

## Rom. 8:29 (LD 12. Q/A 32) “Conformed to His Image”

**For the Children:** Perhaps you have dressed up as someone else at times – a famous person or historical figure. If you want to do it well, you try not only to look like that person, but even to speak and act like them. Of course, that is just acting; it is not who you really are. When we believe in the Lord Jesus, *He* makes us like Himself in some ways – more and more as we grow in the faith. Then we begin to think and speak and behave more the way He wants us to. When we go to be with Him, we will be made even more like Him. **Questions:** What is “predestination”? In what ways should we be like the Lord Jesus? What things can you do to become more like Him and what will make it harder to become more like Him?

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### Introduction:

#### First Point: Predestined to Be Conformed

- 1) More Than Foreseen: “Foreknown” speaks of God’s predestination of the persons whom He has “foreloved.” It does not mean simply “foreseen.” God is not subject to what Fate dictates for the future. In any case, whatever faith or works He foresees must have come from His fore-ordained choice, because these things are gifts to man that only He can give. This foreknowing is once-for-all.
- 2) A Predestined Purpose: Those foreloved are predestined to a particular purpose. This is a strong word, meaning boundaries set, things fixed, appointed or decreed beforehand – also once-for-all. What is determined is the purpose, that those foreloved will be conformed.
- 3) All Things Work Together: The predestining of persons and their purpose is required for “all things to work together for their good (v. 28). If matters were left to man’s will to determine, there would be no guarantee that all things would work for good.

#### Second Point: What It Means to Be Conformed

- 1) Conformed to the Image: We are not made exactly like the Lord Jesus in every respect. A different word is used for an exact representation of something e.g., Heb. 1:3. In Rom. 8:29 the point is that we are like the Lord Jesus, but not identical.
- 2) The Final Conforming: We are made like the Lord Jesus in that we will receive back our bodies, glorified and immortal like His. See vss. 11,21, 23, and Phlp. 3:21, for this aspect of our conformity to His image.
- 3) The Present Conforming: We are also currently being transformed into His likeness, with our spiritual renewal and sanctification. See Rom. 12:1, Eph. 5:1, Phlp. 3:10, Col. 3:10 and 2 Cor. 3:18. We are called “Christians” (“little Christs/anointed ones”) for this reason.

#### Third Point: The Result of Being Conformed

- 1) Christ the Firstborn: The result of this conforming is not simply about us – our present sanctification or final glory. It is above all for the glory of the Lord. Our conformity to Him shows that He is the Firstborn – literally, the “First Begotten” (by His Father). This does not mean that the 2<sup>nd</sup> Person of the Trinity had a beginning. “Firstborn” is not always literal (Heb. 12:23, Rev. 1:5). Based on the laws regarding the firstborn son in Israel (Ex. 4:22, Dt. 21:16-17), it can be a metaphor for pre-eminence and inheritance. See Col. 1:15,18; Heb. 1:6). Heb. 12:23 explains that we are firstborn in Christ the Firstborn – we share in His eminence and inheritance.
- 2) The Three-Fold Office: The result of conformity to His image means we also share in His anointing – “little Christs.” We are little prophets, priests and kings in Him (Q/A 32). This means we have a calling to be holy, to offer our lives in service and gratitude to the Lord; to resist sin; to share the Gospel with unbelievers and with each other. We only make a small beginning in these things, but that is our character, as those being conformed to His image.

### Conclusion: