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Doctrine Of The Father – Part 1

In the NT section we've covered several events and their doctrines. We started with the Birth of the King and the doctrine of the incarnation, then the Life of the King and the doctrine of revelation, third the Death of the King and the doctrine of atonement as it relates to God's justice, fourth the Resurrection of the King, fifth the Heavenly Origin of the Church, sixth the Earthly Origin of the Church on Pentecost and sixth, now we are working with the Emergence of the Church away from the nation of Israel, the realization that occurred during the Book of Acts that the Church is something different than Israel. That realization took five steps. The doctrine that falls out of this is the work of the Trinity on behalf of every believer, many of which are unique to the Church Age, starting with God the Holy Spirit and working backwards to God the Son and finally to God the Father, each member does certain works. The relationship between these is that the Father is the speaker, the Son is message He speaks and the Spirit is the results of that which is spoken. So if you think in terms of a speaker, a message, and the result, then that's how the three persons of the Trinity relate to one another so far as their works are concerned.

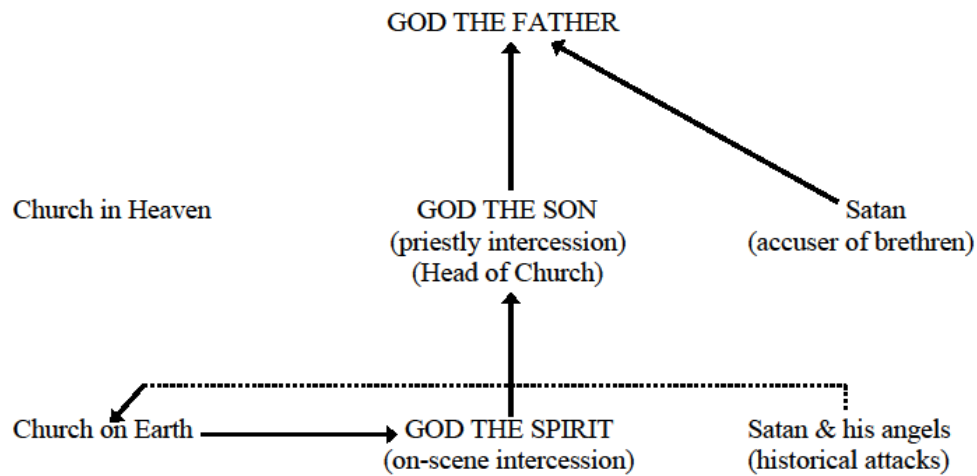
We started with six works of God the Spirit. His work we remember by the acrostic RIBS; Regeneration, Indwelling, Baptizing and Sealing; in addition He makes Intercession for us and gives us Spiritual Gifts. We're going to get back into some of this today because some of it relates heavily to what the Son is doing.

The six works of God the Son we are looking at, first of all, Imputed Righteousness. As incarnate God the Son generated historical righteousness by His perfect life. The one who has faith in Him has the Son's righteousness imputed to his account. Second we have the Son's death and resurrection, and

through faith we share in His death and resurrection, such that part of us has exited from mortal history and entered into immortal history. Third, the Son is Eternal Life and that life, in the person of the Son, is given to believers. Fourth, the Son is making Priestly Intercession for us. We talked about that last time, distinguishing the kind of intercession He is doing, that it is not a re-offering of Himself on the cross, that was once for all, never to be repeated. Yet this is a major issue between Protestantism and Catholicism. If you've ever observed the Protestant cross it doesn't have Jesus on it; Catholic crosses do have Jesus on them, and those two different depictions of the cross are depictions of the difference in doctrine. We've worked with Christ's priestly intercession. We went through Zech 3 and Luke 22 as examples of His priesthood.

What we want to do is go to the fifth and sixth works of the Son, the Son's Heavenly Direction of the Church and His Priestly Intercession. And I'll wrap these together. What I'd like to do is look at this diagram as it tries to relate them. One of the things I'm trying to say by this diagram is that the intercession of the Spirit is not the same as the intercession of the Son. Don't get confused about these different works—the package of work that the Holy Spirit does is distinct from the pattern of the work of God the Son, which is going to be distinct from the pattern of the work of God the Father. We have to relate their works because they are the One Triune God, but they are also distinct works because they are Three Distinct Persons.

At the top you have God the Father, who is the author of the Plan, and one who is the eventual object, everybody submits to Him so He's the source of it. Then you have God the Son, and then you have God the Holy Spirit.



