

NORTHEAST HOUSTON COMMUNITY CHURCH
Sermon: All Things for our Good and Predestination, Part 4
Topic: Foreknowledge of the Elect
Scripture Text: Romans 8:28–30
6/23/2019

Romans 8:28–30 (NKJV) 28 And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose. 29 For whom He foreknew, He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren. 30 Moreover whom He predestined, these He also called; whom He called, these He also justified; and whom He justified, these He also glorified.

Let's continue trying to exegesis this passage.

29 For whom He foreknew, He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren.

We are going to look at the phrase **“For whom He foreknew, He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son,”**

This passage contains two words that has sparked much controversy. foreknew and predestined. Both are related to the “called” or the doctrine of election.

You may remember that last week I said I was not comfortable with that I explained very well the sovereignty of God in relationship to His calling of some and not of others. I said I hoped that the Holy Spirit would enlighten me later in the series. Well, He has.

Let me quickly review the two most popular prevailing thoughts.

1. The first assumes that God, in His sovereignty choose in eternity past to predestine some for salvation and others for eternal damnation. The person had no say in the matter it was Gods purpose apart from any conditions attached.
2. The second assumes that God in knowing all things could look down the road of time and through “foreknowledge” would know who would exercise their free will and respond to God’s saving grace through Jesus Christ.

This topic brings us back to the doctrine of election. I hope I can make it clear. I will warn you that there may be parts of it we may not understand and wonder about.

Let me point out just a few points for thoughts

- I had a hard time accepting that God would create some people for salvation AND THE REST for eternal damnation without a chance to be saved. This would mean that a person is either among the “Elect” or not and therefore lost.
- If the elect were “predestined for salvation then likewise would the non-elect be predestined for destruction?

First let's look closer at the two key words in this verse.

Foreknow - to have previous knowledge of: know beforehand especially by paranormal means or by revelation

The word "foreknew" in *Rom 8:29*, is thus understood by Arminians to mean that God knew beforehand which sinners would believe, etc., and on the basis of this knowledge He predestined them unto salvation.

Calvinists contend that the passage teaches that God set His heart upon (i.e., foreknew) certain individuals; these He predestined or marked out to be saved.

The questions raised by the two opposing interpretations are these:

1. Did God look down through time and see that certain individuals would believe and thus predestine them unto salvation on the basis of this foreseen faith?
2. Or did God set His heart on certain individuals and because of His love for them predestine that they should be called and given faith in Christ by the Holy Spirit and thus be saved?

In other words, is the individual's faith the cause or the result of God's predestination?

<https://www.monergism.com/thethreshold/articles/onsite/foreknew.html>

Although God knew about all men before the world began, He did not know all men in the sense that the Bible sometimes uses the word "know," i.e., with intimate personal awareness and love). It is in this latter sense that God "foreknew" those whom He predestined, called, and justified, as outlined in Romans 8:29,30.

<https://www.monergism.com/thethreshold/articles/onsite/foreknew.html>

Another strong thought is that the word "knew" refers to a more intimate relationship or knowledge than a casual one.

This is another case of the difficulty of a word for word translation. To know is to have knowledge of and Biblically it could mean to know in an intimate way.

Example #1:

Matthew 1:25 (NKJV) 25 and did not know her till she had brought forth her firstborn Son. And he called His name Jesus.

Matthew 1: 25 (NLT) 25 But he did not have sexual relations with her until her son was born. And Joseph named him Jesus.

Example #2

Jeremiah 1:5 (NKJV) 5 "Before I formed you in the womb I knew you; Before you were born I sanctified you; I ordained you a prophet to the nations." (Is 49:1,5, Gal 1:15, Amos 3:2)

Ordained - order or decree (something) officially.

Synonyms: destined, predetermined and predestine.

I believe at this point I have come to the conclusion that everyone that becomes saved have been predestined to do so by God from the beginning. A larger group of people are not counted among the elect but I believe they will have the opportunity to become saved. Then there is another group that were predestined for destruction from the beginning.

Let me try to paint a picture, In the OT God created a world of people from that world of people God called out the nation Israel.

*Amos 3:2 (NKJV) 2 “You only **have I known** of all the families of the earth; Therefore I will punish you for all your iniquities.”*

Israel was the elect of the OT. But among the elect, Israel, were many people not of Israel being at one time over 150,000 (2 Chronicles 2:17)

Israel was saved out of Egypt, saved in crossing the Red sea, saved from starvation and thirst in the desert, saved in battle and allowed to enter the promised land along with those not of Israel.

I believe the same model may apply in the NT. Of all the peoples in the world God called out a number to be elected for salvation. Among that number were some that were not of the elect but still able to receive salvation. That elect group is identified as believers in Jesus Christ, The Church.

