

The Foreknowledge of God

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[0 : 00] Well, in our last lesson, we began to look at this word and concept of foreknowledge.

! And we're dealing with it as it pertains to Romans chapter 8, particularly verses 29 and 30. I want to read those two passages again until you have it memorized.

For those whom He foreknew, He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son, in order that He might be the firstborn among many brothers. And those whom He predestined, He also called, and those whom He called, He also justified, and those whom He justified, He also glorified.

And we talked about this last time, but the predominant interpretation of this passage is that eternity passed, God looked down the corridor or the tunnel of time because God was wanting to find out who would one day pray to receive Him, to receive Jesus as Savior.

And once God identified those individuals, He was then able to elect them to eternal life. Now that's the prevailing view, globally.

[1 : 37] And I got some good friends that hold that view, and I love to debate them. And we haven't come to blows yet, but it's been interesting. I pointed out last time that this view, while widely held, is erroneous, and it's fraught with problems.

To put it more bluntly, it is a false view that cannot be supported by Scripture.

Now what happens to people that hold that view? I believe most of them are believers. I think they go to heaven. And the Lord will correct them, just like He's going to correct me when I get there.

Mine's going to be the great bonfire in heaven, the wood, hay, and stubble. So stand back, the big bonfire in heaven. I covered last week why I believe this belief of foreknowledge is incorrect.

And the major point, and I had a lot of you come up to me later and really thank me like it was original with me, but I took credit anyway. But point one, we covered last time, God never learns anything.

[2 : 54] God doesn't learn anything. He's omnipotent. Let me read you a quote here.

I can't remember where I got this. God has never and will never peer into the future in order to see what is going to occur.

God has never looked into the future with the goal of learning anything. Why? God is omniscient.

On my paper, I've put those three words in bold type, underlined them.

God is omniscient. He knows all things eternally. He knows all things immediately. And that renders the need to appear in the future unnecessary and pointless.

It is important that we understand this truth. God has never peered into the future and learned anything new or unknown to Him.

[4 : 03] And I didn't always hold of that. I used to think God would sit up there with Jesus saying, you won't believe what Tom Holland did today. And Jesus said, try me. Nothing He does surprises me. But that's not God.

He doesn't look into the distant horizon of time in order to discover what he did not previously know. Now, if he wants to look into the future, he can do it because he's God.

But all that he would see is what he's already foreordained before the foundation of the world.

That's what he would see. So it's not necessary for him to do that.

That was point one last week as to why it is not necessary for God to look forward in time to discover who is going to get saved and who is going to remain lost.

I started on point two last time. The reasons why God does not need to look in the future, but we didn't have time to fully develop the thought.

[5 : 12] And the point I made last week, at least on the surface, to expand it this evening, if God chose to look into the future, if He chose to look down the corridor of time, all He would see was

unbelief.

That's all He's going to see. Now, if you remember this, you get an A tonight. But about the third lesson in this study, which is two and a half years old, I drew a circle.

And I said, every human that has ever lived or ever will live is in that circle. The only person that's not there is the Lord Jesus Christ, the unique God-man.

But everyone else is in that circle. And if God, and everybody in that circle is lost, dead in trespasses and sins, and if God wants to take someone out of that circle and save them, He can do that.

Because He's God. And He does it. Are we glad that He does that? Yeah. You don't want them remaining in the circle, guys. But God, when He looks down the corridors of time, if He ever did, that's what He would see, that circle.

[6 : 36] The Apostle Paul gave us the perfect description of mankind, men and women, in the third chapter of the book of Romans.

And I can say perfect, because Paul was writing by inspiration of the Holy Spirit. And beginning in verse 10, here is God's description of mankind.

If he wanted to look into the future from billions and trillions of eons ago, this is what he would have seen. And I'll start in verse 10.

No one is righteous. How many are righteous? No one. No one is righteous. No one understands God's way.

This is a biggie. Verse 11. No one seeks God. You know, we went through a seeker movement.

[7 : 43] There are churches in this town today that say we're seeker churches. There's one seeker in the Bible, and that's God. He's seeking to save the lost.

He's the seeker. But when God looked down the corridor of time, no one is seeking Him. All have turned aside. Verse 12.

All have become useless spiritually. Verse 12. No one does good, not even one. That's verse 12. Now let me make a comment there. That's total depravity. And we've studied that. But remember, total depravity doesn't mean that there's some people that do some good things.

There's a lot of guys in this room that have done some really good things. And done personal things for me personally. I'm always happy when Mike Dursham shows up to work on my plumbing because he knows I've already worked on it.

[8 : 50] It does triple the cost. But that's not his fault. That's my fault. But no one does good. I always think of Dr. Salk.

Creator, inventor of the polio vaccine. Now guys, I'm 73 years old. I went through those polio shots at school.