God the Son is making His Intercession where? In heaven. This is His base of operation. This is where He leads the church from. This is why it was so important early on in this section to grasp the significance of that Latin clause, the *filioque* clause, meaning “and the Son.” Who sent the Holy Spirit? The Father only? No, the Father and the Son, that’s the *filioque* and it is significant for history because it means the work of the Son isn’t over. If He sent the Spirit on the Day of Pentecost then He is directing what takes place here on earth. The Holy Spirit is His agent so to speak. Christ is still central even today. That’s His heavenly direction.

He also intercedes for us in heaven vs. where is the Holy Spirit making intercession for us? On earth, actually from within us. And by saying that we’re not denying His omnipresence, but we are saying that so far as base of operation during the Church Age it’s in believers on earth in contrast to before when His base of operation was in heaven. So that’s why the Holy Spirit in this diagram is at the bottom. If you look at the arrow from the Church on earth to the Holy Spirit, that’s trying to depict that the Holy Spirit is making on-scene intercession from within us directly to God the Son according to Rom 8. He is, as it were, the on-scene commander of our lives. You know, when you have a disaster or something, the police and fire

departments have these emergency operating plans and one of the things that they have to figure on is when you have a catastrophe, when you have a disaster, there's somebody that calls the shots. Most plans speak of someone who is the on-scene commander. It doesn't mean he's the supreme commander, it means that as far as that situation goes, all the logistics and everything else that has to happen, the on-scene commander is responsible to make sure it all gets done in an efficient and orderly fashion. The on-scene director of our lives is the Holy Spirit in Rom 8. And it says in Rom. 8 that He makes intercession for us "with groanings that cannot be uttered." We said when we exegeted that passage that it's talking about secret passwords, passing high security information on a secure line and we would say today that the Holy Spirit is the on-scene commander in our lives. When we go through something in life and we don't know how to pray, which is about 100% of the time, there are always things going on that we don't understand, but He does understand and He makes intercession for each of us from within each of us and His petition doesn't go to the Father, it goes to the Son. And that's clear in Rom 8 because it speaks of the One who searches the hearts, etc... and you can see by comparison with Rev 2 that is what the Lord Jesus does.

So the intercession goes up in a chain. The Holy Spirit is making intercession from within us on earth, it goes up to the Lord Jesus Christ in heaven by a secure line. Satan would love to know what that prayer content is, because if Satan could find out what the prayer content was, he could move on the spot and jam the work. You see, the problem is, he can't do that because the work that is being prayed for is already happening before he can find out the work that is going on. All Satan can do is respond as quickly as He can to the work God is doing, but he can't jam it before it's going on because he doesn't know what the work is going to be and that's because it's kept secret on this secure line between the Holy Spirit to the head of the Church, the Lord Jesus Christ.

Satan has another thing: you see where Satan is mentioned twice in the diagram? One, Satan and his angels make historical attacks against the Church. In the next section we're going to deal with church history, and you'll see the sequence of the attacks that Satan has made not just against individuals but he has made bodily, corporate attacks against the Church itself down through the centuries of the Church. Who resists that? It's the Holy Spirit, "greater is He that is in you than he that is in the world." That's

that horizontal battle that's going on. But that's only part of the battle. What this diagram also shows you is the heavenly component to that battle. And that's why Satan is mentioned twice in the diagram.

You notice on the right Satan is doing something in heaven. What is he doing in heaven? He's accusing the brethren. Now why is Satan interested in accusing the brethren? Just because he wants to have something to do? No, he's got plenty to do so the fact he does this shows it's a serious situation here. He's trying to defend against the casualties he's facing, one after another; as people are called out of Satan's kingdom of darkness and into Christ's kingdom of light that is a casualty for him. And he's frustrated about it, he's losing ground. Finally he's going to lose so much ground that, according to theologians going back to Augustine, it's speculation, but it's an interesting speculation, that the total number of people that will eventually be saved in the Church Age are going to equal the number of angels that fell with Satan. That way the men who are redeemed can fulfill the functions those fallen angels are no longer fulfilling. That's not taught in the Scriptures, I'm just saying that Christians who have looked at the Scriptures and seen the overall picture have wondered, hmm, is that why the Church Age isn't over yet? Is it because the number of believers has not yet reached the number of fallen angels? And when it does it will be like boom, it's over, the Church comes to an end, the rapture of the Church occurs. There was a calendar for Israel. Is there something like a calendar for the Church? And while Israel's calendar was a time schedule, is the Church's something else, like a people schedule and once all those people come in then that's it? We don't know. But it's interesting to speculate that the Church has something that signals the end, and it's just as definite when the Church ends as it was when Israel ends. What is it that's the marker? If it's not time it must be something else. So it's people-driven rather than time-driven. So apparently the Church Age is terminated with a person. Some person is the last person to be added to this organism. The question is who's the person? We don't know, but the Church is an organism and just as an organism has to be put together piece by piece so when the last person becomes a believer the Church is complete and then that's it. Every angel that went with Satan has been replaced. Stuff like that may be going on. So in the meantime Satan has a real issue with this. He's got to constantly challenge the legal basis. He hates it that God credits righteousness to sinner's accounts. So he picks up on all the sins we do and he shoves them in God's face, what about this, did you

