

God’s Pre-Election Knowledge of the Soul

A New Interpretation of Biblical Election and Predestination Showing Why God Only Chose
Some Rather Than All

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Abstract

A new theological interpretation of Calvinist unconditional election and predestination theology is developed, answering the long-standing question of why God chose some, rather than all. The word “foreknowledge” is typically believed to denote future knowledge about the nature of the human in physical reality (in chronological terms, God having awareness of the human soul at all times, including times future from its origination-point), but I will find that “foreknowledge” originally meant *initial* knowledge of the soul, the moment of its creation. Further, Romans 8:28-30 and 1 Peter 1:2 are focused on to show that the specific mechanics of what the word “foreknowledge” involves in Scripture reveal that God had awareness of all human souls after they were created but also *before* God elected souls. This pre-election knowledge of the soul God had can indicate why God only could choose some, rather than all souls, and the vexing centuries-old question of Calvinist unconditional election finally has an answer.

1. Preliminaries

In this paper I argue for a new Biblical interpretation of election and predestination, wherein I will arrive at a new Calvinist interpretation which shows why God only chose some, rather than all, souls. I will argue that Calvinists have missed a few Scriptural points, and that their theories of predestination and election are not getting to the heart of the matter, and by getting to the heart the aforementioned new theology is revealed. This new theory of predestination and election, which I call *God’s pre-election knowledge of the soul*, also reveals specifically why God chose

only *some* souls for salvation (John 13:18), rather than all, which has been a puzzling unanswered question in theology for centuries. A misunderstanding of the word “foreknowledge”, and a failure to understand that soul creation must occur *before* election and predestination of the soul are the keys to showing this deeper picture of Calvinism that I will unveil in this paper, and which leads to an understanding of why God chose only some, not all souls.

2. Election

2.1 Arminian Election Involves a Human Having Two Non-Identical Futures

We know that election cannot be based on anything from the future, or the embodied existence of a person in physical reality (2 Tim. 1:9, among many other verses), which would also give credit to humans, instead of God’s mighty grace. And we know that humans cannot choose God first: He chose us, and humans did not choose Him (John 15:16). And thirdly, if God looks into the future of the embodied life of a person and sees if the person chooses Him or not, where if the person does, he is chosen by God (the classical Arminian view), this leads to a paradox, described as follows. Since then the person is elected and predestined *after* his life is analyzed, but then the person has a different future and life constructed for them by God based on the person being predestined *after* his life is analyzed, the person therein has *that* predestined future, *in addition to* the future-life that was analyzed in order to determine if the person is to be elected. The person has two non-identical futures (contradiction). In other words, if God looks to see a person’s future to see if they should be elected or not, and where the person’s future then is constructed (predestined) based on that election that resulted from the future embodied knowledge of the person, then the person has two different futures: both a future God sees before election, *and* a future God predestined after the person is elected, which is a contradiction, since a person can only have one life, not two non-identical lives and futures. Of course, I am talking about Arminian-Wesleyan theology of election and predestination, which will not be discussed in this article for reasons just given. Much more could be said about this, but from this point onward in this paper, Arminian election theology, and predestination theology, where God looks at a human life before it’s created, to determine if the human chooses God, is disregarded.

2.2 Expanding Calvinist Election Theology

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And that means we are then left with Calvinist unconditional election, where God chose some, not all humans, not based on any works or anything in the life of the believer that God knows about before it happens, and where He only chose *some* for no known reason whatsoever.

Calvinist unconditional election nags and vexes nearly all pre-believers who hear about it, and rattles the cage of nearly all lukewarm believers, as well, leaving them feeling tyrannized and confused. Is this merely because those just referred to are not firm in their faith, or is the problem that Calvinist election and predestination theologians need to further-develop Calvinist election theology to reveal a hitherto unseen reason that exists in Scripture for why God only chose some? The latter will be argued for in this article, and this is believed to be important since (i) multitudes of believers and non-believers are vexed and nagged by Calvinist unconditional election theology, and (ii) since election and predestination theology are of the most important topics of Christianity—Karl Barth said that “[t]he doctrine of election is the sum of the Gospel...”¹

In this paper I will argue for a new interpretation of Scriptural predestination, where we will find that there *is* a clear Scriptural reason for why God elects some, not all. The thesis that will be given evidence for is as follows:

God first created souls in a sort of blind-random process, then after² that He elected some of those souls the quality of the souls in their pre-election state, wherein He saw which souls He could put His Spirit into. Based on this election process, God predestined based on the foreknowledge (which means *before* knowledge, not future clairvoyant knowledge) of every soul. God knew the inner texture and nature of each soul in its pre-elected state, and by this He predestined each soul, for His purposes, into time and physical reality.

Here is revealed what the Calvinist has missed, and which we will find is lurking in Scripture as this thesis unfolds in this article. The Calvinist knows that election is not based on future

¹ Cited in Neder 2009, 15.

