

Biblical Notes – Romans 8:28-30

28-30 – And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose. [29] For those whom He foreknew, He also predestined to become conformed to the image of His Son, so that He would be the firstborn among many brethren; [30] and these whom He predestined, He also called; and these whom He called, He also justified; and these whom He justified, He also glorified. (28. Οἴδαμεν δὲ ὅτι τοῖς ἀγαπῶσιν τὸν θεὸν πάντα συνεργεῖ [ὁ θεὸς] εἰς ἀγαθόν, τοῖς κατὰ πρόθεσιν κλητοῖς οὖσιν. 29. ὅτι οὓς προέγνω, καὶ προώρισεν συμμόρφους τῆς εἰκόνος τοῦ νιοῦ αὐτοῦ εἰς τὸ εἶναι αὐτὸν πρωτότοκον ἐν πολλοῖς ἀδελφοῖς. 30. οὓς δὲ προώρισεν, τούτους καὶ ἐκάλεσεν, τούτους καὶ ἐδικαίωσεν οὓς δὲ ἐδικαίωσεν, τούτους καὶ ἐδόξασεν)

God's foreknowledge is based upon his decree. That's how God can say that those whom he foreknew he also Predestined to be conformed to the image of his son.

"For whom God did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son. To foreknow, here signifies to design before, or at the first forming of the scheme; to bestow the favor and privilege of being God's people upon any set of men, Romans 11:2. This is the foundation or first step of our salvation; namely, the purpose and grace of God, which was given us in Christ Jesus, before the world began, 2 Timothy 1:9."

— Adam Clarke Commentary, Commentary on Romans 8:29.

"The literal meaning of the word cannot be a matter of dispute. It denotes properly to "know beforehand;" to be acquainted with future events."

— Albert Barnes' Notes on the Whole Bible, Commentary on Romans 8:29.

"The text does not say that God foreknew what certain individuals might do, only that he foreknew them as individuals to whom he would extend the grace of salvation. In this sense foreknowledge can only mean that God has fixed a special attention upon certain people or has loved them in a saving way... This is the way the word generally is used in the Old Testament."

— James Montgomery Boice, Commentary on Romans 8:29.

"He not only foreknew them in the sense of having a prior idea of their personal identities, but he also foreknew them in the sense of foreloving them. We must remember that when the Bible speaks of 'knowing' it often distinguishes between a simple mental awareness of a person and a deep intimate love of the person."

— R.C. Sproul, Commentary on Romans 8:29.

"The direct object of 'foreknow' when used of God is always personal. God foreknows the elect (Romans 8:29), His people (Romans 11:2), and Christ (1 Peter 1:20). These are all personal objects, never events. This means that, for the person who wishes to dismiss this section of Scripture using the 'foreknowledge defense,' the task is difficult indeed, for such a person will have to explain how this one usage is the exception, and why, in the context, it must bear a meaning seen nowhere else. It refers to the choice to enter into relationship with someone. In this case, in eternity past God chose to enter into personal relationship with His elect people, even before bringing them into existence. The relationship is so personal, so intimate, that it is proper to speak of it in the sense of foreloving. God's eternal choice was to enter into a loving, intimate relationship with the elect. This results in His predestinating them to adoption as sons, His calling them into relationship with Him in time, His justifying them by declaring them righteous, and His glorifying them in His presence for all eternity."

— James White, Commentary on Romans 8:29.

"I know the objections which many make here: when Paul says that those are predestinated whom God foreknew, he means that each is elected in view of his faith. But I cannot allow them this false supposition. God is not to be understood as foreseeing something in them which procures grace for them; rather they are foreknown because they were freely chosen. Hence Paul elsewhere teaches the same thing: God knows them that are His (II Tim. 2.19), because, that is, He holds them marked and as it were numbered in His roll. Nor is the point omitted by Augustine: the terms foreknowledge is to be taken as meaning the counsel of God by which He predestines His own to salvation. No one denies that it was foreknown by God who were to be heirs of eternal life. The real question is whether what He foresees is what He will make of them or what they will be in themselves."

— John Calvin, Commentary on Romans 8:29.