

having been believers in the Dispensation of Grace, in advance of this time.

When did God promise this for us? God promised this for us when Ephesians was written, long before He establishes His next order or arrangement of things (*kosmos*) on Earth. When will these promises become a reality for us? When the manifest kingdom of God becomes a reality on Earth.

This passage tells the believers in the Dispensation of Grace that God has predetermined to bestow upon us all of these wonderful promises concerning our future positions. He does this beforehand, ahead of the time when He will reign supreme on Earth through His Holy Spirit in the Kingdom (government) of God on Earth.

The next verse in Ephesians is quite telling once the real meaning of an important word is revealed. Ephesians 1:12: That we who first trusted in Christ should be to the praise of His glory. The words "first trusted" are a poor translation of the Greek word *proelpizo*, pronounced pro-el-pid'-zo. This is the only occurrence of this Greek word in all of Scripture. *Pro* means in front of, prior, or before, and *elpizo* means hope or trust. E.W. Bullinger suggests "have before hoped," while James Strong and Otis Q. Sellers both suggest "hoped in advance." We have hoped, we have trusted, Christ in advance of all that God has in store for us, before the results of our faith are evident and these Ephesians promises are manifest in our lives. This verse is essential in understanding why these passages are stated the way they are, that God has "predetermined" something for us. It is because we have put our faith in Christ for all He has done for us in advance of the plans He has for us as a result of that faith.

Calvinism stands largely on the use of the word "predestined," but even a cursory investigation of the Greek shows that this word is unjustified. When interpreting these verses within the context, Calvinism fails to stand up to the pressure exerted upon it. It is important to answer these "who," "what," and "when" questions in order to refute this teaching. 1 Peter 3:15: But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts, and always be ready to give a defense (*apologia*) to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear. The reason for the hope (faith) that lies within us is because of who Jesus Christ is and what He has done for us. For every believer who has ever lived, this faith has been displayed long before the Ephesians promises will become a reality, so God has predetermined them for us.

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THE PREDESTINED QUESTIONED

By Robert Juneau

John Calvin got off on the wrong track with several ideas and it resulted in the erroneous doctrine of predestination. Two passages most often called upon to support this teaching are Romans 8:29-30 and Ephesians 1:4. We are told that these passages teach that long before the creation of the universe, before anyone was born, God predestined everyone for either salvation or damnation. This teaching is popular in Christendom and deserves to be scrutinized.

Dispensationalists are sometimes confused about this doctrine because we recognize that God must be involved in helping us respond to and receive His wonderful gift of salvation. It seems strange to us that many thumb their noses at the Gospel because to us it's a wonderful and beautiful gift. We cannot discount God's involvement in helping us respond favorably to the Gospel, but we must never ignore the fact God has authorized, or made available (*apostello*), the salvation-bringing message of God to all nations, Acts 28:28. God wills that none should perish, John 3:15-16, 2 Peter 3:9. Acknowledging the fact that God backs up His gracious offer of salvation with His generating (*gennaio*) Spirit so that we can properly respond to it is a far cry from what Calvinism teaches.

Romans 8:29-30: For whom He foreknew, He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren. Moreover whom He predestined, these He also called; whom He called, these He also justified; and whom He justified, these He also glorified (NKJV used).

The Calvinists tell us that this passage teaches that not only did God foreknow those of us who would be saved, He also predestined who would be saved. The translators have chosen the words "foreknew" for *proginosko* and "predestined" for *proorizo* in this passage. Foreknew is a decent translation of *proginosko*, but *Seed & Bread* No. 160, *Concerning Predestination*, will show that "predestined" is a poor translation of *proorizo*. I will use the more accurate word "predetermined." We need to understand what

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this passage is talking about. The ability to rightly divide Scripture is an invaluable tool in refuting this false doctrine. It is of the utmost importance to discover *whom* it is God foreknew, *what* it is that has been predetermined about them, and *when* did God do this predetermining?

Who is it whom God foreknew? Romans 11:2: God has not cast away *His people whom He foreknew*. Amos 3:2: You (Israel) only have I known of all the families of the earth. It is the Israelites to whom Paul is writing. Romans 2:17, 4:1. Only Israelites can rightly be called the Lord's brethren. Only Israelites can rightly be called "His people."

What is it that has been predetermined about these Israelites? That they should be conformed to the image of Jesus Christ, so that He might be the firstborn (*prototoko*—sovereign, preeminent) among many brethren.