see what this guy did? How can you accept him? Yeah Christ says, I saw what the guy did, I also paid for it in full, he believed in Me, I gave Him My righteousness, so buzz off.

That's what's going on with the Church and that's why premillennialism is not pessimism. The Church age is about the gospel going forth to call people out of Satan's kingdom into a new kingdom. We're not passive about what's going on in the world. The Church Age is something that really has to be finished before the Kingdom can come. Before Christ can fully exercise His authority by returning to this earth to set up His Millennial Kingdom He's got to have a people. Where is He going to get the people from? He's getting them right now during the Church Age. The Church Age is going to be finished before He sets up His kingdom on earth and rules with those people.

So that diagram says the Holy Spirit makes intercession for us from within us to the Son who then, in heaven, protects us with another kind of intercession which guarantees and stabilizes our justified status. So whereas the Son guarantees salvation every time an accusation comes up, "My righteousness," substitutionary blood atonement gets rid of the sin, My righteousness takes care of justification, so that locks that up. Then what happens is the Holy Spirit makes intercession in Rom 8 for our spiritual growth and if we knew what the Holy Spirit was praying about right now in each of our lives we'd know what's going to happen tomorrow, but we don't know that because He doesn't tell us. That's secure communications; it's strictly between Him and the Son over the issue of the Son's body.

Having said all that, we go on to describe another work which we introduced last time, Jesus Christ is the head of the Church and He's also the Judge of the Church. As head of the Church, we see that in the book of Revelation, where He says the seven lampstands are seven churches and He's threatening to remove churches, those are parts of His body that when they get into a state of malfunction He removes them and replaces them. Talk about heavenly direction. He's in full control of His body. Just now we finished talking about His priestly intercession, and finally we talk about His Judging.

Turn to 2 Cor 5 - the Lord Jesus Christ is going to judge us. In verse 10 the Scriptures say that Jesus Christ is the judge of the Church. What that means

is that, as it says, "For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may be recompensed for his deeds in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad." The exposition that is found in 1 Cor 3 describes it as a certain quality of production, whether wood, hay and stubble or gold, silver and precious stones and it's all thrown in the fire and what comes out on the other side is things of the Spirit, what doesn't come out is things of the flesh. What is the issue at this judgment? If the issue isn't salvation, what is the issue here at this judgment? The issue at this judgment is works and the question then becomes what are the righteous works, what are those works that we have done in obedience to the leading of the Spirit versus the works that we have done in the flesh because we were pressured by our boyfriend, girlfriend, wife, husband, group, teenage gang or whatever else - some motivation that had nothing to do with the leading of the Holy Spirit, it was just external pressure.

The works have been divided into the bad works and the good works in v 10. And the bad works are eliminated from our credit card, so we don't get credit for that, that's the wood, hay and stubble, the works of the flesh. And the works that were done by the Spirit, those we are rewarded for. But the problem here is that you see, just as with this, no believer can go into eternity saved on any other basis than a perfect basis. The substitutionary death of Christ removes sin; imputed righteousness of Christ justifies. So also the Church has to have a personal evaluation and we go into eternity but we can't go in with some false notion of our significance in our lifetime. And it can be a sobering kind of scary thing when the Lord Jesus Christ evaluates each one of us on what we did that was correct and what we did that wasn't. Paul as well as John hint in their writings that we can't even know; showing that we aren't sufficient to evaluate all of our motives. And if the apostles didn't know and they have to wait to see what is going to be revealed in the last day then I'm not going to sit here and worry about it; I'm going to go on living my life as unto the Lord, doing what I know to do and leave the evaluation to Him.

