unto honour, and another unto dishonour? 22 *What* if God, willing to shew *his* wrath, and to make his power known, endured with much longsuffering the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction: 23 And that he might make known the riches of his glory on the vessels of mercy, which he had afore prepared unto glory, 24 Even us, whom he hath called, not of the Jews only, but also of the Gentiles?

So the purpose of God according to election is that salvation be not of works, but of him that calleth. God has mercy on whom God will have mercy. Election is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God who shows mercy.

FOREKNOWLEDGE

So what does it mean when it says "For whom God foreknow?" "Foreknowledge" is the Greek word from which we get the word "prognosis." Prognosis is a judgment made beforehand.

Before the foundation of the world, God made a judgment of his people. God took delight in his people, in Christ. In eternity, God approved of his people in Christ his Son. God's foreknowledge of his people is God's peculiar, gracious, complacency in his people.

It is because in the mind and purpose of God, when he formed us in his Son, knowing the end of what he would do from the beginning. God's complacency with his people—his foreknowledge of us—his everlasting love and delight in us—is because in the mind and purpose of God we were conformed to Christ, it was done in Christ. We were predestinated in image of his Son, called, justified, and glorified. It was infinitely, eternally complete in the mind and purpose of God. There was no time yet. God is eternal. So beforehand, God took delight in his people in his Son.

Adam "knew" Eve. Foreordination is God "knowing" his people personally, loving them particularly, approving of them in Christ, in the mind of God in eternity. This "love of knowing" is what is being declared in the context of Romans 8. After declaring the things God did and does for his people, the Spirit says, "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?...shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord." (Rom 8: 35, 39) God's judgment of his people, his prognosis in his own heart toward them, was everlasting love and infinite approval in Christ. "The LORD hath appeared of old unto me, *saying*, Yea, I have loved thee with an everlasting love: therefore with lovingkindness have I drawn thee." (Jer 31: 3)

Our text, does not say "what" God foreknew—in the earth in the future—it is "whom" God foreknew in eternity—in the mind and delight of God—in Christ.

THE FORE—SEEING OF GOD

The thing most mistake foreknowledge for is God foreseeing into this time-state in which we live. We do not want God to choose or refuse us based on what he foresees in us in this time state. When God is said to look upon us from heaven, into this time-state in which we live in, scriptures says this is what God sees.

Genesis 6: 12: And God looked upon the earth, and, behold, it was corrupt; for all flesh had corrupted his way upon the earth.

Psalms 53: 2: God looked down from heaven upon the children of men, to see if there were *any* that did understand, that did seek God. 3: Every one of them is gone back: they are altogether become filthy; *there is* none that doeth good, no, not one.

All God's eternal blessings toward his people flow out of God alone—according to his foreknow-SIS—fore-love—fore-approbation—his eternal judgment of his people. It has nothing to do with any good or evil foreseen in us or of us. It is obvious God did not foresee we would believe because those God foreknew he also did predestinate.

HE ALSO DID PREDESTINATE

God pre--fixed the destination of his people—that destination is conformity to the image of his Son. Had God foreseen that his people would believe on him then there would have been no need for God to predestinate them. But the reason, we were redeemed by Christ, regenerated by the Holy Spirit, given the gift of faith and brought into the family of God—the reason we believe—is because God predestinated us to be conformed to the image of his Son. To see to it that his people would be conformed to the image of Christ, God predestinated each one to that conformity to his Son.

Ephesians 1: 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 before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love: 5: Having predestinated 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.

Those God foreknew, God blessed with all spiritual blessings by choosing us in Christ, and those he chose he predestinated to be sanctified by Christ through the Holy Spirit into the family of God.

1 Peter 1:2: Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ: Grace unto you, and peace, be multiplied.

2 Thessalonians 2: 11: And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie: 12: That they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness. 13: But we are bound to give thanks alway to God for you, brethren beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth: 14 Whereunto he called you by our gospel, to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Jeremiah 1:5: Before I formed thee in the belly I knew thee; and before thou camest forth out of the womb I sanctified thee, and I ordained thee a prophet unto the nations.

