

Rev. Lex DeLong / General Adult

Romans Road to Recovery / Eternal Security / Romans 8:26–39

All three Persons of the Triune God is for us in all things, to bring us from our groaning state of sin to our belonging place with the Lord.

Notes

10/19 Rom. 8:26-39, "God is For Us," Subtitle: The permanence of God's Love, Scripture: Ps. 136:1-4 + 26

Romans (3. Living in the Spirit (8:1–39))

These verses contain a series of five verbs (all in the aorist tense) describing how God has carried out his saving purpose.

The struggle is in clearly differentiating between the meanings of the first two, "foreknowledge" and "predestination."

Romans 11:2, God foreknew Israel just like he foreknows those He predestined in Romans 8:29. God clearly did not choose Israel because He looked down the corridor of time and saw that they would choose Him. In fact, despite their all out rejection of Him, before the foundation of the world, He determined He would make them His people ("foreknew") and then He predetermined how He would make them His ("predestined").

1 Peter 1:20, God foreknew Christ just like he foreknows those He predestined in Romans 8:29. God clearly did not choose Christ because He looked down the corridor of time and saw that Christ would accept God's call for Him because Jesus as God would do nothing else but what the Father predestined. Christ as God could do nothing but accept God's will. God's foreknowledge was involved in predetermining Christ's role in salvation. It was based on His already eternal and experienced intimate relationship with Christ.

However, Romans: An Introduction and Commentary (2. The Glory to Come (8:18–30)) says that, "God's foreknowledge here connotes that [as] electing grace which is frequently implied by the verb 'to know' in the Old Testament. When God takes knowledge of people in this special way, **he sets his choice on them.**"

Romans: An Introduction and Commentary (2. The Glory to Come (8:18–30))

Before ever they existed He established their whole design, and when, as ordained for them, they come into being, it is in accord with His glorious design that they fulfil their work.

Barrett notes that it is not easy to distinguish between these two terms ["foreknowledge" and "predestined"]: "The slightly ambiguous phraseology may serve as a warning that we are not dealing here with a rigidly thought out and expressed determinist philosophy, but with a profound religious conviction" (Romans, 170). In the same vein Barclay writes that "Paul never meant [the passage] to be the expression of theology or philosophy; he meant it to be the almost lyrical expression of Christian experience" (Romans, 114). Dodd agrees with Professor Otto that the idea of election is "a pure expression of the religious experience of grace" and adds that Augustine and Calvin "made the mistake of erecting upon it a rigid dogmatic system." He concludes that "the best commentators upon this passage of Paul are not the theologians, but the greater hymn-writers of the Church" (Romans, 141). On the other hand, Brunner claims that in the five-word "golden chain" we have "a summary of all Christian doctrine" (Romans, 77).

194 Romans

Although προγινώσκω (proginosko) means "to know in advance," Paul's use of the word here carries the OT nuance of personal and intimate knowledge (Amos 3:2, "You only have I chosen [ἐγὼν in the LXX] of all the families of the earth"). BAGD (Bauer and Danker, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and other Early Christian Literature*, 3rd edition) has "to choose beforehand" as the meaning for προγινώσκω in Rom 8:29 (p. 703). For a conclusive argument against the position that predestination depends on prescience [foreknowledge], see Murray, Romans, 1:315–18.

Romans (3. Living in the Spirit (8:1–39))

Verse 29 is sometimes interpreted to mean that God predestines on the basis of his prior knowledge about how each of us will in fact respond.**194** But this would mean that in election God would not be sovereign; he would be dependent upon what he would see happening in the future. Theologians rightly point out that **prior to knowledge must be the divine decree. Unless God determines in some sense that something will happen, he cannot "know" that it will. For God to foreknow requires an earlier decree.** The etymology of the Greek verb translated "predestine" suggests marking out a boundary beforehand.**195** In the present context predestination is not concerned with election to salvation. Rather, God has

foreordained that believers be brought into "moral conformity to the likeness of his Son."**196** What is predestined is that we become like Christ (cf. 2 Cor 3:18).**197** The purpose is that Christ might be the "eldest in a vast family of brothers" (Weymouth). If we were to bear no family resemblance to him, the intention of the Father would never be realized. The supremacy of Christ is reflected in the designation "firstborn" (cf. Col 1:15, 18; Heb 1:6; Rev 1:5). It speaks both of his priority in time and of his primacy of rank. It also implies that there are to be others who will share in his sonship.