But the fact is that there's going to be no false notion about how great people we were or how incompetent we were; some of us who think we were incompetent will be finding out, oh yeah, when you witnessed to that person or said that to somebody or you encouraged somebody, that reconciliation that happened there. You can never realize how far those things can ripple

into history. And some of us can be pleasantly surprised by things that we never even dreamed that we were involved with. In fact, probably most of the things that come out good will be the things we never thought of, and the thing we thought were so good will probably go down the toilet. That's the surprise of the Lord Jesus Christ. That's His Judgment.

Let's go on to the Father, because now we come back to the source behind the plan of salvation, what led to it, the works of the Father, which largely are in the planning department. One of the keys in going back through and thinking of the salvation package, you can think of the Father's part as that which causes all the rest of it. This is where it all started, with the Father's plan. There are six things here and it's these six things that triggered the whole plan of salvation; foreknowledge, predestination, calling, justification, glorification and chastening.

Some people are sensitive to some of these things so I want to review something we covered years ago, back when we were talking in the OT about the Call of Abraham. We said of all the people on earth, God picked Abraham out. Why? Because Abraham was good? No, He picked Abraham out for reasons God had for Himself. He picked Abraham out because the human race was so rapidly paganizing itself after the Noahic re-colonization of the planet after the Flood, nations were developing, they were all going into paganism and it was clear that the Noahic Bible would become completely rejected as the culture degenerated. So God formed a counterculture called Israel, to protect the truth and Abraham was the man called out to start that project.

Here we get back to the same idea. Abraham was called out from a pagan environment and I went through a little about the cultural background. In cities like Ur of the Chaldees and those ancient cities, they worshipped gods and goddesses. They believed each city had gods and goddesses that looked over their city. The way they explained history in those days was that if that city was invaded, let's say city A took over city B - the interpretation of that history was that the gods and goddesses of city A were bigger than the gods and goddesses of city B and history was this ebb and flow between which god was, for the time, superior to the other gods. The point of telling the story is this: that you never have any security because there was never a final god or goddess who would guarantee that your city wouldn't fall tomorrow to

another god or goddess. So if your god was finite you always wound up in a chance environment where there was no one who had the final say. And if you read all the mythologies of the world you'll see it, it's saturated with all the fights the gods and goddesses have with each other trying to be the top dog. They're just as fallen and depraved as men and that's because they're amplified versions of men. But that doesn't produce security. So what paganism does, in order to produce security, think; if the gods and goddesses can't give you stability, what do you revert to for your stability, because men and women have to have some stability in life. They attribute it to fate. So the other side of the coin in the unbelieving world is it's either what we call Chance, the gods and goddesses constantly warring with one another so there's constant chaos, or you appeal to this mysterious thing behind it called Fate. If you want to see a good picture of fate, think back to that classic movie 2001. At the beginning of the movie, Kubrick has the black monolith that spins through space and you look at it and it's very interesting. Kubrick had to do something to somehow picture on the screen what fate looked like, so he chose a tablet. Kubrick knew what he was doing because in the ancient world the tablet... they didn't call it fate, fate is a Latin word that came in later with the Greeks and Romans, but their idea of fate came out of a tablet of destiny. That's the way they viewed it, a tablet of destiny. It's like an impersonal code that existed. And the gods and goddesses themselves were under this power of the tablet.

This is why in that movie you see this tablet coming in at key moments in the movie, somehow the destiny of the universe is written on that tablet, and it's a faint adumbration of the Ten Commandments, it's got a relic of that in it, almost like it was borrowed from the Bible or something. But the difference is it's cold, it's dark, it's impersonal, there's no person there. It's ultimately an impersonal universe that is controlling whatsoever comes to pass. So you have the two extremes, you either have Chance or you have Fate. And you see the dilemma, one is completely irrational, the other is rational and they stand in tension.

When we come to God the Father we have another answer to these kinds of questions. Thinking again in terms of the speaker, the message, and the effects of the message, we come to the work of God the Father. *"In contrast to paganism which attributes ultimate cause to both impersonal Fate and Chance, the Bible insists upon the ultimate cause as the one Personal will of*

the Creator.” Period. The Creator has no competitors; NO competitors! There are no votes on how history will go. God works all things after the counsel of the Gallop Poll? Or after the counsel of His own will? God does not take counsel from anyone other than Himself. God does not ask you, God does not ask me. God decides all things within Himself. He is the source and origin of history. That’s what we’re talking about, the origin of this plan, the works of God the Father.