We'd go down to school on like a Saturday to get them and the needle was about that long. And we had to have them. And all of us at my age, we've seen these kids, pictures of these kids in the iron lung.

And I know I didn't want that. I didn't want to contract polio. And Dr. Salk saved probably ultimately billions of people.

Dr. Salk died an agnostic Jew. Never embraced Christ and never believed for sure there was even a God. He was an agnostic. Did he do some good things?

[9 : 56] Yeah, of course he did. But that didn't get him one inch toward heaven. Verse 13, even our speech is like a smelly grave.

We stink like a grave. Deceit is on our tongues. Our mouths are full of cursing and bitterness.

Innocent blood is shed physically and mentally by people like us. I mean, I've been there.

Our lives are ones of destruction and misery. That's verse 16. Verse 17, lost have not and cannot know peace with God. And verse 18, the human race has lost its fear of God.

I don't think there's anyone in Washington, D.C. that fears God. I really don't. That day's coming.

[11 : 01] Judgment delayed is not judgment denied. And that day's coming. Consider these passages as well. Isaiah 53, 6.

All we like sheep have gone astray. We have turned everyone to his own way. So as God looks down the tunnel, he sees sheep that have gone astray.

Just wandering around. Isaiah 64. For all of us have become like one who is unclean, and all our righteous deeds are like a filthy rag in the sight of God.

My wife always says, don't use that example. But in Hebrew, that's the feminine napkin during menstruation. Which, if you came into contact with it, you couldn't go to the temple for so many weeks.

You had to clean yourself up. But I'll stop there, because usually when she's in the audience, I expand on that. Just to aggravate her. In Ephesians chapter 2, verses 1 to 3, And you were dead in trespasses and sins in which you once walked.

[12:18] That's what God saw if He wanted to. Following the course of this world. Following the prince of the power of the air.

That's Satan. The spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience, among whom we all once lived, in the passions of our flesh, carrying out the desires of the body and the mind, and were by nature children of wrath like the rest of mankind.

And I was there. Because I didn't get saved until I was 30. I was there. In Genesis 3.15, which we're going to look at Wednesday night, by the way.

And I will put enmity. That's hatred in Hebrew. Between thee. He's talking to Satan. And the woman.

And between thy seed. That's Satan. And her seed. That's the seed of Mary. These passages are only a sampling of many such that describe lost humanity.

[13:35] And it is no wonder that if God were to look down the corridors of time, He would only see disbelief. This is what He affirms in Romans chapter 8 and many other places in the Bible, Old and New Testament.

No one can choose to believe in Jesus by his own initiative or by an exercise of his own will. I had a very good friend. And he told me, I chose Christ.

He didn't choose me. I said, really? Really? I said, when you get to heaven, how much credit are you going to give to Jesus for being there?

He said, 100%. I said, why? He said, what do you mean? I said, you just told me. You chose Him. He didn't choose you.

Surely you share in some of this. Well, maybe a little. I said, no. Because it doesn't work that way.

[14:45] It doesn't work that way at all. No one choose Jesus by His own initiative or by an exercise of His own will. We're going to get to that in a minute.

Repeatedly, Scripture teaches that repentance and faith are necessary to salvation and that repentance and faith are grace gifts that God must give to the guilty sinner before he can embrace Christ Jesus as Lord and Savior.

And you all ought to have that down because we spent 19 weeks on that. We spent half a year almost talking about justification by faith. Well, does Scripture verify this truth?

Consider these passages. Some of these we read last week and others we didn't. Acts 11, 18. When they heard all these things, they fell silent and they glorified God, saying, Then to the Gentiles also...

Now, these words are underlined. God has granted repentance that leads to life. Who granted repentance? God did.

[16:02] I didn't repent on my own. I couldn't. I tried. I got further away. God grants repentance. Acts 13, 48.

And when the Gentiles heard this, they began rejoicing and glorifying the word of the Lord and, underlined, As many as were appointed to eternal life believed.

You need a divine appointment on God's book, his calendar, whatever. As many as were appointed to eternal life believed.

That's a whole city in ancient Israel that they're talking about there. Very familiar. Ephesians 2, 8, 9. Most of you have it memorized.

For by grace you have been saved through faith, and this is not your own doing. Underlined, it is the gift of God.

[17:06] It's a gift of God. Not a result of works so that no one may boast. Can you imagine if it was us? Well, I did better than somebody.

And then somebody, yeah, but I did better than you. Yeah, but he did better than all of us. I mean, it would be boasting. That's part of our fallenness. Philippians 1, 29.

For it has been granted to you. Underlined. God grants us something. It has been granted to you that for the sake of Christ, you should not only believe in Him, but also suffer for His sake.

Now, we like to leave that last part out, you know? Believing in Christ is something that has been granted to us by the Father and by the Spirit.

