

BEFORE THE BEGINNING...



TEXT: *Rom. 8:28-31* And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose. For whom he did **foreknow**, he also did **predestinate** to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren. Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also **called**; and whom he called, them he also **justified**: and whom he justified, them he also **glorified**. What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us?

INTRO.: A. We often quote Romans 8:28 knowing that God has promised that anything that happens in a believer's life "**work(s) together for good...**" but that is simply the introduction to all that happens or will happen when a person trusts the Lord as Savior. But there is so much more than this promise...

B. The next two verses speak of **where it all began** or "**BEFORE THE BEGINNING...**" And it all began before we were conceived in our mother's womb! God not only predated the creation, but He predated time and even what we call eternity! We have all heard the song "**When He Was On the Cross, We Were On His Mind**" - but even that concept is an inadequate description of His overall plan for His children.

ILLUS.: To use a finite description think of a young **married couple** just beginning their life together. They have no family, but they are planning to have **children**. Then it happens...she becomes pregnant and although they don't even know whether it will be a **son or daughter**, they begin planning for **his or her** arrival. They may be thinking about **names, planning a nursery, buying blankets**, etc. Then they find out its **gender** and pick out the appropriate colors for the nursery, clothing, furniture, etc. But our infinite God never has a surprise, so His plans for us were already completed before time and before we were conceived...

I. HIS FOREKNOWLEDGE: (Stage One)

A. The Word Means "*to know in advance*"

Ps 139:16 *Thine eyes did see my substance, yet being unperfect; and in thy book all my members were written, which in continuance were fashioned, when as yet there was none of them.*

1. The foreknowledge of God is associated with His omniscience.
2. There is nothing that God doesn't know...nothing surprises Him, He has no eraser on His pencil and He never has to correct a mistake...THERE ARE NO "**Oh ohs!**" with God!

ILLUS.: You say "*What about sin in the garden?*" Why didn't God stop Adam and Eve from sinning? God already had a plan to in place to defeat Satan and to provide redemption. His Son was also pre-existent, although He didn't yet have human form or flesh. Jesus was "*standing in the wings*" to provide mankind's redemption...and YOURS!

3. God's foreknowledge not only encompasses what *will* happen, it also can tell what *could* happen.

4. What makes the difference are the actions any man takes based on his own free will.

II. HIS PREDESTINATION: (Stage Two)

A. This Is Not the Calvinist's Definition:

ILLUS.: I had a good pastor friend in Maryland who became a Calvinist. He said that if you swat a mosquito it was predestined and there was no choice involved. Thus, in his thinking man has no choice about anything, no free will. One Calvinist said *"Not only did His (God's) omniscient eye see Adam eating the forbidden fruit, but He decreed that he should do so."* In other words, God wanted man to sin!!! *I should add that his church diminished to the place where he had to resign and the last I heard he was peddling paper for a living.*

1. But this is not the biblical concept.
2. Notice that the purpose of predestination has nothing to do with our getting saved against our will, but rather has everything to do with being **"conformed to the image of His Son"**
3. In other words God has a plan for believers to be Christlike! (*How are we doing?!*)
4. We are predestined to be **"the firstborn among many brethren"**

1. We are brothers to our Savior: He is God's **Son**, and you are God's **son**.

NOTE: Jesus had many advantages over us, of course, but we probably don't think of this one...when He was born, His flesh was born of the Spirit. Both his human body and his human spirit were born of the Spirit at the same time. **Luke 1:35**

III. HIS CALLING: (Stage Three)

A. After Foreknowledge and Predestination Comes Calling:

1. Of course God **knows** who will be saved and He has a **plan** for their conformity to Christ's image.
2. But beyond that He also has a definite and distinct calling for every believer.

QUESTION: You say how do I know what my calling is? Simply study God's Word. You will find that you are called into *full time ministry!* I don't mean as a preacher, etc., but as a believer. You are to **STUDY the Word, CLEAN UP your life, WITNESS and WIN the lost, STAY FAITHFUL to the local assembly, etc.** That is every believer's calling.

IV. HIS JUSTIFICATION: (Stage Four)

A. The Lord Justifies Every Son Whom He Calls:

1. Justification is our legal standing with God, i.e. He sees us as righteous.
2. We are now safe in the arms of our Savior! (He justifies every son...) **Cf. v.31**

V. HIS GLORIFICATION: (Stage Five)

A. Glorification is the Final Step in Our Salvation:

1. We will arrive in Heaven glorified and be **"like Him, for we shall see Him as He is..."**

1 John 3:2 *Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is.* (NOT as He was in His humiliation!)

1Cor. 15:52 *In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.*

2. Glorification is when God finally removes sin from our existence and we stand faultless before Him.
3. I am waiting for looking for and longing for this final step in my salvation! Are YOU?

CONCL: Glorification is not a process, it is instantaneous! But it is in 2 steps. **#1) "to be absent from the body is to be present with the Lord." (Death)** That is the first step in the glorification process. **#2) The Rapture.** Are you listening for the trumpet?