² The dominant view by philosophers today is not that God is eternal-timeless, but that He is temporal and everlasting (see Ganssle 2018, the introductory section and Section 1). But given verses such as Isaiah 57:16, this is a more recent development, as philosophers of earlier times stuck more to the atemporal categorizations of God. Scholars such as Augustine and Aquinas held the eternal/timeless view (Ibid). The theology developed in this paper does not depend on any specific philosophy of time, nor is it strengthened or weakened by any existing philosophy of time. I am only concerned with the Scripture I am analyzing, and theologies of time are not relevant for my purposes in this article.

information about an embodied existence, but the Calvinist has no (known) reason for why only some souls are chosen. Calvinists apparently have not explored if there is a Scriptural account about God’s knowledge of souls *after* their creation and *before* their election (a stage of the soul between its creation and its election or non-election), which would be knowledge that God could have used in predestining souls. In other words, the Calvinist believes that (a) the creation of the soul and (b) its being elected (or not elected) are an *identical* happening, but we will find that is not in accord with Scripture, (a) and (b) were a two-step process, and therein we will uncover the hitherto unseen reason God only chooses some.

3. Foreknowledge Is Not Future Knowledge

According to Dictionary.com, the prefix “fore” is “from **fore** (adv.), which was used as a **prefix** in Old English and other Germanic languages with a sense of ‘before in time, rank, position,’ etc., or designating the front part or earliest time.” The word “foreknowledge”, one would think, then, refers to knowledge of the earliest state of the soul: the very beginning. If so, the definition of foreknowledge should be as follows:

- (i) *Foreknowledge*: the knowledge of the earliest time. (Definition derived from prefix “fore”.)

Call this *the inception definition* of “foreknowledge.” If this is what the prefix “fore” shows us what foreknowledge is defined as, that would mean God’s foreknowledge in Rom. 8:29 is God’s knowledge of the soul at its *earliest time or state*, such as at its creation/origination. This is precisely how we will conclude below that Scripture is treating the concept of how God “foreknew” in Romans 8:28-30. But this is not how the word “foreknowledge” (or “foreknow” or “foreknew”) is treated by theologians, who view it as being defined in virtually the opposite way, and instead as follows:

- (ii) *Foreknowledge*: the knowledge of the future before it happens; knowing the future. (Definition derived from usage by theologians.)

Call this *the clairvoyance definition* of “foreknowledge.” The two definitions of “foreknowledge” just given are diametrical opposites: one is about the first point (or earliest point), and the other about the future that has not yet happened. God being omniscient would, of course, have knowledge of what is going on in both situations (at the inception of the soul, and

the not-yet-existent future of the soul), but that is not relevant to what is being discussed here, which is what “foreknowledge” denotes, not God’s omniscience.

To give just one of many examples that could be given for how (ii) is used by theologians instead of (i), *Baker's Evangelical Dictionary of Biblical Theology's* first sentence of their "foreknowledge" entry³ reads: "In his omniscience God knows what the future holds both for individuals and for nations." I will show below that while theologians have utilized (ii) the clairvoyance definition of “foreknowledge,” the Bible, on the other hand, is in fact utilizing (i) the inception definition of foreknowledge. This confusion about the word “foreknowledge” is largely why there has been confusion about election and predestination for centuries: theologians seemingly were not expecting there to be a state of the soul for God to know about *before* it was elected or predestined, since seemingly it was ubiquitously concluded that “foreknowledge” followed the clairvoyance definition and was looking into the future not into the past.

Webster’s Dictionary defines “foreknowledge” as follows: “to have previous knowledge of: know beforehand especially by paranormal means or by revelation.” This is blatantly (ii) a clairvoyance definition. And similarly, dictionary.com’s definition is, “knowledge of something before it exists or happens; prescience.” Dictionary.com states that “foreknowledge” originated in the 1530s form “fore+knowledge. Cf. foreknow “to know beforehand (late 14c.), yet there is no explanation of how “fore” came to be (ii) pointed at the future rather than (i) to the past. And if one looks up “foreknew,” which is what appears in Romans 8:28-30 (in most translations), which is a word that sounds roughly like it could be past tense (fore+past-test of “know”), dictionary.com does not have an entry for it and directs me to “foreknow,” treating “foreknew” and “foreknow” as synonyms, even though one is present tense (“foreknow”) and the other appears to be past tense (“foreknew”). Applying the clairvoyance definition to “foreknew,” would mean that Romans 8:29 is about God looking into the future to have knowledge about human lives before they happen. Merriam-Webster does precisely the same move as dictionary.com, in redirecting me to “foreknow” when one looks up “foreknew,” as do Bible dictionaries. What is referred to by the word “foreknew” in Romans 8:29 and 11:2, theologians ubiquitously apply (ii) the clairvoyant definition to.

