

Salvation—Predestination (1st)

(Today we begin studying the doctrine of predestination and its connection to salvation. In this lesson, we define the term and begin to investigate more specifically how the word is used in the salvation of the people of God.)

In previous podcasts, we covered the purpose of God, the sovereignty of God, election, and adoption and their relationship to salvation. In those studies, we mention predestination but we did not enlarge on this subject *per se*. Though predestination is included and directly connected with the purpose of God, election, and adoption, as well as other subjects, I believe it is good for us to look at it specifically. While many people and even some professed Christians deny predestination, every Bible reader knows that it is a scriptural word and a subject that must be addressed if he is going to truly worship God as He revealed Himself to man in the Holy Scriptures. Many quotes could be supplied from the writings of Arminians like John Wesley, John Fletcher, and others to show their arguments against the truth of predestination that reveal those who argue against it today are the same sophist arguments of human “logic” and misrepresentation of Scripture. Their claims are basically that it either makes man a puppet or that God is the author of sin. However, my desire is simply to try to explain the passages as found in the Word of God in a literal, grammatical interpretation as with all of the Scriptures and to show the subject in the connection of salvation.

The Greek word for predestinate, predestination, etc. is προορίζω (proorizo) and means “to limit in advance, i.e. (figuratively) predetermine:—determine before, ordain, predestinate.” (*SwordSearcher* computer Bible program.) It is used six times in six verses in the New Testament: **Acts** 4:28 (determined before); **Romans** 8:29 (did predestinate); 8:30 (he did predestinate); **I Corinthians** 2:7 (ordain); **Ephesians** 1:5 (having predestinated); 1:11 (being predestinated). According to Thayer’s *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament*, the word is defined as *to predetermine, decide beforehand; to foreordain, appoint beforehand*. This compound word is composed from the preposition πρό (pro) which means “in front of, before,” etc. and ὀρίζω (horizo) which means “to mark out or bound (“horizon”), i.e. (figuratively) to appoint, decree, specify:—declare, determine, limit, ordain.” (*SwordSearcher*). When studying ὀρίζω we find that it is used eight times in eight verses in the New Testament: **Luke** 22:22 (it was determined); **Acts** 2:23 (by the determinate); 10:42 (was ordained); 11:29 (determined); 17:26 (and hath determined); 17:31 (he hath ordained); **Romans** 1:4 (declared); **Hebrews** 4:7 (limiteth). Our English word horizon comes from this Greek word. Obviously, the horizon does not cause anything; it marks out the boundary between the earth and the sky. In all of the definitions given for the Greek word translated predestinate not one time is the word “cause” mentioned. In the omniscience of God all things that come to pass were marked out or determined by Him from all eternity but this in no way infers that He caused what was declared. Some events *were* caused by God. Creation is such an event. But in no way God is the author of sin nor does He have fellowship with sin. When man sins he is the “cause” of that sin, not God. When Lucifer sinned, he was the cause of his sin. When the non-elect angels sinned, they were the cause of the sins they committed. Yet while “Herod, and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles, and the people of Israel, were gathered together, For to do whatsoever thy hand and thy counsel **determined before** to be done” in crucifying Christ, they were the cause of their sins. See Acts 4:23-28. Note that **determined before** is προορίζω or the Greek word for predestination. Note also that **what** they did was according to the **hand and counsel** of God. Nevertheless, they were the cause of their sins and not God. This one example should be sufficient to show that the predestination of God is not

