

The Foreknowledge of God

I. Introduction

- a. Words have meanings that are not confined to their definitions
- b. Biblical examples:
 - i. Walk
 - ii. World
 - iii. Belief / Faith
 - iv. Repentance
 - v. Know

II. Simple Foreknowledge

- a. Its Definition
 - i. Knowledge of things or events before they exist (Baker Encyclopedia of the Bible)
 - ii. Greek 'proginōskō' – To know before
- b. Its Meaning
 - i. In modern usage
 - ii. In the Bible
 - 1. God's knowledge of all things that will ever take place
 - 2. Specifically prior knowledge regarding prophecy
- c. Its Difficulties
 - i. No different than divine omniscience
 - ii. Implies that God is passive regarding what He knows and how
 - iii. Ignores the Biblical usage of the term

One of the saddest mistakes ever made by students of the Bible concerns the definition of the foreknowledge of God. Men... define foreknowledge as being no more than advance knowledge. It is very low concept of God which conceives of Him as having just a larger degree of advance knowledge than that which we possess.

God's foreknowledge is God bringing to pass in me something which He has planned for me.

Donald Grey Barnhouse, God's Heirs: Romans 8:1–39, pp. 159-160.

The Foreknowledge of God

I. Short-Sighted Foreknowledge

a. Its Definition

- i. God knows all things
- ii. That includes knowing who will eventually believe (I Peter 1:2)

b. Its Meaning

- i. God looks ahead into the future to see who will be saved
- ii. He predestines those to salvation based on what He sees in the future
- iii. God puts within humanity absolute freedom to choose or reject Him

c. Its Difficulties

- i. Denies man's depravity
- ii. Denies God's omniscience
- iii. Denies God's sovereignty
- iv. Makes the creator dependent on the actions of the creature
- v. Faith is turned into a work instead of a gift (Eph. 2:9)

II. Scriptural Foreknowledge

a. Its Definition

- i. The absolute sovereignty of God in determining and implementing his decision to save sinful man (Kistemaker and Hendriksen, Exposition of the Epistles of Peter and the Epistle of Jude, New Testament Commentary, p. 35)
- ii. God's perfectly purposed relational knowledge of everyone who is in his redemptive plan before they exist in time and space (MacArthur and Mayhue, eds., Biblical Doctrine: A Systematic Summary of Bible Truth, p. 177)

b. Its Meaning

- i. God is absolutely sovereign in salvation (Eph. 2:1-9)
- ii. God planned to save believers through the death of Jesus (Acts 2:23)
- iii. God predetermined a relationship with believers (Rom. 8:28-30; Matt 7:21-23)
- iv. God's foreknowledge is active, not passive, and guarantees our salvation (John 10:11, 26-29; I Peter 1:1-2, 20-21)

The Foreknowledge of God

c. The Scriptural Support

i. Old Testament

1. Exodus 33:12, 17
2. Jeremiah 1:5

ii. New Testament

1. Acts 2:23
2. Romans 8:28-30
3. Romans 11:2
4. 1 Peter 1:2
5. 1 Peter 1:20-21
6. John 10:11, 27-29

III. Conclusion – Responding to the Truth

- a. Worship God because of His character
- b. Rest in God because of His predetermined plan
- c. Witness boldly because Jesus knows His sheep

The Foreknowledge of God

John 10:11, 26-29

“I am the good shepherd; the good shepherd lays down His life for the sheep.”

“But you do not believe because you are not of My sheep. My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me; and I give eternal life to them, and they will never perish; and no one will snatch them out of My hand. My Father, who has given them to Me, is greater than all; and no one is able to snatch them out of the Father’s hand.”

Acts 2:23

[T]his *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.

Romans 8:28-30

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. 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; and these whom He predestined, He also called; and these whom He called, He also justified; and these whom He justified, He also glorified.

I Peter 1:1-2

...who are chosen 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.

I Peter 1:20-21

For He was foreknown before the foundation of the world, but has appeared in these last times for the sake of you who through Him are believers in God, who raised Him from the dead and gave Him glory, so that your faith and hope are in God.