³ <https://www.biblestudytools.com/dictionaries/bakers-evangelical-dictionary/foreknowledge.html>

The question is this: How did fore+knowledge, which leads to definition (i), the inception definition, become definition (ii), the clairvoyance definition, at some point deep in the past? This is like calling a prefix a suffix, or calling a past moment a future moment. Applying (i) the inception definition to “foreknew” would mean that Romans 8:29 is about God looking at the soul before it was predestined or elected, as if there was knowledge of the soul in a pre-elected state. There is virtually no information I could find on how (ii) the clairvoyance definition, rather than (i) the inception definition became accepted. This is a major question, since our understanding of election and predestination in Romans 8:29 depends on the interpretation of “foreknew,” and since if we apply the inception definition to προέγνω (proginosko, “foreknew”) in Romans 8:29, immediately, we have a new interpretation and theology of election and predestination that very clearly shows why God only chose some, as I will clarify below. This becomes perhaps more puzzling when we learn that another form of this word is προγινώσκοντες (proginōskontes), used in Acts 26:5, which means “which knew me from the beginning” (KJV), which is precisely not only (i) the inception definition of “foreknowledge,” but also precisely the opposite of (ii) the clairvoyance definition. Furthermore, it is exactly what we will find “foreknew” originally meant, as we unpack this below.

Puzzling that two forms of the same word could have diametrically opposite meanings. It is also puzzling that there has been so little discussion over this confusion between (i) the inception definition and (ii) the clairvoyance definition. And it is difficult to find any writer in the past few hundred years to agree with this idea that (ii) the clairvoyance definition is the opposite of what we’d expect to find the fore+knowledge to denote. I do not know of many examples of where (i) the inception definition is discussed or utilized with respect to Romans 8:29. One example is from the University of California journal, *Bibliotheca Sacra.*, 1892, where we find L.S. Potwin writing:

In Romans xi. 2—“God hath not cast away his people which he foreknew,—the prefix “fore” seems to denote not “looking into the future,” but simply “before now,” the writer looking back into the past. (Potwin 1892, 340)

Grudem, in his *Systematic Theology*, also appears to heavily lead toward (i) the inception definition of “foreknowledge:” Therefore in Romans 8:28, “those whom he foreknew” is best understood to mean “those whom he long ago thought of in saving relationship to himself”

(Grudem 1994, 676-677). (Later we will see that Grudem comes very close to the same conclusions I reach in this article about why God chose some, but Grudem did not put all the pieces together to see what had been uncovered, which is God’s pre-election awareness of the soul that was used to elect and predestine souls.)

And here is a very powerful example from a blog by Leighton Flowers⁴, and which precisely gets to the point of what is being discussed here as the problem with (ii) the clairvoyance definition mysteriously replacing (i) the inception definition of “foreknew”:

Much debate centers on the meaning of the word προγινώσκω (proginōskō), but many of the most popular authors fail to recognize all the available options for consideration. For example, Dr. John Piper, a notable Calvinistic Pastor, lists only two options for interpreting this verse:

“Option #1: God foresaw our self-determined faith. We remain the decisive cause of our salvation. God responds to our decision to believe.”

Option #2: God chose us — not on the basis of foreseen faith, but on the basis of nothing in us. He called us, and the call itself creates the faith for which it calls.”

Piper seems to overlook the most basic meaning of this term, which is “to know before” or to have known in the past. The same Greek word is used in 2 Peter 3:17, which states,

“You therefore, beloved, knowing this beforehand, be on your guard so that you are not carried away by the error of unprincipled men...”

And in Acts 26:4-5 the same word is used:

“So then, all Jews know my manner of life from my youth up, which from the beginning was spent among my own nation and at Jerusalem; since they have known about me for a long time, if they are willing to testify, that I lived as a Pharisee according to the strictest sect of our religion.”

Clearly, this word can be understood simply as “to know someone or something in the past,” as in those “known previously” (i.e. the saints of old). So, if Paul means to use the word proginōskō in this sense, then he is simply saying, “Because we have seen how God

⁴ <https://soteriology101.com/2016/01/07/foreknew-foreseen-or-foreordained-or-formerly-known/>

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worked all things to the good for those whom He knew before, we know that He will do the same for those who love and are called by Him now.” (Underlining and italics as in original.)

Flowers is getting to the precise and obvious problem I am zeroing-in on as well: why (i) the inception definition of “foreknew” or “foreknowledge” was replaced with definition (ii), the clairvoyance definition. But I am not aware of Flowers taking this to the next step, however, and showing how definition (i) reveals why God only chose some, as I will do below in this paper.