Turn to Rom 8:29, this is the big passage that deals with this. It’s interesting because it’s the same passage that talks about suffering, and Paul has to deal with where it came from. Where does Paul conclude it came from? It came from the plan. So suffering is written into this plan. Who put it there? God did. It’s no accident that Rom 8 contains suffering and the plan of God. We have an explanation for it and we have a way of handling it, all things work together for good. Does that include suffering? Yes, it does. How would Rom 8:28 work out for a pagan? If you say well, gee, I’m following a lunar deity tonight, and the lunar deity guarantees me that all things work out together for good, could a lunar deity guarantee you that all things work together for good? No, because tomorrow the solar deity could beat him up. So if Rom 8:28 doesn’t have a root, doesn’t have a leg to stand on, it’s just nice comforting religious poetry, that’s all it is. There’s not any substantive claim. For Rom 8:28 to have a substantive claim it’s got to be rooted on something. So verse 29 starts, and here are some works of God the Father, so let’s go through the list. “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; ³⁰and these whom He predestined, He also called; and these whom He called, He also justified; and these whom He justified, He also glorified.” Let’s count those. We’ve got foreknowledge, predestination, calling, justification, and glorification. So we’ve done six of all the other members of the Trinity, here we have at least five works of the Father; foreknowing, predestinating, calling, justifying and glorifying. Let’s start going through those. There’s the package that comes from God the Father. They are all the package that deals with the causes of everything else in the chain, what the Son does, what the Holy Spirit does.

Foreknowing we’ll talk about and then go through some of the Scriptures that are involved. “In eternity past God ‘knew’ each New Testament saint in Christ. This action expresses a divine choice about creation and history.

Autonomous man hates to hear that God is the final cause of all things.” There’s nothing that brings to the surface of our souls our rebelliousness more than when we hear it said that God has the final say, period, because right there we’re face to face..., the fleshly mind does not submit to God. The last word that the fleshly mind wants to hear is that God has the final say. Who chose the kind of history we’ve got here? If He had an infinite number of versions of history, why did He choose this one? Why did He choose a history with evil in it? Why did He choose a history with suffering in it? Why did He choose a history with His Son dying in it? However you answer that you do have to conclude that it was His choice and that’s what He chose. He didn’t consult with anyone, and that’s what we mean when we talk about God is the ultimate cause. “Yet it follows immediately from the doctrine of creation.” That’s why from the very start I’ve always emphasized the Creator-creature distinction. We’re going to see why in some more detail, why I keep emphasizing that, the Creator-creature distinction; it never goes away. “Ultimately, what happens in history—whether the fall of Satan, the fall of Adam, the rejection of Jesus Christ by Israel, or the final judgment—whatever happens is a result of God’s choice to make history the way it is playing out.” He is the author and we’re characters in His story.

I’m indebted to C. S. Lewis for this because he was a writer. C. S. Lewis was talking about foreknowing and predestinating one time, and he said you know, the best way of thinking of this, the way I always think of it, is when I write a story..., remember *The Narnia Chronicles* (you read your kids these neat little stories), and when C. S. Lewis wrote *The Narnia Chronicles* he had characters in them. When an author writes a story he doesn’t write about puppets, he writes about real people who have real decisions. You put a story together, and to make the story real you have real people, suffering, you have real decision making, etc. If you’re the author, in order to have genuine people you have genuine choices, but they’re choices that you yourself as the author in the overall scheme of things have mapped out. That’s an analogy to how God runs history. We have these choices but the choices are still part of the script. But they’re a script of real people making real choices that count for eternity.

So here we’re coming back to that age-old thing that we’ve covered thousands of times in this series, and that is we go back to the Creator-creature distinction. God is the Creator, we are the creature and we are finite analogs

of Him. God is sovereign, man has choice, God is righteous and just, man has conscience, God is omnipresent, man has geometry, can think spatially; there are analogies between Creator and creature. We don't share identities with Him; we share finite analogies with Him. But we're never identical.

Where people have a hard time working with this is that we load our brains with the wrong set of tools. And we do this almost unconsciously because most of the time in our every day experience the tools that we load our thinking machine with have come from the world. But when we start discussing something that bridges the Creator-creature distinction we've got to watch out what set of tools is governing the way we analyze the data.