A PURPOSED FALL

It was to be conformed to Christ's image that God predestinated us to the adoption of children. So that tells us that Adam's fall and our fall in Adam was according to God's purpose to glorify his Son. In fact, God made Adam the representative head of all Adam's people to picture Christ the last Adam, who represented all his people—

Romans 5: 14: Adam—"is the figure of him that was to come."

Romans 5: 19: For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous.

Remember, in our text, the Holy Spirit is showing us why all things work together for good to them who love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose. Adam's transgression and fall, evil as it was against God, was worked together for the good of God's people. It was so that Christ, the last Adam could receive all the glory for perfectly obeying God, unto the death of the cross, for his people.

Now, as we look at how God predestinated us to be conformed to the image of Son. We remember Adam was created in the garden in that image. But we lost the image of God in the fall. Adam's son, Seth, was not born in the image of God, but in the image of Adam—fallen, depraved, without spiritual understanding. So was every son born of Adam.

So we came into this world under the curse. In order for us to be conformed to the image of Christ, we had to be justified from the law, we had to be recreated in regeneration after the image of God and one day we will have to be raised incorruptible into Christ's presence. So why did Christ come?

First, to justify us so that we could then be given the Holy Spirit in regeneration so that we would be created in his image inwardly in the new man,

Galatians 4: 3 Even so we, when we were children, were in bondage under the elements of the world: 4 But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, 5 To redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons.

Christ Jesus took the flesh of his brethren. Christ Jesus was made under the law like his brethren. Christ Jesus took the sin and judgment of his brethren, redeeming each one from the curse of the law. Christ accomplished that work “that we might receive the adoption of sons”—that we might be born of the Holy Spirit, after the image of God's Son.

Galatians 4: 6: And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father. 7: Wherefore thou art no more a servant, but a son; and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ.

2 Corinthians 3:18 But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord.

Oh, get this in our hearts, brethren. Satan, sin, death and hell, all the ages of time, the wars between nations and people, the rejection and crucifixion of God's own Son, your and mine rebellion all our days, the gospel being brought to us, our being born again, all of it, God worked together for the good of his people, according to his purpose –why? “For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate *to be* conformed to the image of his Son.” (Rom 8: 29)

1 John 3: 2: Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is.

Will anything stop God for bringing to pass this eternal purpose?

Philippians 3: 21: Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself.

Rest, easy, beloved, nothing shall stop God from working all things together for the good of his people according to his purpose.

THE CHIEF REASON

Lastly, what is the chief reason that God did and does all this for his people? The chief reason is not for us. The chief reason is for his Son, “that he might be the firstborn among many brethren.” (Rom 8: 29) God's love, election, predestination, calling, justification, and glorification—God's salvation of his people—first and foremost—is for his Son, Jesus Christ.

Psalm 115: 1: Not unto us, O LORD, not unto us, but unto thy name give glory, for thy mercy, *and* for thy truth's sake.

Colossians 1: 16 For by [Christ] were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether *they be* thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: [good and evil] all things were

created by him, and for him: 17 And he is before all things, and by him all things consist. 18 And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all *things* he might have the preeminence.

From eternity, God gave all things into the hands of his Son to glorify his Son and give him all preeminence in all things. He did so that Christ might be the Head of God's whole house. The Firstborn among many brethren

His brethren are all made partakers of his divine nature: all are sons in the same family with him, all have the same Father, all have the same inheritance, being joint-heirs with Christ, all have the same blessings of grace in him and by him so that he is not ashamed to call us brethren. But God saves each of his children so that Christ receives all the glory as the Firstborn among many brethren.

The Firstborn has the blessing, the government, the priesthood, and the inheritance. This is all owing to, and is the chief end of God's divine election, predestination, particular redemption, irresistible calling and final glorification of his people.

Sinner, understand this, if you reject God's sovereign grace then you reject Christ having the glory as the Firstborn. Satan and a host of angels did and they were cast out forever. But all his brethren—knowing what we are in ourselves and knowing what he has done for us freely by his blood and his grace—we sing a different song, “Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, and the first begotten of the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth. Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, And hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father; to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.” (Rev 1: 5-6)

aAmen.