God correctly inspired the word “foreknew” in Romans 8:29 into human Bible writers and translators, but man did not stick to its definition (the inception definition), and flipped “foreknowledge” into its opposite (the clairvoyance definition). On the one hand, perhaps it would take a professional etymologist to uncover if and where (i) the inception definition was replaced by (ii) the clairvoyance definition at some point in the past, *but* it is not terribly difficult to find shifts going on in the past, from (i) inception to (ii) clairvoyance. Just a small amount of investigation will reveal, on multiple fronts, that a flip *from* (i) the inception definition *to* (ii) the clairvoyance definition seemed to take place. It is interesting that the very first Bibles did not make this flip, and stuck more to (i) the inception definition in translating. For example, consider the Geneva translation:

Romans 8:28-30 1599 Geneva Bible (GNV)

28 Also we know that all things work together for the best unto them that love God, even to them that are called of his purpose.

29 For those which he knew before, he also predestinated to be made like to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren.

30 Moreover, whom he predestinated, them also he called, and whom he called, them also he justified, and whom he justified, them he also glorified.

There are multiple interesting items to note here.

Firstly, and most obviously, in v29, the word “foreknew” is not used, and instead, “those which he knew before” is used. It seems this is more in-line with (i) the inception definition. If I say I knew x before, it is different than saying I knew x after, or presently. It is as if I am saying I knew x from the beginning, or from an earlier point. This is in-line with both the prefix “fore”

and (i) the inception definition of “foreknew.” However, by the time we get to the KJV translation (much of which is shared with the GNV), we however see the shift: “29 For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son...” We have the word “foreknow” (most translations use “foreknew”), which involves (ii) the clairvoyance definition usage.

As an aside, note, secondly, in the GNV, how one can very clearly note the ordering in v29, where (a) *first* souls were created, and (b) *then* they were predestined. This is precisely what we will depend on in the next sections to verify why God only chose some, not all souls. Most translations keep this relatively clear ordering.

Moving back to the discussion of the curiosity of the (ii) usage of the definition of “foreknew,” and the possibility that there was a shift from (i) to (ii) at some point in the past, the GNV appears to show (i) inception definition usage, as just noted, and *The Wycliff Bible* (late 1300s, pre-Reformation, fueled the Reformation) also reads as follows:

Romans 8:28-30 Wycliffe Bible (WYC)

28 And we know, that to men that love God, all things work together into good, to them that after purpose be called saints.

29 For those that he knew before [For why and whom he knew before], he before-ordained by grace to be made like to the image of his Son, that he be the first begotten among many brethren.

30 And those that he before-ordained to bless, them he called; and whom he called, them he justified; and whom he justified, them he glorified. [Soothly whom he before-ordained to bless, and them he called; and whom he called, and them he justified; soothly whom he justified, and them he glorified.]

We again see no use of “foreknew” or “foreknow,” and virtually the same statement as the GNV is used, “those that he knew before...” With this wording, it appears one cannot automatically conclude that *those he knew before = knowledge of their futures*—nothing in the left side of that equation automatically prompts one to move to the right side. In fact, it sounds more like (i), as in the GNV, where an earlier time of knowing is being referred to, which is (i), and which is the opposite of (ii) clairvoyance and looking into the future.

And extremely interesting is Luther’s Bible, which is in German, but when I put it in Google translate, this is what shows up:

Romans 8:29 (LUTH1545)

29 For what he has seen before, he has also ordained, that they should be equal to the image of his Son, that the same may be the firstborn among many brethren.

“For what he has seen before” could be interpreted as (ii) seeing the future before it happens, but that is not what “For what he has seen before” says, and taking it more literally, it says roughly what the GNV and DARBY says. But most interesting is the past tense “seen before”—as if God saw something very early on (“before”), and then predestined. This sounds like first God saw (analyzed) the souls He created, and then elected and predestined them. This is, again, what will be utilizing in finding out below why God only chose some.

And the history of the word “foreknew” is also extremely revealing in showing how (ii) the clairvoyance definition replaced (i) the inception definition. If one looks up the etymology of “foreknew”, that will lead to “foreknow” and “foreknowledge,” and tracing the histories of those leads to the word “foreknowing,”⁵ wherein which will lead further back to the words “forewitan”⁶ and “forwiten.”⁷ When we investigate the histories of “forewitan” and “forwiten,” the (i)-to-(ii) flip from inception to clairvoyance definitions seemingly appears. The histories of those words lead back to another word, “forewete,”⁸ where “forewete” is defined as “to know, determine, or settle beforehand.” And this is what we might expect to see, since the (i) inception definition, and the (ii) clairvoyance definition are both in the definition of “forewete,” thus revealing a confusion of (i) and (ii) in the deep past. “To know beforehand” is (ii) the clairvoyance definition, but with “to determine beforehand” or “to settle beforehand” the future-knowing clairvoyance does not exist in those, and those are certainly not in-line (ii), but rather involve (i) the inception definition. There is a removal of the future-knowing in the definition of “foreknowledge” which is found in (ii) the clairvoyance definition usage, and without clairvoyance, there is no future knowing; there is only *fore-knowledge*, *earliest* knowledge (pre-

