

## Romans Part 21 (8:28 - 8:30)

### I. "For whom He foreknew, He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son..." (8:29a)

--when trying to understand the concepts of being foreknown by God and being predestined, it's important to bear in mind that God is omniscient and omnipotent... the concepts of God's foreknowledge and predestination are easily distorted when filtered through the lens of mankind's limited knowledge and limited power.

#### --the foreknowledge of God... (8:29)

--the Greek word *proginosko*, translated "foreknew", is a compound word that combines *pro* (before) and *ginosko* (to know)

--*ginosko* is translated in a wide variety of ways – in the words of Strong's Greek Dictionary: in "a great variety of applications and with many implications."

--*proegnoosménou* is a different form of *proginosko* and is translated "foreordained" (NKJV) or "chosen" (NIV) in 1 Peter 1:20: "He [*Christ*] indeed was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you who through Him believe in God..."

--some will use Romans 8:29, along with other passages, to try and prove that we choose to have faith in Christ because He first chose us, but this argument is no more convincing than the argument that God chose us because in His foreknowledge He knew that we would choose Him.

#### --"predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son..." (8:29)

--the phrase "conformed to the image of His Son" is a concise way of summing up authentic salvation...

--when we were saved, the Holy Spirit came to dwell inside us and begin a life-long process of making us more like Christ.

--this process will be completed in heaven... "For our citizenship is in heaven, from which we also eagerly wait for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, who will transform our lowly body that it may be conformed to His glorious body..." (Philippians 3:19-21)

--"predestined..."

--because we were foreknown by God – because He chose us, or because He knew we would choose Him – God, in His unlimited power, secured our salvation before we were even born!

--one simple truth that we can learn from the profound concepts of God's foreknowledge and His predestination is that **our salvation is not left to random chance!**

--God doesn't know us because we happened by chance to cross paths with Him in the course of our life; but rather He knew us before we were even born and from the beginning of our lives was working behind the scenes to bring about our salvation...

--in a sense, He was by our side from the day we were born until the day we were saved and entered a personal relationship with Him through faith in Christ.

--though this doesn't change the fact that before we were saved we were enemies of God... "And you, who once were alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now He has reconciled in the body of His flesh through death, to present you holy, and blameless, and above reproach in His sight..." (Colossians 1:21-22)

--again, through the lens of human reasoning it is easy to distort the concepts of being foreknown by God and being predestined...

--these concepts naturally stem not only from the omnipotence and omniscience of God but also the dependent nature of all creation...

--Colossians 1:17: "He is before all things, and in Him all things consist."

--Acts 17:28: "for in Him we live and move and have our being..."

--other passages that are sometimes used to prove that God chose us to be saved could simply describe the omnipotence and omniscience of God securing our salvation that stemmed from our free will.

--John 6:44-45: "No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him..."

--John 10:26-29: "But you do not believe, because you are not of My sheep, as I said to you. 27 My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me. 28 And I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; neither shall anyone snatch them out of My hand."

--if being foreknown and predestined to salvation simply means that God chose us to be saved, then it would be a logical conclusion that God also chooses people to go to hell, but nowhere does Scripture state this. On the contrary, Scripture states that God desires for everyone to be saved...

--2 Peter 3:9: The Lord "is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance."

--1 Timothy 2:4: God "desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth."

## **II. "Moreover whom He predestined, these He also called; whom He called, these He also justified; and whom He justified, these He also glorified." (8:30)**

### **--"these He also called..."**

--outward call...

--Romans 10:14-15: "How then shall they call on Him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in Him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher? 15 And how shall they preach unless they are sent? As it is written: 'How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the gospel of peace, Who bring glad tidings of good things!'"

--inward call that precedes the outward call...

--some may not have opportunity to hear the outward call (the preaching of the gospel); but according to Romans 1 everyone hears the inward call, and on the basis of this anyone can be saved.

