

For whom He foreknew, He also predestined to become conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the first-born among many brethren; (Romans 8:29)

Based on 1Peter 1:1-2, foreknowledge is also required to precede the election of a New Testament believer—note that “*Elect*” (KJV) is equivalent to “*chosen*” (NASB), proving that to be elected is equivalent to being chosen:

Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, to the strangers scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia, elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ: grace unto you, and peace, be multiplied. (1Peter 1:1-2 KJV—emphasis added)

Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, to those who reside as aliens, scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia, who are chosen according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, by the sanctifying work of the Spirit, that you may obey Jesus Christ and be sprinkled with His blood: may grace and peace be yours in fullest measure. (1Peter 1:1-2 NASB—emphasis added)

Should New Testament believers have been predestined to salvation by means of an eternal decree (as Arminianism and all forms of Calvinism advocate), foreknowledge could not precede such an arrangement—refuting Arminianism and all forms of Calvinism altogether. For further input, study Diagram 10 in the Reference Section titled, “*Why God’s Foreknowledge Cannot Precede His Eternal Decrees.*”

Conclusion: God’s eternally known works are accomplished through His eternal decrees, which make certain the fulfillment of His eternal purposes or plans. Thus, if God’s decrees have always existed, they have never been future to Him. To state it differently, God can’t foreknow what has always existed. Hence, to foreknow that which has no beginning is impossible. In fact, God has never said, “I knew before I decreed this decree that I would decree it,” because His decrees have always existed within His heart. Because God’s foreknowledge must precede His decrees, New Testament believers could not have been predestined to salvation by means of an eternal decree. Thus, Reformed Theology must redefine “*foreknew*” (Romans 8:29) in an attempt to justify its view of election and predestination. (Our *God’s Heart* series describes in much detail how Reformed Theology attempts to redefine this powerful term.)

Words can’t be manipulated, changed, or redefined to validate an unscriptural experience or contradictory ideology. In fact, we are never to allow an experience or system of thought to dictate what we accept or reject regarding God’s infallible Word. Rather, we are to always allow God’s Word to dictate what we accept or reject regarding all experiences or systems of thought! Scripture is never at the mercy of a particular way of thinking. Instead, all ways of thinking are at the mercy of the Scriptures. Changing the definition or meaning of the terms used in God’s holy Word is an indictment against

the God Who composed it. This manipulation must never be allowed—no matter who perceives it as proper.

Now that “*foreknew*” has been addressed and properly defined, we will transition into that hugely debated subject known as “predestination.” Honestly, its definition is easily obtained when Scripture alone directs one’s conclusions.

Predestination

According to Ephesians 1:5, God predestines New Testament believers “*to adoption as sons*”:

He predestined us to adoption as sons through Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the kind intention of His will, (Ephesians 1:5)

Noting Paul’s use of “*us*” in this passage, and considering that Paul was a believer while writing to the church at Ephesus, one can easily understand that the full counsel of God’s Word teaches that believers aren’t predestined until they become believers. Nowhere in the Scriptures do we find that potential believers are predestined from eternity past, as some have incorrectly assumed. Therefore, New Testament believers are not predestined until God makes them new—subsequent to their exercising repentance and faith while depraved. How can we be certain of this? The phrase, “*adoption as sons*,” according to Romans 8:23, points to that day when all church saints receive their resurrected bodies:

And not only this, but also we ourselves, having the first fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting eagerly for our adoption as sons, the redemption of our body. (Romans 8:23)

Linking the phrase, “*our adoption as sons, the redemption of our body*” (Romans 8:23), to the phrase, “*predestined us to adoption as sons*” (Ephesians 1:5), we can conclude the following:

A New Testament believer is “*predestined*” to receive a glorified “*body*” once he is placed in Christ and made new—after exercising repentance and faith while depraved.

Yes, we were “*predestined*” to one day receive resurrected bodies. We were granted this glorious future destiny once we were placed in Christ through the Person of the “*Spirit*” (1Corinthians 12:13) and made “*new*” (2Corinthians 5:17)—subsequent to our exercising repentance and faith while depraved. The predestination of New Testament believers occurs in time, not from eternity past. We were “*predestined*” in time to blessings associated with salvation, not “*predestined*” from eternity past to one day be saved from the penalty of sin. (Consult Diagram 12 titled “*Scriptural Election/Chosenness and Predestination*” in the Reference Section.)

Teachings about predestination which are contrary to this Scriptural view are responsible for the confusion. Everyone has a free will and can, while depraved, accept or reject Christ (John 1:12, Acts 16:31, Acts 26:18, Romans 10:9-10—along with a hoard of additional passages). Once we exercised repentance and faith while depraved and were placed in Christ through the power of the Holy Spirit (1Corinthians 12:13), we were “*predestined*” (Romans 8:29). To what were we “*predestined*” once we were placed in Jesus? We were “*...predestined to become conformed to the image of His [God’s] Son...*” (Romans 8:29), a conformity that includes receiving a resurrected body at the Rapture of the church. This truth will be confirmed by interpreting Scripture in context, so we will begin by revisiting Romans 8:29 and build from there.