⁵ <https://www.etymonline.com/word/foreknowledge>

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ The *Modern Dictionary of the English Language*, Vol. 2, of 1906 (1894), New York: P.F. Collier & Son Publishers, page 2172, has “forewitan” in the definition of “forewete.” This Dictionary was edited by Robert Hunter and Charles Morris.

election knowledge). To “settle things beforehand” is as if to set things *form the start*. If I am going to settle business matters beforehand, it means I am going to take care of some specific matters at the start, before business matters even commence. This has nothing to do with knowing the future, and it is akin to setting up a plan at the start of some action or endeavor. And “to determine beforehand” is also not looking into the future, but is to know something from the start. As we will see below, “to settling beforehand” and “to determine beforehand” are precisely what we will find God doing, as revealed in Scripture, between creation of souls and electing and predestining them.

In this paper, hereafter I will conclude that these points, as well as the two non-identical life-futures contradiction above, show that the word “foreknowledge” was intended to be defined by (i) the inception definition, not (ii) the clairvoyance definition. God did not use looking into the future with His foreknowledge, but rather, He foreknew things in their earliest pre-election, pre-predestined state. This difference leads to a difference in understanding of what “foreknowledge” denotes, and this misuse of the word “foreknowledge” is one of the key reasons that election and predestination are misunderstood, leading to the Calvinist and Arminian conceptions of election and predestination, which have caused division and confusion and great anger for Christians for a long time.

4. Why Does God Only Elect Some, Rather Than All?

Perhaps the most urgent issue in this study is to find a Scriptural answer as to why God only saved *some* souls, rather than all of them. This issue could be one of the most prominent issues in leading people away from Christianity, since the answer often given is the Calvinist answer, which is that God simply chooses *some*, the rest are not chosen, and no explanation is given. This can (incorrectly) leave people feeling God is a cruel, nonlogical tyrant. But we will next discover that there always has been a Scriptural answer as to why God saves some and not all human souls, apparently unnoticed hitherto.

I am entertaining the possibility that the word “foreknowledge,” somewhere in history, was changed from being used as (i) the inception definition, to being used as (ii) the clairvoyance definition. Etymology and Scripture both suggest this, as we saw in the previous section. Next we will find there is further evidence for this, since Scripture involves hitherto undiscussed references to the pre-election state of the soul that God would have obviously been aware of and

seen (to use Luther’s word) in His creating the soul. And we will discover that if God is looking at this pre-elected state of the human soul, it makes much more sense to assert that it was this state of the soul He “forewete” (“foreknew”) in order to elect and predestine, rather than a future state of the soul when it is embodied in physical reality.

It is surprising how little discussion there exists over the nature and state of the soul before God determined election of souls, which is the discussion of this section. It seems logical and safe to explore the idea that God *first* had to create souls in order to *consequently* initiate election and predestination. If there were a pre-election state of the soul, it is most coherent, and, I will show below, it is Scriptural to maintain that God’s awareness of this pre-elected state of the soul is what is referred to as God’s foreknowledge/forewete (His determining, knowing, and settling beforehand).

On the one hand, the creation of souls happened during the first week of creation, when all things were created, and where all souls were created *ex nihilo* (Gen. 1:26).⁹ On the other hand, the act of God electing and predestining souls was *not* an *ex nihilo* happening, since the predestination process itself, Scripture tells us in Romans 8:28-30, was *not* a process God originated out of nothing, but rather He originated it out of *something*—and that something was, namely, *foreknowledge* (God’s pre-election knowledge of the soul). In simpler words, the creation of souls was *ex nihilo* but the election and predestination of souls was not out of nothing, but derived from some *previous* information, namely, what was known and determined beforehand (forewete), before election and predestination. And the important issue is that this indicates to us that these two happenings—(a) soul creation, and (b) the election and predestination of souls—*were two different and distinct stages*, in tandem, where (a) had to come *ex nihilo* before (b), where (b) was not *ex nihilo*. We cannot say (a) soul creation (*ex nihilo*) and (b) election and predestination (not *ex nihilo*) are identical, since the same occurrence seemingly cannot be both *ex nihilo* and not *ex nihilo*, and if not, then (a) \neq (b). Inserting the definition of “forewete” into 8:29, those He foreknew He predestined, 8:29 can be written as, those determined beforehand He

⁹ Genesis 1:26 tells us that man was created during the first week. It should be concluded that this means that all souls were created during the first week, since we are not told of any other time in Scripture when humans were created. Later souls were associated with specific biological bodies that were created via God’s directing of procreation. We can see a hint of this in Genesis 2:7, where God says He made Adam a “living soul,” not just a soul, and where the word “living” denotes biological function. So, in simpler terms, God created all souls during the first week, and then implanted them into human biological vessels at later times, as He predestined.