When we deal with this, what the tendency to do is to take the idea of, and I'll put it in quotes, the idea of "cause" or "causation." We grab a hold of the vocabulary word "causation" and in our minds we start applying it promiscuously in the same sense to the Creator as we do to things in the creation. And we think we are slick because we start pumping out all these grand conclusions with the tool of causation, never stopping to think that we are applying our concept of causation to the Creator in the same way we apply it to the creation. What we have done is started with our idea of cause because we can't imagine God dictating everything about history without destroying choice. How can you have choice if God already made the choice? You can't have causation coming from God because if you do them, well it destroys choice. But that's only because we've been deceived in the way we've been thinking.

The fallacy is that we've taken this concept of causation and we've applied it across the boundary of the Creator-creature, so that it applies to Him in the exact same way it applies to us. As though that word has no change in meaning whatsoever when used of God as when used of man. Wrong! Let me give an example. Where do we have an historic test case to use in the mind's eye that we can check out our thinking with? Can you think of any place where the Creator and the creature have come close together? The Lord Jesus Christ, the hypostatic union, undiminished deity and true humanity in one person. Now if God's sovereignty and human choice were illogically related and in conflict you never could have had the Lord Jesus Christ uniting both of them in one person. But as a matter of fact, He did, and we may have a hard time trying to get it all together but we've got a perfect historical example of where it all did come together.

Every time the Lord Jesus Christ faced a temptation as a man He had choice. He had a choice in the Garden of Gethsemane. But yet we know from the doctrine of impeccability, *non posse peccare*, He is not able to sin. That's why we had that discussion ages ago about those two phrases, *non posse peccare* and *posse non peccare*. He is not able to sin and He is able not to sin. How can that be? How can we resolve that? We said the term *posse non peccare*, able not to sin, looks at the Lord Jesus Christ from His humanity; He is able not to sin. So He could be tempted in His humanity, He was able not to sin, He had a choice. Yet because He was also God, He was *non posse peccare*; he was not able to sin, God can't be tempted, God can't sin. How could you get those two together? Remember the argument I said? Good theologians have strained their brains over this trying to get a hold of this one. And that's right, we can't. The problem then is not that it's illogical, it's that when we try to erase the Creator-creature distinction what we do is create a real mess, because without that you have two contradictory ideas, but if you keep the Creator-creature distinction in place you understand one applies in one realm and the other occurs in the other realm.

So when we talk about foreknowing, what are we saying? In a nutshell, what does foreknowledge mean? Here's what it doesn't mean. It is not a synonym for omniscience; omniscience is God knows all things and He knows even the what-if's of history, what might have been. Remember that strange comment the Lord Jesus made in the garden, what did He say? He said do you now know that I could call to My Father and He'd send Me legions of angels. He had knowledge of what could have happened. That's omniscience; it is a total knowledge of everything, actual and potential. Foreknowledge is not that. Foreknowledge has a highly personal involvement to it, there's an intimacy to this word as in Amos 3 where God says of Israel, you only of all the nations have I known. Now we're not going to say that God was unaware of the other nations are we? I don't think so. So what God must be getting at is you only did I know in intimate relationship. So foreknowledge is not cognitive knowledge, God knows all things cognitively; it's another kind of knowing that is relational; much as Adam knew his wife and conceived a son, it's an intimate personal relationship. God has a personal commitment to certain individuals, certain characters in His plan of history in a similar way as when an author sits down they foreknow the characters in their story because they have it in mind how they're going to write the story and that's how God

has that foreknowledge. We'll deal with it more when we get into predestination.

Going back to Rom 8:29 you'll see there's a chain to how this works, "For those whom He foreknew," that means some people He didn't "foreknew," some He did foreknow, some He did not. In the sense of omniscience He knew everybody, but the foreknowing is talking about knowing with personal involvement, knowing those who would be in Christ, "He predestined to become conformed to the image of His Son." That's why Rom 8:28 can work. If you compromise verse 29 you can flush verse 28. Verse 29 is the basis for verse 28. So that's why it has to be rooted in the certain plan of God. We don't have Chance running history here. We have the personal will of God, period. No outsiders are telling God how to run the system, He chose the history.

Now how He does that, and not become the author of sin because you could say well, gee, He could have had a history without a fall, He could have had a history without babies dying, He chose that kind of a history? Well, yeah He did. He ultimately decided that's the history I want. People don't like to hear that, but that's the way the Scriptures lay it out, all things, He works *all* things, not some things, He works all things out after the counsel of His will. And it's hard, this is a very hard truth, but the good thing about it is that it and it alone gives the glory to all the works that God has done for us. All the intercession, all the justification, there's nothing that can stop Him because He is all alone as the Creator and He has said it shall take place. And it shall, no one controverts the sovereign will of God.

[Back To The Top](#)

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