195 Romans πρὸ (before) + ὁρίζω ("to mark out or bound"; cf. Eng. "horizon")

196 Romans Cf. NIVSB note on 8:29. The expression denotes an inward and not merely superficial conformity (Robertson, WP 4:377).

197 Romans, Morris comments that "it is God's plan that his people become like his son, not that they should muddle along in a modest respectability" (Romans, 333).

Romans (The Salvation Chain) William Hendriksen and Simon J. Kistemaker, *Exposition of Paul's Epistle to the Romans*, vol. 12–13, *New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1953–2001)*, iii.

"... whom he foreknew."

Is it possible to interpret Paul's words in this sense: Before the world was created God foresaw who were going to believe in him and who would not. So, on the basis of that foreseen faith, he decided to elect to salvation those good people who were going to exercise it?

Answer: such a construction is entirely impossible, for according to Scripture even faith is God's gift. See N.T.C. on Ephesians, pp. 120–123 (on Eph. 2:8). See also John 6:44, 65; 1 Cor. 4:7; Phil. 1:29. In fact, even the good works performed by believers are prepared beforehand by God! (Eph. 2:10).

On the contrary, the foreknowledge mentioned in Rom. 8:29 refers to divine active delight. It indicates that, in his own sovereign good pleasure, God set his love on certain individuals, many still to be born, gladly acknowledging them as his own, electing them to everlasting life and glory. Note the following:

"For I have known him [Abraham] so that he may direct his children and his household after him" (Gen. 18:19).

"Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, Before you were born I set you apart" (Jer. 1:5).

"I am the good shepherd, and I know my own" (John 10:14). Cf. 10:28.

"The Lord knows who are his" (2 Tim. 2:19).

Add the following: Ps. 1:6; Amos 3:2; Hos. 13:5; Matt. 7:23; 1 Cor. 8:3; Gal. 4:9; 1 John 3:1; and see also on Rom. 11:2.

"The term prognosis [foreknowledge] reveals the fact that in his purpose according to election the persons are **not the objects of God's 'bare foreknowledge' but of his 'active delight.'**"²⁴⁸

Douglas Moo, *The New Bible Commentary (8:1–30 Assurance of Eternal Life in the Spirit)*
First, he 'foreknows' us. Some scholars think that *proginōskō* ('foreknow') here means what it often does in Greek literature—'know something ahead of time'. But Paul says that it is we Christians whom God knows, and this suggests the more personal idea of 'knowing' that is sometimes found in the OT: election into personal relationship (e.g. Gn. 18:19; Je. 1:5; Am. 3:2). This is almost certainly also the sense that 'foreknow' has in its other NT occurrences (Rom. 11:2; Acts 2:23; 1 Pet. 1:2, 20). God's 'foreknowing', his selection of us to be saved from 'before the creation of the world' (Eph. 1:4), leads to his 'predestining us', his appointing us to a specific destiny. This destiny is that we become like Christ, a final event that God accomplishes by 'calling' us (see v 28b), 'justifying' us (see 3:21–4:25) and 'glorifying' us. It is significant that this last verb is, like the others in v 30, in the past tense, suggesting that, though the attaining of glory may be future, God's determining that we shall attain it is already accomplished.