predestined. There was a perception or measurement made, conclusion and judgement drawn, *before* election and predestination, something *seen* (to again use Luther’s word), determined, and settled *before* (forewete) predestination, which was God having awareness of the soul before election, as it was created. Romans 8:28-30 shows us there is a specific ordering during the first week at some point before human time started (2 Tim. 1:9). If there is a pre-election soul state, we don’t need to resort to (ii) the clairvoyance definition of foreknowledge, since there is a state of the soul (a) before election and predestination. If “foreknowledge” was originally “forewete,” and therefore “fore”+“knowledge” is really information from the inception not from the future, then the “fore” (before) knowledge of 8:29 is pointing to the pre-election and pre-predestination state of the soul before (b). From pre-election information of the soul is where election and predestination foreknowledge come from: (b) the pre-elected state of the soul.

A large and fiery question that is often discussed surrounding election and predestination is: Could God have created *only* salvific souls? Since Scripture points to (a) creation of souls, and the (b) election and predestination of them being distinct and different happenings, (a) preceding (b), the question is: In the two-step process of (a) creating souls and then (b) electing and predestining them, could God have created all souls in step (a) to be salvific? With this, the soul-creation process would fore-settle, fore-determine (forewete) the life of the person—but this would be to make predestination and soul creation identical, (b) = (a), which we just saw in the previous paragraph is apparently not Scriptural and therefore not possible. (a) Soul creation was before (b) electing and predestining of souls, so souls could not be created to be salvific—and rather, souls can only be *predestined* to be salvific, in the step *following* soul creation: only in step (b). The question we are interested in, is: Could God have *predestined*, rather than created, all souls to be salvific? For reasons just given, we now can understand why God cannot create all souls to be salvific, and later in this section we will discover why God also could not elect or predestine all souls to be salvific.

Our analysis to this point has brought us to the following argument:

1. Soul creation happened before election and predestination, (a) → (b).
2. Predestination was not based on God knowing the future, but rather determination beforehand (forewete), based on (i)-type foreknowledge (inception definition) of (a) the

preceding state of the soul (pre-election knowledge of the soul) before the soul was elected or predestined.

3. Conclusion A: God knew (foreknew) the pre-election state of the soul at the time of (a) soul creation, in order (b) to determine beforehand decisions about electing and predestining.

Regarding the order of (a) → (b) in Romans 8:29 (“For whom he did foreknow, he *also* did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son...”), the word “also” indicates two steps, (a) in addition to (b), or (a) → (b). *In addition to* is the dictionary-definition of “also,” and the dictionary-definition of “addition” involves the act of introducing *something else*, which reveals the two-step process of (a) → (b) in v29. So, we can see that Scripture contains reference to the (a) → (b) scenario where souls are first created, where there was a state of pre-election of the soul that was seen by God, and He determined and settled His conclusions about each soul by what He knew beforehand (what He knew about each soul before they were (b) elected and predestined). We will see below that this explains why God only predestined *some* souls, not all. And Romans 8:29 is not the only verse revealing the distinction of (a) and (b), and of the (a) → (b) ordering. To give another example, 1 Peter 1:2 also reveals the (a) → (b) ordering:

1 Peter 1:2 King James Version (KJV)

2 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.

Merriam-Webster’s Dictionary defines the preposition “according to” as (1) in conformity to, (2) as stated or attested by, (3) depending on. Each of these indicate that foreknowledge and election are distinct. For example, (3) depending on, requires two entities or situations, in order for one to depend on the other (unless dependency is a situation of self-dependency, but that would mean we would say election depended on election, which is not what is referred to in v29, or in 1 Pet. 1:2).

And if I insert the definition of “foreknowledge,” which above we found should be defined as (i) *pre-election knowledge* of the soul, and if I replace “according to” with its definition (*depending on*) into 1 Peter 1:2, here is how the verse reads:

1 Peter 1:2 King James Version (KJV)

2 Elect [depending on] the [pre-election knowledge] 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.

We again see here, as with Romans 8:29, that Conclusion A has been resting in Scripture all-along. And inserting the literal meaning of “forewete” here is how the verse reads:

1 Peter 1:2 King James Version (KJV)

2 Elect [depending on] the [settling and determining beforehand] 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.

Humans are elected and predestined specifically by the pre-election soul knowledge (foreknowledge) God had when (a) He created souls.

Also, consider the immensely important verse from John:

John 6:64 King James Version (KJV)

64 But there are some of you that believe not. For Jesus knew from the beginning who they were that believed not, and who should betray him.