Hebrews 12, 2. Looking to Jesus, and listen to this. Underlined. The founder and perfecter of our faith.

[18:17] People go around talking about their faith. Where did it come from? It was founded in us by Jesus, and He's in the process of perfecting it. It's called sanctification.

And you never arrive in this lifetime. But we strive. And when we get to heaven and see Him as He is, we're going to be like Him. We'll be talking about that in a few weeks, and that will be the last subject in this whole thing.

Looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him, endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God.

2 Peter 1. 1. Simon Peter, a servant, an apostle of Jesus Christ, underlined, to those who have obtained a faith.

They obtained it. It wasn't theirs. They were given it. A faith of equal standing with ours by the righteousness of our God and Savior, Jesus Christ.

[19:32] Phenomenal. 1 John 5.1, Everyone who believes that Jesus is the Christ has been born of God.

That's how you're reborn. And everyone who loves the Father loves whoever has been born of Him. There we have a few passages to consider.

Paul also tells us in the ninth chapter of the book of Romans, the following, 9.16, So then, it is not of Him who wills, and that's free will, an exercise of free will.

It's not to Him who wills, nor of Him who runs, but of God who shows mercy. Underlined, but of God who shows mercy.

It's where salvation comes from. This is why no one has the free will to believe on his own. It is not to him who exercises his will.

[20:38] Neither it is him who runs. Well, what is that? That is working. That's striving. Man's trying to work for his salvation. He's running to be saved.

Salvation can only occur when God shows mercy. That's how we're saved. God shows mercy. Paul said the same thing to Titus.

Titus chapter 3, verses 4 to 5. But when the goodness and loving kindness of God our Savior appeared, He saved us.

Not because of works done by us in righteousness, like we had any, but according to His own mercy. And I love that verse of Scripture for what it says there.

I also love it when we talk about eternal security of the true believer. And I tell my Arminian friends that believe you can lose your salvation if you spit on the sidewalk, that it's according to His own mercy that we're saved.

[21:45] Doesn't it stand to reason the only way we can be lost if Christ enters into a period of unmercy? He withdraws His mercy and now He's become unmerciful?

So then I'll say to them, give me an example of that in the Bible with a believer. If anybody in the Bible ever deserved to lose his salvation other than me, it's King David.

You read that deal with Bathsheba. I counted that up one time. There was like 17 sins that David committed in that whole process.

You know what the first one was? In the spring when kings went out with their armies to fight for God, David remained in Jerusalem.

There was his first sin. He wasn't supposed to be in Jerusalem looking down at a woman taking a bath. Wasn't supposed to. So these passages and many others verify that foreknowledge does not mean foresight.

[22:59] God wasn't doing an exercise hoping to gain foresight. Let me see who's going to get saved so I can elect them. God does not look down that proverbial corridor to see who's going to get themselves saved so he can then elect them.

It just doesn't do it. Foreknowledge does not refer to events. See the corridor a time example people are looking for an event.

Oh look on such and such a date he prayed. Oh yeah he prayed. It doesn't refer to events. Foreknowledge refers to people.

It involves people. In the passage we've been looking at God the Holy Spirit used the word whom whom he foreknew.

If this was referring to an event of getting yourself saved the word would have been what he foresaw. What did he foresee? He saw someone getting themselves saved.

[24 : 05] No. He looks at people. He saves people. In Romans chapter 8 Paul is addressing God's relationship with individuals not incidents.

That's the whole meaning of Romans chapter 8. It's dealing with people like us. Foreknowledge not only means foreknow specific people but it means to forelove those people.

God foreloved his children. He even wrote our names down in the Lamb and Book of Life in ink. In ink.

the Greek word for foreknowledge is pro-gonesco which I'm sure I mispronounced. It is a compound word in the original language made up of pro and gonesco.

Gonesco means to know someone in a personal intimate relationship. it is synonymous with loving another person in an intimate way.

[25 : 25] When the Bible talks about Adam knowing his wife that is referring to the sexual relationship within that marriage.

And by the way that's the only sexual relationship acceptable to God. Now we see this also in the New Testament when Joseph found out that Mary was pregnant and he knew he hadn't known her. They weren't even fully married yet. They were basically more than an engagement but less than okay we can sleep together. Joseph was distraught.

He's going to leave her. He was worried because that called for stoning to death. He didn't want that to happen to her. And you know the story. An angel appeared to him in a dream and said that what has happened Mary is pregnant.

She's pregnant with the Son of God through the power of the Holy Spirit. So the Scriptures say in Matthew chapter 1 starting in verse 24 so Joseph took his wife but knew her not until she had given birth to a son.

[26 : 42] Until Jesus was born and I'm sure several weeks after it was hands off. Joseph did not consummate that relationship.

The words he knew her not means they did not have a physical relationship until the baby Jesus was born. After that the Scriptures record that Joseph and Mary had sons and daughters. This demolishes the Roman Catholic belief in the perpetual virginity of Mary. They're huge on that. That she's a perpetual virgin.