Douglas Moo, *Encountering the Book of Romans: A Theological Survey (The Spirit of Glory (8:18–30))*

When God "knows" a person, he does not learn some information about that person; rather, he comes into relationship with that person. Note, for instance, Amos 3:2: "You only have I chosen ["known" in the Hebrew and the Greek] of all the families of the earth." "Foreknowing" is another way, then, of speaking of God's choosing, or election. Paul therefore is elaborating the notion of God's call that he mentioned at the end of verse 28. Foreknowing leads to "predestining." This word, as I suggested, emphasizes the purpose or result of God's choosing. In this case, that end is that we should be "conformed to the image of his [God's] Son." In this context, it refers to our being glorified with Christ (see vv. 17, 30). God's predestining leads to his calling (see v. 28), his calling to his justifying, and his justifying to his glorifying.

So:

"foreknowledge" - His selection of us to be saved from before the creation of the world

"predestination" - His appointing us to a specific destiny.

The former means to be chosen out of the many, the latter means to be directed to His specific purpose in His determined plan.

The former speaks of His choosing relationship with us, the latter of His choosing to direct us to His purpose.

The last thought in Romans 8:25 we left off with last week was, "25 But if we hope for what we do not see, with perseverance we wait eagerly for it."

In the remaining verses of Romans 8, Paul outlines three reasons why we can wait with perseverance eagerly:

The Spirit Helps Us in Weakness (Rom. 8:26-27)

- The Holy Spirit speaks for us and to us (v. 26)
- ++The Holy Spirit directs us according to God's will (v. 27)

What Paul apparently has in mind is that inability to discern clearly God's will in the many things for which we pray; note that the "as it is necessary" of this verse is paralleled by "according to God," that is, "according to his will," of v. 27. *All* our praying is conditioned by our continuing "weakness" and means that—except perhaps on rare occasions—our petitions must be qualified by "if it is in accordance with your will."

Douglas J. Moo

God Directs us Towards Good through Everything (Rom. 8:28-30)

- God's direction is for those who love Him (v. 28)
- ++The "Good" is conformity to His Son (v. 29)
 - ++ "foreknew" — chose to know us by intimately experiencing relationship with us before the earth's foundation
 - ++ "predestined" — moving/pointing us towards Christ-likeness
 - ++ "called" — summoned us by our will to Him
 - ++ "justified" — declared righteous through Christ when we were not righteous
 - ++ "glorified" — clothed in splendor like Christ

‘Whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified.’ This has already happened. There are foolish people who say you can be justified and then lose that status. But that is impossible; these are links in an unbreakable chain. If you have been justified you have been glorified—your final glorification has already happened in the purpose of God. These are all past tenses to give us absolute proof of the certainty. In certain ways the most daring statement in the whole of Scripture is this statement that we are already glorified.

The Final Perseverance of the Saints, 212

David Martyn Lloyd-Jones (Welsh Preacher and Writer)

Since all of this is accomplished in eternity past, according to the will of God, then we can be sure that we are powerless to remove us or be removed from that determined and directed love.

Jesus Keeps Us in Love (Rom. 8:31-39)

- No one can undo what God has done (v. 31)
- ++The great price paid guarantees our ownership of the “good” through Christ (vv. 32-34)
- ++No one can separate us from Christ’s love (vv. 35-36)
- ++Through the “good,” we are more than conquerors (vv. 37-39)

The Word of God, our Lord Jesus Christ ... through His transcendent love, became what we are, that He might bring us to be even what He is Himself.

Irenaeus; John Behr

All three Persons of the Triune God is for us in all things, to bring us from our groaning state of sin to our belonging place with the Lord.

Watchman Nee tells about a new convert who came in deep distress to see him. "No matter how much I pray, no matter how hard I try, I simply cannot seem to be faithful

to my Lord. I think I'm losing my salvation." Nee said, "Do you see this dog here? He is my dog. He is house-trained; he never makes a mess; he is obedient; he is a pure delight to me. Out in the kitchen I have a son, a baby son. He makes a mess, he throws his food around, he fouls his clothes, he is a total mess. But who is going to inherit my kingdom? Not my dog; my son is my heir. You are Jesus Christ's heir because it is for you that He died." We are Christ's heirs, not through our perfection but by means of His grace.

Watchman Nee.

Since we are Christ's in eternity past, before the foundation of the World, we are and will always be Christ's.