



God takes all the events of life and blends them into something very beautiful.

If we understand this,

- 1. We will view** all the events of life in a unique way. His sovereign ability to do this becomes a source of stability and assurance no matter what may come our way.
- 2. This does not mean,** that when we sin **God will cancel consequences for our actions.**
- 3. The believer who does not understand and believe** this truth will experience the unpleasant, irksome, and often unhappy events of life and display human viewpoint responses and reactions that destroy all possibility of Christlikeness.
- 4. On the other hand, the instructed believer,** sees the same unpleasant events and yet beholds the master hand of God in them. They are all viewed as part of the good and gracious plan of God designed to make the believer like Himself. McCalley

God's purpose is not merely an expressed Divine desire, but a fixed and vast will, that itself subordinates, necessarily, all things; submerges all opposition; effects its object. Newell

God's purpose, regarding “**the called**,” His “elect,” arises out of His desire, as well as being according to His infinite wisdom.

“*God is love*,” and He acts according to that nature. Out of His infinite, holy desire arose **His Purpose**.

Reverse this order, and you have the god of the fatalist, not of the Bible.

The lesson is simple. What people intended for evil and harm, God brought together for good. This is Romans 8:28 in operation. Paul's stability was rooted in an understanding of this truth.

In God, however, purpose is absolute, —wholly apart from contingencies. In the very next occurrence after Romans 8:28 we read, *“that the purpose of God according to election might stand”*—everything subordinated, and the end predicted.

In *Ephesians 3:11* a *“purpose of the ages”* which God has ordained and will carry through, just as our salvation is referred to as *“not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the times of the ages”* (II Tim. 1:9).

Romans 8:29-30 (NASB)

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.

First, we find many Scriptures in which the consent of man's will is asked, and blessing is contingent upon his consent; and some ("rocky ground people) will receive the *Word* "***immediately with joy, and for a while endure,***" but in time of tribulation or persecution "fall away."

Second, we shall find plainly written in Scripture the purpose of God according to which He works effectually; and all His elect are brought safely in, and there is no separating them from His love which was given them in Christ Jesus, in whom they were "***chosen before the foundation of the world.***"

So, we **don't try to mix** these two things; and more emphatically we say, **do not try to “reconcile”** them either! Useless controversy and biased feeling will be the only result.

Who told us to “reconcile” in our little minds, these seemingly contradictory things? Have we ceased to believe where we do not understand?

Every system of theology undertakes to subject the words of God to categories and catalogs of the human intellect.

Now, if we undertake to “reconcile” **God's sovereign election with His free offer of salvation to all**, we must sacrifice one truth or the other.

Our poor minds may not “reconcile” them both, but our faith knows them both, and holds both, to be true! And Scripture is addressed to faith, not to reason. Newell

29 For whom He foreknew He also foreordained conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the First-born among many brethren.

For whom He foreknew—This *for* looks back at the word *purpose*, and opens out the word **foreknew** for us to see:

The word **foreknow**. is **proginōskō**. The prefix **pro·** means “**before**” and the verb **ginōskō-** means “**to know.**” So “**to know before**” or “**in advance**”

Doesn't God know everything in advance? Isn't God omniscient?

Of course. From omniscience point of view God knows all things in advance. **But this verse does not say that.**

This verse is saying that God **foreknows believers**, not all men. **We see foreknowledge is limited to believers.** In other words, **God does not foreknow all men; He only foreknows believers.** 4

This is God's foreknowledge. —

In pursuing its meaning, we turn to Scripture only.

- In *Amos 1:2 to 2:8*, Jehovah gives in detail His exact knowledge of the sins and of the coming judgments of Syria, the Philistines, Tyre, Edom, Ammon, Moab; and **then also of Israel**. But to Israel He says, *“You only have I known, of all the families of the earth.”*

What did this language mean?

- That He had **acquaintanceship with** *“the whole family which He brought up out of the land of Egypt.”* Of Israel—especially the godly Remnant, He speaks: *“God did not cast off His people which He foreknew.”*

Of Christ it is written in **I Peter 1:20**, *“He was foreknown indeed before the foundations of the world.”*

The word does not simply mean “**to know in advance,**” even though that is what the word means in its elements.

- But “***The Word become flesh***”: that happened when He came into the world. And as was revealed, “***He was foreknown.***”
- It was not a mere Divine pre-knowledge that He would be manifested; but a pre-acquaintanceship before His appearance,
- From this “**foreknowledge,**” or **pre-acquaintance**, flowed the most intimate prophecies of Him, His lowly coming, His rejection, and the manner of His death. All this is wrapped up in this word foreknowledge!

What God foreknew is believers, not what believers would do. The text says *those whom He foreknew*, using the personal pronoun, masculine gender. This means He foreknew the people.

Under omniscience God does know what a person will do but that is not foreknowledge.

Foreknowledge is the personal knowledge of a believer.

It is very common to hear in theological discussion that **God foreknew who would believe and on the basis of foreseen faith He chose them. That is not a biblical idea.**

It confuses time with eternity and bases God's knowledge on time, a very damaging error. **God's knowledge is independent of time.**

Newell

We see that **the kind of knowledge in mind is relational knowledge, not intellectual knowledge.**

- **Intellectually** God knows everything before time, that's omniscience, but
- **relationally God only knows believers in advance.** Newell

*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;*

The word foreordained or predestined is from **proorizō**.

pro· meaning “before” and **orizō**· meaning “horizon, to mark out, a boundary.”