Letter to the church of Thessalonica

*1 Thessalonians 1:4–5 (NKJV) 4 knowing, beloved **brethren, your election by God**. 5 For our gospel did not come to you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Spirit and in much assurance, as you know what kind of men we were among you for your sake.*

Letter to the church at Colossi

*Colossians 3:12–13 (NKJV) 12 Therefore, **as the elect of God**, holy and beloved, put on tender mercies, kindness, humility, meekness, longsuffering; 13 bearing with one another, and forgiving one another, if anyone has a complaint against another; even as Christ forgave you, so you also must do.*

Letter to the Christians fleeing persecution.

*1 Peter 1:1–2 (NKJV) 1 Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, To **the pilgrims** (elect ESV,NIV) of the Dispersion in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia, **2 elect according to the foreknowledge of God** the Father, in sanctification of the Spirit, for obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ: Grace to you and peace be multiplied.*

Letter to the church at Ephesus

*Ephesians 1:3–4 (NKJV) 3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ, 4 just as **He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world**, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love,*

Just as Israel was a highly favored group so are the elect of the church.

Believers first belong to God as His elected. God then brings them to salvation through Jesus Christ and we become His.

*John 17:9 (NKJV) 9 “I pray for them. I do not pray for the world but for those whom You have given Me, **for they are Yours. (God’s elect)**.*

We believers become secure in the hand of Jesus.

*John 10:29–30 (NKJV) 29 **My Father, who has given them to Me**, is greater than all; and no one is able to snatch them out of My Father’s hand. 30 I and My Father are one.”*

We are protected in His care.

Matthew 24:24–25 (NKJV) 24 For false christs and false prophets will rise and show great signs and wonders to deceive, if possible, even the elect. 25 See, I have told you beforehand. (foreknowledge)

This elect calling does not nullify the need for all to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, for Salvation is by grace through faith in Jesus Christ and all who will be saved must believe.

Romans 10:13–14 (NKJV) 13 For “whoever calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved.” 14 How then shall they call on Him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in Him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher?

In order for even the elect to be saved they must first hear the message of salvation

*Acts 13:46–49 (NKJV) 46 Then Paul and Barnabas grew bold and said, “It was necessary that the word of God should be spoken to you first; but since you reject it, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, behold, we turn to the Gentiles. 47 For so the Lord has commanded us: ‘I have set you as a light to the Gentiles, That you should be for salvation to the ends of the earth.’ ” 48 **Now when the Gentiles heard this, they were glad and glorified the word of the Lord. And as many as had been appointed to eternal life believed.** 49 And the word of the Lord was being spread throughout all the region.*

The topics of predestination, justification, election, chosen and foreknowledge of God are not easy topics. I studied them as best I could but I am still willing to listen to the knowledgeable views of others who seek the answers through the word of God. I have found what I believe to be the best attempt to explain this at this site.

<https://www.gotquestions.org/elect-of-God.html>

Even in this well-done explanation there are two similar but different views on election.

Excerpts:

Prescient or Foreknowledge View

As it stands, the concept of God electing those who will be saved isn't controversial. What is controversial is how and in what manner God chooses those who will be saved. Throughout church history, there have been two main views on the [doctrine of election](#) (or predestination). One view, which we will call the prescient or foreknowledge view, teaches that God, through His omniscience, knows those who will in the course of time choose of their own free will to place their faith and trust in Jesus Christ for their salvation.

Augustinian View

The second main view is the Augustinian view, which essentially teaches that God not only divinely elects those who will have faith in Jesus Christ, but also divinely elects to grant to these individuals the faith to believe in Christ. In other words, God's election unto salvation is not based on a foreknowledge of an individual's faith, but is based on the free, sovereign grace of Almighty God. God elects people to salvation, and in time these people will come to faith in Christ because God has elected them.

The difference boils down to this: who has the ultimate choice in salvation—God or man?

The writing (“Who are the elect of God?”) is well worth reading.

<https://www.gotquestions.org/elect-of-God.html>

I am impressed with the article. I am at the point of understanding each view better and say “why does it have to be either or?” I tried to explain that in this sermon series.

I cannot claim to know it all but the time will come when we all will.

[1 Corinthians 13:12](#) (NKJV) *12 For now we see in a mirror, dimly, but then face to face. Now I know in part, but then I shall know just as I also am known.*

I must close out on this part hoping that we understand that God has predetermined some from the beginning of time to be counted among the elect and for those that are not are vulnerable for destruction some being predestined to that end. (Rom 6:23).

In the next message we have to look closer at the non-elect, those that God has blinded to salvation and those that He has hardened their hearts to salvation.

Message Scriptures: **Romans 8:28–30**, *Matthew 1:25, Jeremiah 1:5, Is 49:1,5, Gal 1:15, Amos 3:2, 2 Chronicles 2:17, 1 Thessalonians 1:4–5, Colossians 3:12–13, 1 Peter 1:1–2, Ephesians 1:3–4, John 17:9, John 10:29–30, Matthew 24:24–25, Romans 10:13–14, Acts 13:46–49,*

END