the cause of sin. To say that it is, is to teach contrary to the Scriptures and we are to submit our mind and reasoning to the Scriptures whether we understand it or not. God forbid that we force the Scriptures to our sinful reason and understanding. We are taught in Romans chapter nine that God hardened Pharaoh's heart and the question is raised as to why does God find fault when His will is irresistible. The Divine answer is, "Nay but, O man, who art thou that repliest against God? Shall the thing formed say to him that formed it, Why hast thou made me thus?" This would have been an excellent time for God to explain or simplify His sovereignty and the responsibility of man, but He did not do that. God simply said that we are to not try to explain it and we are to submit our thinking to what the Scriptures say. We are not to try to rationalize it to the understanding of sinful thinking. I believe if one would do a thorough and honest study of the verses with the words $\pi\rho\omicron\omicron\rho\iota\zeta\omega$ and $\acute{o}\rho\iota\zeta\omega$ and the context in which they are found that he will find that God predestinating all things does not cause anything and certainly does not cause sin. Much, much more can be said to show that predestination merely marks out, determines, ordains, decrees, etc. events but does not cause the events that were determined or marked out.

With this overall brief introduction to the subject of predestination, let us now direct our attention more specifically to predestination as it relates to the salvation of God. In doing so we will first consider Romans 8:29-30: "For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate *to be* conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren. Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified." It is obvious from this passage that not only is predestination a biblical subject but that it is vitally associated with the salvation of God. The whole book of Romans could be identified as a theological exposition regarding the fall and salvation of man. In Romans 1:16, the gospel regarding salvation is the power of God to the believer. Then in verse seventeen, it is clearly stated that "the righteousness of God" is revealed in the gospel to the man who has faith. In studying how it is that a person is justified before God, we find that the ground of that justification is "the righteousness of God." (The Lord willing, we will discuss this more fully in future podcasts as we study the doctrine of justification.) However, the passage in Romans 8:29-30 is a brief, but profound, description of the salvation of God.

The passage begins with "for whom he did foreknow." It should be obvious that the "he" in this phrase is God and there are some people that God foreknew in a way different from others. In studying the omniscience of God, it is obvious to any Bible believer that God not only knows all things, but that He knows everyone that has ever lived, is alive today, and will ever live on the earth in the future. It is also plain to everyone who believes the Scriptures that someday God will cast some individuals into the lake of fire with the beast, false prophet, and the devil, cf. Revelation 19:20; 20:10, 15. Therefore, those foreknown by God in verse twenty-nine is a group separate from all others. It is further obvious that the phrase does not say "what" God foreknew but "whom." In other words, God knew some people specially and separate from all others. In fact, the word "know" is so used in the Scriptures to indicate an intimate knowledge or love. In Genesis 4:1, it says, "And Adam knew Eve his wife; and she conceived and bare Cain, and said, I have gotten a man from the Lord." From the very earliest of the history of man we find the word "know" used to indicate an intimate knowledge or love. Then in Genesis 4:17, it states, "And Cain knew his wife; and she conceived, and bare Enoch" Afterwards, Genesis 5:25, affirms this special or intimate love when it was said, "And Adam knew his wife again; and she bare a son, and called his name Seth" Also, when Gabriel was sent to Mary and announced that she was to give birth to Jesus, she said to the angel, "How shall this be, seeing I know not a man?" Amos 3:2 equally testifies of this special knowledge or favor regarding God knowing Israel in a separate way from all the other families or tribes of the earth. Many other examples can be supplied throughout the Scriptures to show this truth for the word know but these should be

sufficient. Therefore, the idea that “foreknow” in Romans 8:29 refers to the love of God for a special people is not some farfetched idea but is completely in harmony with the clear teaching of the Holy Scriptures and is in agreement with the overall truth of the salvation of God. Those predestinated by God to be conformed to the image of his Son, Jesus Christ, are those whom the Father loved before the world began. As we studied in previous podcasts regarding the subject of election, we see that it is the elect that are the objects of the love of God. Note the words of John Gill after giving an explanation of what this phrase is not, he said, “this regards the everlasting love of God to his own people, his delight in them, and approbation of them; in this sense he knew them, he foreknew them from everlasting, affectionately loved them, and took infinite delight and pleasure in them; and this is the foundation of their predestination and election, of their conformity to Christ, of their calling, justification, and glorification.”

The Lord willing, we will discuss this further in our next podcast, but our time is up for today. Farewell.