Notice that this verse says Jesus knew *from the beginning*, not from the *future*. There is only one beginning point that Jesus can know from, not two. If Jesus at the beginning point looked into the future then Jesus would have known from and by the future if a person is to be chosen or not. But it says He knew (i) from the inception. To say that Jesus knew from the beginning about the future, it may seem like an innocent usage of (ii) the clairvoyance theology. But this bumps into the two-future-life-courses contradiction we noted above, and additionally John 6:64 does not mention the future, so why should we imagine this verse involves (ii) the clairvoyance use of the word “foreknowledge”? From everything that has been written in this article, it is simply more economical and judicious to allow “from the beginning” to denote the span of “time,” for lack of a better word, from (a) soul creation, before and up to but not including when (b) election and predestination occurred. Jesus knew the soul at that point (“from the beginning”), and He knew all He needed to know about the soul, just by *seeing* it (to again use Luther’s word), where its deep inner being, its structure and quality in its pre-elected state could only be fully known to

God who is omniscient, without having to look into the future, and without having to look beyond the point of (a) soul inception. All that was needed was (a) pre-election soul knowledge for and before (b) election and predestination.

It would appear that many theologians interpret this verse from John via (ii) the clairvoyant foreknowledge framework: Jesus clairvoyantly knew *at the beginning* of time who would believe and who would betray *in the future*. But that is not what the verse says, and it only mentions that Jesus knew from the beginning, not from the future, of who would believe and who would betray. In other words, from the information of pre-election soul knowledge, Jesus knew from that point who is to be elected and who is not, just by a deep knowing of the soul in its first moment. To doubt that God could know who to elect and how to predestine, just from His observation and determination of the (a)-state of the soul before election, is to not understand that the knowledge God is infinite (Ps. 147:5 KJV). And “who they were that believed not” must be a reference to which souls Jesus saw in the pre-election state where the sort that He could put His Spirit into, which ones were of a quality that they could receive faith, and indeed which souls even in merely their (a)-state pre-elected existence could only start sharing in the glory of the Creator, just by being in relation to Him in (a) the pre-elected soul-state, and where that openness to the Trinity could be seen in the quality of the soul in its pre-election state, without considering its future when embodied in physical reality.

In discussing Romans 8:29, Grudem in his *Systematic Theology* seems to possibly arrive at Conclusion A. But Grudem does not take things further; being entrenched in Calvinist theology where Calvinists may have ceased looking into Scripture for reasons why God only chose *some*. Grudem apparently did not realize what the conclusion leads to (which is: *why* God only chose some souls, which we will uncover below). Grudem writes:

But this verse can hardly be used to demonstrate that God based his predestination on foreknowledge of the fact that a person would believe. The passage speaks rather of the fact that God knew persons (“those he foreknew”), not that he knew some fact about them, such as the fact that they would believe. (Grudem 1994, 676)

Moving on... God created the works and lives of people when (b) He predestined those souls, but since (a) soul creation was before that, soul creation is independent of any works, choices, or life-qualities of any person. Predestining souls, (b), gives an individual soul a direction, a life-

course, in embodied physical reality. But soul creation, *before* the predestining of souls, appears to be *undirected* creation, not based on anything (at least nothing stated or known from Scripture), and not with any end-result, in the *ex nihilo* creation of Creation during the first week.

As a way of being perfectly fair, it may have been the case that in creating souls God created *all* souls that could possibly exist, rather than only some souls. In other words, God may have specifically not directed souls to be created in any specific way, such as being saved or unsaved, merely created them independent any shaping, and where instead He merely created all souls in the set of all possible soul configurations and soul types that could possibly exist, where His only requirement in creating them is the requirement that every human soul that can possibly exist will be created, and where the qualities of the souls from one-to-the-next will widely vary. For this reason, the process of soul creation appears to be a quasi-random function, for lack of better words. There is nothing in the Bible telling us about the directedness of (a) soul-creation. Directedness of a person’s life occurs not with (a) soul creation, but rather with (b) election and predestination. So, it appears that God chose to create souls in an *undirected* fashion, since the direction of a life was proscribed in the (b)-step (election and predestination). The following passage from Scripture *could be* interpreted to be about the idea that God created every possible soul that could exist:

Colossians 1:16-17 King James Version (KJV)

16 For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him:

17 And he is before all things, and by him all things consist.

Typically, I believe, “all things” is interpreted as meaning something like this: *everything that exists*. But it could just as surely be interpreted to mean: *everything exists*, or *everything that possibly could exists does exist*. This could explain the great variety of items in nature: different shapes of trees and snowflakes, and so forth—everything that possibly can exist was pre-planned to exist. This does not automatically mean that there are infinite worlds, for example, since there may be a reason that is not possible—but then again, perhaps there are (Heb. 11:2 in the KJV refers to Him being the creator of *worlds*). Only God knows what is possible and not possible,

and my only concern here is the God, it would appear, created an undirected set of souls at the (a)-step, which could have been a scenario where He created *all* possible souls, as Col. 1:16-17 seems to indicate. Revelation 4:11 and Romans 11:36, for example, seems to suggest the very same conclusion.