God marks out a destiny befitting such foreknown ones.

Here we come to words of plain meaning, but limitless reach! 6

- Christ the Son, for whom and by whom all things were made.
- Christ the Son, the appointed Heir of all things.
- Christ the Son—center of all the Divine counsels!
- Christ the Son, God’s Son, the Son of His love!

Most people think this word means that God chose who would be saved. From this they often logically rationalize that **God also chose who would not be saved. This is called **double predestination**.**

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;

The word "conformed" is *summorphoō*, "to bring to the same form with" some other person or thing, "to render like."

The noun *morphē* refers to the outward expression of an inward essence or nature.

The word "image" is *eikōn*, a derived likeness." nothing lacking, nothing short: like Christ

Conformed to His image: in glory, in love, in holiness, in beauty, in grace, in humility, in tenderness, in patience! Our very bodies at last alive unto God! For we know that this also shall be: *“When Christ, our life shall be manifested, then shall ye also with Him be manifested in glory!”*

The image of the Lord Jesus in the saint is not accidental but consequent, as the likeness of a child is resulting from its parents.

Through the new birth we become brethren of Jesus Christ ([Heb. 2:13](#)) and thus inherit His image. This image, indistinct in the new convert, becomes progressively clearer and distinct as that believer grows in the Christian life.

Therefore, to be with Christ, like Him forever and ever! Only God can show, and only simple faith respond to, grace such as this!

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;

This conformation of the saints to the image of the Lord Jesus was for the **purpose** that He, the Lord Jesus "*might be the firstborn among many brethren.*"

In Christ, like Christ, brethren there with the First-born!

This is the highest place that God could give creatures! God puts us there: and of Christ it is written, "*He is not ashamed to call them brethren*"; because we are "*all of one with Christ!* (Heb. 2:11

Colossians 1:15 (NASB)

¹⁵ He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation.

2 Corinthians 4:4 (NASB)

⁴ in whose case the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelieving so that they might not see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.

1 Corinthians 15:49 (NASB)

⁴⁹ Just as we have borne the image of the earthy, we will also bear the image of the heavenly.

2 Corinthians 3:18 (NASB)

¹⁸ But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as from the Lord, the Spirit.

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.*

Since we are here considering God's unfolding of His purpose (of verse 28), we must regard **called** from God's side, —Who counts things not being, being.

The *calling* here and elsewhere spoken of by Paul is the working, in men, of '**the everlasting purpose of God whereby before the foundations of the world were laid, He has decreed by His counsel secret to us, to deliver from curse and damnation those whom He has chosen in Christ out of mankind, and to bring them by Christ to everlasting salvation.**' "Newell

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.*

Justification is to pronounce righteous, **not** to make righteous;

To be justified means that the believer is viewed in Christ as righteous and is treated as such by God.

Called, and justified—God does speak here of that entering upon justification by faith—of which this Epistle is full.

For only believing souls are accounted righteous, justified, as we well know. Yet in God's counsels all His elect already are before Him, accounted righteous—justified.

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**.*

The words **predestined**, **called**, **justified**, and **glorified** are all verbs in the indicative mode, aorist tense, and active voice.

That shows that they are **all completed accomplished facts** and that **God did them all**.

This is the necessary end of this amazing series—**glorified!**

Therefore, these foreknown ones, must ever be, before God, since God foreknew them in Christ.

None has yet been glorified in manifestation.

Because Christ Himself has not yet been “manifested”; although He has entered into His glory.

It is in this glorified Christ that God chose us long ago, —before the foundation of the world! God, who could connect us with Christ, can also say of us, I have glorified them!

And so, we the saints go on to a glory already true of us by the word of our God!

Past - Present - Future

- The *Father* accomplished all of this in His mind concerning us, and much, much more, prior to creation.
- Then He accomplished all of it for us in the Son, through His death, resurrection and ascension.
- Now He is accomplishing it in us, by His Spirit, for His Son.
- All will be actually completed in us at the Rapture, plus a few finishing touches at the Bema!

And think of all that The Holy Spirit has accomplished in order to place us in our position:

- ❖ He has to seek each of us in our sin, woo us, convict us, present the Savior to us, and enable us to carry out our responsibility of accepting the Lord Jesus as our own personal Savior.
- ❖ Then, having hidden us in Him, **He begins the patient work of conditionally slowly conforming us to the image of Christ.**
- ❖ It is the Spirit *who works all things together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to the Father's eternal purpose.*
- ❖ The Holy Spirit never rests nor hesitates until He has - **every single called one raptured and possessed of his glorified body - so shall we ever be with the Lord.**

Intimacy with Himself is the marvelous thought of our Father concerning us, who, in the first Adam, hid ourselves from His voice; and who, until He gave us in His sovereign grace to believe on His Last Adam, dreaded the very thought of meeting Him.

Formerly the thoughts of His holiness were terrible; and the contemplation of Him as light made us shrink from His presence. But the Cross of His Son, the body of the Lord Jesus in death - the end of all that we were as children of Adam, in God's sight - has calmed every fear, and therefore we are perfectly happy in the presence of our Father. --H.F. Witherby (The Serious Christian, Series II, Vol. II, p.

