

God's Foreknowledge

(Rom 8:28-30)

- Remember the context is still the assurance of justification by faith

I. Heresy of Universalism

A) This popular teaching bases all upon man's philosophy and reasoning

1. They focus solely on the attribute of God's love, ignoring most others
2. They say "God is all love and therefore can consign no one to eternal punishment"
 - i. But what about the attribute of God's holiness?

B) The entire bible recognizes and proclaims a distinction between God's people and the people of the world

1. John 3:16- Even their core verse by necessity implies those that do not believe and therefore perish (John 3:36)

II. God's ultimate purpose: Christ's glory

A) Notice there are 2 points in Paul's argument:

1. Christ to be the first-born of many brethren
2. Therefore we are conformed to His image
 - i. We are all so subjective by nature that we lose sight of God's true purpose and the ultimate end: Christ's glory!
 - ii. Our being conformed to His image is a means to that end
 - a) 2 Cor 3:18- Changed from glory to glory

B) Terms

1. "Firstborn"- This term means much more than the first in numerical order
 - i. Christ is to be the "firstborn among many brethren"- this indicates the preeminence of the firstborn son in a large family
 - a) The firstborn was totally unique, there could not be another
 - b) He got the double portion
 - c) He acted as the Father's steward towards his brethren
 - d) He took the spiritual lead and was truly the "chief among brethren"
 - ii. Col 1:15-18- Christ preeminent in all things
 - a) Eph 1:20-23- All things under His feet
 - b) John 1:14- Christ the only begotten (there cannot be another)
2. "Image"- *Icon*- This is a "worked out likeness," or a "derived image" or a "pressed-out likeness" (thus conformed)
 - i. This isn't by chance, it's not a natural similarity
 - ii. This is planned and purposed
 - iii. 2 Cor 4:4- Christ is the image of the Father

- a) Heb 1:3- Christ the “express image of God”
 - 1) Only the child can be said to derive its image from the father
 - (a) Others make look similar, but it is not derived from the father, and is only external likeness
- 3. “Conformed”- *Synmorpho*- Fashioned together with
 - i. Phil 3:21- Same word used to describe our change of body
 - ii. It means to bring to the same form with, inwardly and outwardly
 - a) Heb 2:10- Christ conformed to lowly man
 - b) Phil 2:5-11- Christ humbled in fashion as a man
 - 1) “Wherefore”- States the ultimate goal and purpose- His glory!

III. Doctrine

A) We need to look at Christ in reverse

- 1. Phil 2:5-8- The Only Begotten Son left glory and took upon Him our human nature, the “firstborn creature” (Col 1:15-18)
 - i. 1 Tim 3:16- God was manifest in the flesh
 - ii. Heb 2:9-18- Christ became like us, so we could become like Him
 - a) Christ became a man, 2 natures in one person
 - b) He took this dual nature back to glory
 - c) He is the first of a new kind of “race”
 - 1) We are being made conformable to the glorified dual nature of Christ (we do not become gods nor angels)
 - (a) 2 Cor 5:17- We are new creation in Him
 - (b) 2 Pet 1:4- “Partakers of the divine nature”
 - (c) Eph 5:30- “Of His flesh and bone”
 - (d) 1 Cor 15:45-49- We will bear the image of the heavenly
 - (e) 1 John 3:2- “We will be like Him”
 - (1) Heb 2:5-8- Our ultimate end

B) Consider the assurance of this: if this is God’s ultimate purpose and goal, how can it fail? God’s honor is on the line

- 1. Eph 1:10-14- The end is the praise of His glory through us
- 2. Eph 3:10-11- Testimony to all the universe of the attributes of God
 - i. But if Arminianism is right, then it was possible that no man would be willing to believe, and God’s honor would be destroyed
 - a) In fact, if just 1 predestined person missed the goal, God’s honor and glory suffers, thus:

IV. Rom 8:29

A) “For”

- 1. Paul shows us how this is all worked out in every detail, in order that God’s ultimate purpose is achieved perfectly, with no uncertainty whatsoever
 - i. This brings us to the “Golden Chain” (v.29-30)

- a) This chain has 5 links: Foreknew, predestinated, called, justified, glorified (notice “sanctified” is left out)
 - 1) We can separate this into 2 pairs connected by “called”:
 - (a) Foreknew and predestinated (what God has determined regarding us)
 - (b) Justified and glorified (how God practically accomplishes this)
 - (c) “Called” linking the 2 together
 - (1) It is at the moment of calling that this begins to be revealed in us

B) “Foreknow”

- 1. This word does not mean simply to “know before hand”
 - i. Many teach this is the meaning, that God is omnipotent, and therefore prescient
 - a) They say “God looked out over time and saw all those that would believe”
 - ii. There is nothing in this Golden Chain that refers to what “we do” whatsoever, it is all “He” (5x’s)
- 2. “Foreknow”- *Proginosko*- This word means to “know before” or to “ordain before,” to “appoint before”
 - i. We must not rely simply on the dictionary for a words meaning, but see how it is used in scripture
 - a) Acts 2:23- Foreknowledge tied to “determinate counsel”
 - 1) Does this mean that God simply foresaw that the Lord Jesus Christ would be crucified?
 - (a) Acts 4:27-28- Compare this “carrying out of God’s plan”
 - (b) God did not simply “foresee”, He “foreordained”
 - b) Rom 11:2- No way Israel can be simply cast away, because God chose them (true Israel)
 - 1) What God foreordains must come to pass
 - 2) This is the whole argument of Rom ch 9-11
 - (a) This is also the most complete refutation of dispensational theology and their misunderstanding of God’s “Israel”
 - c) 1 Pet 1:2- Elected according to God’s purpose (and not according to our reaction to gospel)
 - d) 1 Pet 1:20- Christ becoming the “lamb of God” was God’s preordained plan
 - 1) This cannot mean that God foresaw His Son would leave glory like the Prodigal Son
 - ii. God “knows”

- a) When scripture says God knows, it refers not simply to His omniscience, for God knows all!
 - 1) Amos 3:2- “You only have I known...”
 - (a) Can this mean God is unaware of others?
 - 2) Matt 7:21-23- “Depart from me, I never knew you”
 - (a) Can this mean God is no familiar with all mankind?
 - (b) Or does it mean “You don’t belong to me!”
 - 3) In LXX God’s “knowing” has reference to God having set His heart upon someone before hand”
 - (a) What assurance!!!!
- iii. Acts 13:48- “As many as were ordained to eternal life believed”