That is the (a)-step. By the “time” God gets to the (b)-step of election and predestination, the word “forewete” implies he has determined and settled His conclusions about the quality of each soul, wherein He could proceed to act on (b) electing and predestination souls. God looks at those souls (foreknowledge or pre-election soul knowing), and deems which He can put His spirit into or not: which are salvific.

Now consider another argument:

1. God created an undirected set of souls, which may have been all souls that possibly could be created.
2. Conclusion A (above).
3. Not all souls seen by God in the pre-election (a)-step were determined and settled as being salvific (that is, not all souls were seen to be of the quality capable of receiving faith and having His Word and Spirit implanted within them).
4. Conclusion B: only some souls could be chosen, since not every soul was capable of being indwelt.

I see nothing in Scripture that could denote the entity that is foreknown before predestination, and which predestination was based on, other than the ex nihilo created unjudged/pre-judged not-yet-elected-or-predestined, seemingly-randomly-created soul. We are predestined based not on our choices, or our works, and it seems we must conclude that before works, the technical structure of our quasi-randomly-created soul would reveal if we are to be savable or not. We have already found that, after the creation of souls, God would have looked into them (this is the pre-election soul-knowing that is not based on any works or choices in the future embodied life) and seen that not all of them were such that He could put His Spirit into them, and *ipso facto*, *some* were known, according to their deep inner structure, to be unchosen, wherein the rest were seen by God to be chosen, where He could put His Spirit into, and if so He would therefore predestine them accordingly. If a soul, created without direction, just one of the many in all possible souls that was created, is revealed by its pre-election state as not capable of being like

God, in the image of Christ, not where the Spirit can indwell, then there’s not a lot God can do about it: this soul cannot be chosen, since that would be like trying to put a square peg in a round hole. Judgement day will happen, but also has *already* happened:

John 3:18 English Standard Version (ESV)

18 Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only Son of God.

In creating souls *not* based on *any* future knowledge about their life as embodied humans in physical reality, God created a group of souls without trying to make them a certain way, where He could not make them a certain way in the future, and then after they were created, he prepared them for embodied life in physical reality. There were no works or choices to know in the future before God’s predestining. There could not be knowledge of the human soul’s future before this predestined time, lest the contradiction of the human having two non-identical (that is, contradictory) futures emerges, and because predestination was needed to create works and a life-course, but that ordination had not happened yet, at the (a)-state. So, only from this pre-election state can the life be created/predestined.

5. Conclusion

If God saves based on soul quality, doesn’t that remove the miracle of grace? The answer to this is *no*, for a few reasons. Even before the sin of Adam, souls existed in a state of potential sin: sinless but potentially sinful, as Adam verified. After the sin of Adam, then all souls were altered to be *originally* sinful—for if that was not the case, then there would be other sinless humans after the Fall other than Jesus Christ, which is heresy. Original sin was an alteration in the nature of souls that were created during the first week after the Fall. In other words, when souls were created during the first week, they did not have willful sin, but they did have free-will (i.e., potential sin). After Eve’s willful, free-willed sin exhibited in Genesis 3:6, by her enticement of the desire for the fruit (where the desire in her for the fruit went over-and-above the trickery of Satan’s temptation), the aforementioned original sin of souls (not willful sin) became part of the make-up of *all* souls, wherein all predestined souls would start off in sin.

This paper offers an answer for Calvinists as to why God only chose some souls, which is *not* based on any information about a person’s embodied existence in physical reality. Hitherto

Calvinists have asserted there was no reason, or no known reason for why God only chose some, not all souls. And, as is also well-known, Calvinists are quite honest in admitting that they have no idea as to any answer. Sproul’s answer to this is a blatant *I have no idea*:

The question remains. Why does God only save some? If we grant that God can save men by violating their wills, why then does he not violate everybody’s will and bring them all the salvation?... The only answer I can give to this question is that I don’t know. I have no idea why God saves some but not all. I don’t doubt for a moment that God has the power to save all, but I know that he does not choose to save all. I don’t know why.
(Sproul 1986, 25)

It is ubiquitously claimed that Calvinism and Wesleyanism are the two ends-of-the-line, and no further, deeper analysis into Scripture exists. For example, Horton writes:

How then can we do justice to both sets of proof texts? We often hear Christians say, “Well, they have their verses, and we have ours”—as if to suggest that the Scriptures are unclear and indeed contradictory. If it is true that there are “eternal security” verses and “Arminian” verses in the Scriptures, then we can no longer consistently affirm that God’s Word tells one story or that it is unified by divine authorship. (Horton 2002, 29)

But as introduced in this article, there is a simple but deeper interpretation, as just uncovered, bringing us to a new interpretation of election and predestination, that takes us deeper into election and predestination theology, which has confused and bewildered so many through time.

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