When did God predetermine this for Israel? This has been the predetermined purpose of God for Israel ever since He called Abraham out of the Ur of the Chaldees. God continued that work in and through Abraham's descendants after they became a nation of people while enslaved in Egypt. Over the centuries God continued His personal involvement with this nation all the way through to the end of the book of Acts, when He chose to suspend that involvement by changing dispensations to that of the Dispensation of Grace. **When** will these promises become a reality for Israel? These promises were true during the Acts Period and they will be true again when God picks up this work in the next move He makes concerning mankind and this Earth: the manifest Kingdom of God.

This passage tells us that the Israelites were, ahead of the time of the Kingdom of God, predetermined by God to become conformed to the likeness of Christ, so that Christ may become preeminent among many brethren. This was becoming a reality for them in the Acts Period and will become fully realized in the more advanced stages of the Kingdom.

It has been argued that because Paul calls these people "called," "justified," and "glorified," Romans 8:29-30 must refer to those of us who are saved in Christendom. Over the history of Christendom it has been mistakenly thought that everything in the New Testament is addressed to us believers today. This is done when Paul describes these Roman Israelites as being called, justified, and glorified. In the Old Testament Israel was *called* through the covenant (Law), in the New Testament they were *justified* through their Messiah, in the Acts Period (early stage of the Kingdom) they were *glorified* through the Holy Spirit in the miracles, signs and wonders they were performing. Not recognizing the dispensational placement of the book of Romans leads to mistakes. While it is true that we are justified in that our sins have been forgiven, we haven't yet been justified in a real, present sense. We also have no ability to defend the premise that we have been called (positioned) or glorified. While these attributes are promised to us today, the realization of these is future, as is taught in Ephesians.

Ephesians 1:4-5, 11: . . . just as *He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world*, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love, having

predestined us to adoption as sons by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will . . . In Him also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestined according to the purpose of Him who works all things according to the counsel of His will . . .

Calvinists tell us that this passage teaches that God has predestined those whom He has chosen before the creation of the earth. The translators have chosen the words "chose us" for *eklegomai*, "foundation" for *katabole*, "world," for *kosmos*, and "predestined" for *proorizo*. "Chose us" is a decent translation of *eklegomai*. "Foundation" is not necessarily a bad translation of *katabole* if we understand what a foundation is. See *The Companion Bible, Appendix No. 146* for an explanation of *katabole* and **Seed & Bread No. 103, Divine Election**, for both *katabole* and *eklegomai*. *Katabole* refers to something that is founded or established, so I will use the word "establish." The word "world" is also not a terrible translation of the Greek word *kosmos* as long as we understand what is meant by "a world." All too often we tend to take this to mean the planet Earth or the whole of the creation, but *kosmos* means an order or an arrangement of things. When we say, "the world of sports" or "the art world," we are not talking about the planet or the universe; we are talking about something much smaller in scope: the order or arrangement of sports or art. The world to come is the subject here. We have already addressed the word *proorizo*. Again, let's ask the "who," "what," and "when" questions for this passage.

Who is it whom God has chosen? Since Ephesians is written to believers in the Dispensation of Grace, this refers to believers today. One of the most glaring errors in Calvinism is ignoring the fact that the predetermined promises made in Ephesians pertain to those who are *already found "in Him."* Just like our elected officials need to be citizens in good standing of the United States before any voter can "choose" him or her, those for whom this Ephesians choice is made need to be *"in Christ"* before they are eligible for what God chooses for them. Salvation is not in view here. Ephesians 1:3-14, the longest sentence in the Bible, contains truths that are only true about those of us who are already found to be believing, those of us who are "in Christ."

What is it that God has chosen for those of us who are in Christ? That we will be holy and blameless before Him in love, that we would be positioned as sons (*huios*) for Himself, for His purposes. In Christ, we have obtained an inheritance, which is elaborated upon in Ephesians 2 and 3. Briefly, it involves exalted seats, or positions. The Jewish concept of adoption to son-ship had nothing to do with salvation; it was the promotion of the eldest son to represent the family in business matters. The apostles and the *ekklesia* of the Acts Period will once again be sons (representatives) of God's government when He establishes His Kingdom on Earth, Matthew 19:28. God has predetermined that we too will represent Him during that glorious dispensation on the Earth. Our position will be from the perspective of