And they like to call people like Jude and James and others that were half brothers of Jesus, they refer to them as cousins. They were just cousins because they want to maintain Mary's virginity. I tell my Catholic friends and infuriate them, Mary's never heard one of your prayers. And they pray to Mary. She didn't hear any prayers. Jesus hears prayers.

[27 : 51] I went to the Kansas City Festival of Evangelism back in 19-year-old with Mike Stark. And it was at the Convention Center in downtown Kansas City, right across the street from the largest Catholic church in the state.

And on the side of the building said, Mary, mother of Jesus, save our souls. And we had Billy Graham there and we had Louis Palau and we had all these great guys there and thousands of people.

It was a neat deal. But we walked in under that banner every day. Mary, save us. Let me return to the Greek word genosko, meaning, I thought my button came off, meaning this great, intense love relationship.

But in Romans, there's a prefix pro in front of genosko. The word pro means before or beforehand. So you take these two words and combine them to become pro genosko, meaning to love someone beforehand.

that's what God did for us. How much beforehand? Well, before the world was created, before there was a heaven and an earth, and eternity passed.

[29 : 12] We don't have the date and time. But He loved us beforehand. And we find this word in Romans 11 chapter, verse 2, which says, God has not or never rejected His people whom He foreknew.

If you and I have been foreknown by God, we've been foreknown for eternity. For eternity. God has not rejected His people whom He progenesced.

Paul uses foreknowledge to mean those whom God previously chose to love with a special distinguishing love.

This refers to those individuals whom God purposed to love before the foundation of the world. And may I say that this divine love was based on nothing lovable in the chosen one. You know, before the earth, before the heavens and the earth were formed, we weren't even around, were we?

[30 : 25] We weren't even around. This love originated in God, and you know why? No one said anything.

That's the right answer. we don't know. Why would God love someone like me? I'm the most unlovable person that's ever been around. We don't know why.

Why did God fix His love on us? Well, I don't know. I don't know. Ask God that someday. I doubt if He answers you. I don't think you'll even ask Him though. I think we'll be in such awe.

you know. This love originated in God for reasons known only to God. He loved those whom He chose to love simply because He chose to do so.

I taught on election years ago upstairs. I had two visitors from Scotland that I knew were connected to VOM. And that's my wife's country of birth going back generations.

[31 : 28] I have relatives from there. And these guys were all steeped in Calvinism being Scottish Presbyterians. And so I had like 60 in that class. And I said, I promised you last week I was going to tell you why you were elected by God.

And they were all sitting on the edge of their seat. And I said, I don't know and neither does anyone else that has ever lived.

And people that tell you they know why, mark it down, they don't know why. And those two guys from Scotland went, whew, because they thought I was going to come up with something bizarre, you know.

I'll never forget that. Divine foreknowledge means we were chosen in love by God for a purpose. Why? To worship Him. God is still in the business of calling out worshipers for Him. That we will worship Him for eternity.

[32 : 33] And He's still doing that. When He's through doing that, we're out of here. And I think that day's getting close. So share the good news now. You're not going to share it when you get to heaven.

There's nobody in heaven you're going to witness to. If you're ever going to witness, you got to do it now. Why do we love God? According to 1 John 4 19, we love God because God first loved us.

That's why. He's the great teacher in that. What should be the result of this? Having been loved by God from eternity past, should humble us, should drive us to our knees in heartfelt devotion to God. The more we grasp the fact that He predestined us to adoption as sons, the more reason we have to give God all the glory. 100%. Not like my friend said, maybe 1%, maybe 5%.

No. 100% goes to the Lord. I love Ephesians first chapter. I'm only going to read three verses, maybe four.

[33 : 49] Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places.

How many blessings? Every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places, even as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before Him.

That's probably going to be our next area of study when we finish this study. Striving for holiness. Godliness, I call it. Godly living in an ungodly world.

That's a possibility. He wants us holy and blameless before Him. In love, He predestined us for adoption to Himself as sons through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of His will, to the praise of His glorious grace with which He has blessed us in the Beloved.

When we get to heaven, we will immediately cast any crowns we receive at the feet of Jesus. That's the only proper place for them.

[35 : 07] At that moment, we will each have a greater realization of the love of God than we've ever had before. each of us will be staggered at the truth that He foreknew us.

We'll be staggered that He predestined us, that He called us, that He justified us, and that He glorified us. It's going to be staggering.

Maybe that's what it means when it says there was silence in heaven. We're so staggered we can't even speak. The truth of the foreknowledge of God should cause our hearts to be ignited with a

greater adoration for Him who chose to love us before time even began.
Before time began. Such of as this puts a whole new appreciation of the cross in our hearts and in
our lives.
moment Thank you.