--Romans 1:19-20: "what may be known of God is manifest in them, for God has shown it to them. 20 For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead, so that they are without excuse..."

### **--"these He also justified..."**

--while there is mystery surrounding the question of who is ultimately responsible for our decision to trust in Christ, Scripture makes it crystal clear that God alone is responsible for our justification.

--we contribute nothing to the basis of our justification; we simply place our faith in Christ and He does

all the work to secure our justification... we were justified when the righteousness of Christ was "credited" to our account. (Romans 4:24)

--Ephesians 2:8-9: "For by grace you have been saved through faith, **and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God**, not of works, lest anyone should boast."

--"these He also glorified..."

--Paul emphasizes the security of our salvation by speaking of our future glorification in heaven in the past tense, from the perspective of eternity.

*--It is essential to realize that these five links in the chain of God's saving work are unbreakable. With the repetition of the connecting phrase 'He also', Paul accentuates that unity by linking each element to the previous one. No one whom God foreknows will fail to be predestined, called, justified, and glorified by Him. It is also significant to note the tense in which the apostle states each element of God's saving work. Paul is speaking here of the Lord's redemptive work from eternity past to eternity future. What he says is true of all believers of all times. Security in Christ is so absolute and unalterable that even the salvation of believers not yet born can be expressed in the past tense, as if it had already occurred. Because God is not bound by time as we are, there is a sense in which the elements not only are sequential but simultaneous. --commentary by John MacArthur*

### III. "...that He might be the firstborn among many brethren." (8:29b)

--Romans 8:29: "For whom He foreknew, He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren."

--"brethren..."

--in heaven we will be living in the presence of God and will relate to Him as His brethren, opposed to being subjects of a fearful king who is unapproachable!

--Hebrews 2:10-11: "For both He who sanctifies and those who are being sanctified are all of one, for which reason He is not ashamed to call them brethren."

--"that He might be the firstborn..."

--in Jewish culture certain family privileges were given only to the first-born, and therefore the term "first-born" was often used figuratively to represent preeminence.

--Jesus was literally the "first-born" from the dead; that is, He was the first person to be resurrected from the dead and then never die again.

--"And He is the head of the body, the church, who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in all things He may have the preeminence." (Colossians 1:18)

--in heaven we will see God in all His glory and preeminence, yet because we will have glorified bodies ("conformed to the image of His Son"), we will still be able to relate to Him as His brethren... profoundly different from the experience on Mt Sinai!

--Exodus 33:20-23: God said to Moses, "'You cannot see My face; for no man shall see Me, and live.' 21 And the LORD said, 'Here is a place by Me, and you shall stand on the rock. 22 So it shall be, while My glory passes by, that I will put you in the cleft of the rock, and will cover you with My hand while I pass by. 23 Then I will take away My hand, and you shall see My back; but My face shall not be seen.'"

--Revelation 21:23-24: "The city had no need of the sun or of the moon to shine in it, for the glory of God illuminated it. The Lamb is its light."

--Hebrews 12:18-24

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

**--"to those who love God"**

--that is, those who are saved... those who love God because He first loved them. (1 John 4:19)

**-- "for the good" / "according to His purpose"**

--the life of Joseph is a great example of all things working together for good... "But as for you, you meant evil against me; but God meant it for good, in order to bring it about as it is this day, to save many people alive." (Genesis 50:20)

--this promise encompasses a broad spectrum of good, but **the ultimate good and God's ultimate purpose for our life is to become more like Christ**, as stated in the following verse – being "conformed to the image of His Son." (Romans 8:29)

--when there doesn't seem to be any good that can come out of trials, we can always find opportunity in the trials to become more like Christ.

--there is far greater wealth found in becoming more like Christ and growing closer to Him than in any material gain.

--the "peaceable fruit of righteousness..." (Hebrews 12:11)

--1 Thessalonians 4:3: "For this is the will of God, your sanctification..."