The proper interpretation of the phrase, “*that He might be the first-born among many brethren*” (Romans 8:29), can be found by noting its relationship to the previous phrases in the passage:

For whom He foreknew, He also predestined to become conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the first-born among many brethren;
(Romans 8:29)

Jesus is “*the first-born*” of the Father in the sense that He was the first to receive a resurrected body. Colossians 1:18 validates this fact:

...and He is the beginning, the first-born from the dead...(Colossians 1:18)

If Jesus is described as “*the first-born*” of the Father due to His bodily resurrection (Colossians 1:18), then Romans 8:29 must point not only to Jesus’ bodily resurrection, but also to the future bodily resurrection of all New Testament believers:

...that He might be the first-born among many brethren; (Romans 8:29)

The fact that we are part of the “*many brethren*” confirms that God “*predestined*” us (after we exercised repentance and faith while depraved) to receive a glorified body at the Rapture of the church. Many blessings accompany this wonderful event. Consequently, church saints will live throughout the Millennium and the Eternal Order in a glorified body, responding properly to the variables surrounding them. Each church saint will live in a body, not only void of the old brain, which houses sinful habit patterns (and godly habit patterns as well), but a body void of the power of sin—a power which lives in the body of New Testament believers (and the spirit, soul, and body of unbelievers) while dwelling on earth (Romans 7:23). The New Testament believer has been given a glorious future destiny—that of receiving a glorified body at the Rapture of the church.

This truth ties in perfectly with 1Corinthians 15:51-55:

...we shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet; for the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we shall be changed. For this perishable must put on the imperishable, and this mortal must put on immortality. But when this perishable will have put on the imperishable, and this mortal will have put on immortality, then will come about the

saying that is written, “DEATH IS SWALLOWED UP in victory. O DEATH, WHERE IS YOUR VICTORY? O DEATH, WHERE IS YOUR STING?” (1Corinthians 15:51-55)

The resurrection addressed in 1Corinthians 15:51-55 is different from Lazarus’ experience in John 11. Lazarus was raised back to natural life, back to mortal life, meaning that his body would die a second time. The same principle applies to all individuals who are raised back to natural life, such as Tabitha in Acts 9:36-43. Jesus’ body, on the other hand, was resurrected to immortal life, never to die again. Thus, in conjunction with our (old) souls and spirits being placed in Christ and made new (subsequent to our repenting and believing while depraved), we were predestined to receive glorified bodies so we, at the Rapture of the church, can be recipients of this same immortal life in regard to the body.

When a New Testament believer dies, his soul and spirit eject out of the earthly body and instantaneously enter heaven (2Corinthians 5:8), while the physical body returns to dust. At the Rapture, the church saint’s soul and spirit will be joined to his resurrected (immortal) body for all eternity (1Thessalonians 4:13-18).

With the above in mind, let’s review how easily “*predestined*” is defined by first reading Romans 8:23:

And not only this, but also we ourselves, having the first fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting eagerly for our adoption as sons, the redemption of our body. (Romans 8:23)

The phrase, “*our adoption as sons,*” points to “*the redemption of our body*” (Romans 8:23)—that moment in the future when we receive our resurrected, glorified, immortal bodies. According to Ephesians 1:5, we have been “*predestined*” to this—“*to adoption as sons*”:

He predestined us to adoption as sons through Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the kind intention of His will, (Ephesians 1:5)

This verse confirms that New Testament believers are “*predestined*” to receive glorified bodies—not predestined (from eternity past) to be saved. When, then, are they “*predestined*”? They are “*predestined*” in conjunction with being placed in Christ subsequent to exercising repentance and faith while depraved. Consequently, if you are a believer, you were “*predestined*” the moment you were justified/saved—meaning that your future destiny is to one day receive a glorified body and experience all the benefits associated with that wonderful transformation.

The word “*predestined*” (Romans 8:29) can be summed up in the following statement:

We were not predestined to be saved from eternity past by means of an eternal decree of God. Rather, in conjunction with being saved (justified) through being placed in Christ subsequent to exercising personal repentance and faith while depraved, we received a glorious future destiny—that of one day living in a glorified body.

Predestination has to do with believers only, for we were “*predestined*” when God made us new. Therefore, predestination has nothing to do with who will or will not be saved, but has everything to do with the New Testament believer receiving a glorified body at the Rapture of the church. Because the Father possesses foreknowledge, He knows who will choose (while depraved) to accept Christ and receive this glorious future destiny—foreknowledge meaning “to know beforehand.” He also knows who will reject Christ’s free offer of salvation and the resulting blessings. Consequently, foreknowledge means “foreknowledge.” It cannot be redefined as foreordain or predestine, as some have erroneously assumed.

Predestination is simple when studied in context. New Testament believers are predestined (once they are placed in Christ subsequent to repenting and believing while depraved) to receive glorified bodies at the Rapture of the church. Nothing is complicated about that! The contradictory systems of thought have brought the confusion. To pursue the topic further, you can obtain a copy of *God’s Heart as it Relates to Foreknowledge - Predestination*.