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Predestined to Freedom According to Foreknowledge and Other Kinds of Divine Knowledge



Some Bible students assume that divine predestination limits human freedom. In addition, some have misunderstood the close connection between predestination and foreknowledge in Paul's writings. This leads them to conclude incorrectly that divine knowledge also limits human freedom.

In contrast, I propose that according to Scripture, human freedom is facilitated by divine foreknowledge, predestination, and other kinds of divine knowledge. My proposal is presented in terms of the different kinds of divine knowledge mentioned by Paul in the following text from Romans.

“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” (Rom. 8:29-30).

Proposal

1) There is harmony between divine foreknowledge and human freedom. “Glorious freedom” belongs to “the children of God” (Rom. 8:21) who are the people of God (9:25-26) “whom he foreknew” (11:2). “God has not cast away his people whom he foreknew” (11:2); but He does cast away those who freely continue in unbelief (11:20, 22-23).

2) Predestination is a kind of divine knowledge. We are “predestined according to the purpose of him who works all things according to . . . his will” (Eph. 1:11)—and God knows his predestined will (Rom. 8:27-29).

In addition, we are predestined to freedom. We are “predestined to be conformed to the image of his [God's] Son, that he [the Son] might be the firstborn among many brethren” (Rom. 8:29) who will be “delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious freedom of the children of God” (8:21).

3) God's call involves divine knowledge. "Those who love the Lord . . . are the called" ([Rom 8:28](#)); and "if anyone loves God, that one is known by him" ([1 Cor 8:3](#)). To those who do not love God, he will say: "I never knew you" ([Matt 7:23](#)). This kind of divine knowledge is implied in Paul's distinction between the time "when you did not know God" ([Gal 4:8](#)) and "now after you have known God or rather you are known by God" ([4:8-9](#)).

Also, God's knowledge of those who are called facilitates freedom because we are "called to freedom" ([Gal. 5:13](#)). "The called" ([Rom. 8:28](#)) are those who freely respond to God's call. "Whoever calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved" ([10:13](#)) because "faith comes by hearing . . . the word [or call] of God" ([10:17](#)). We may freely choose to resist God's call. "Have they not heard [God's call]? Yes indeed: 'Their sound has gone out to all the earth, and their words to the ends of the world' . . . 'All day long I have stretched out my hands to a disobedient and contrary people'" ([10:18, 21](#)).

4) Justification is a kind of divine knowledge. According to Isaiah: "By his knowledge will my righteous servant justify many" ([Is. 53:11](#)). This concept is also present in James' comment on God's judgment-justification-knowledge of Abraham: "now I know that you fear God, since you have not withheld your son . . . from me" ([Gen. 22:12](#)). James writes: "was not Abraham our father justified when he offered Isaac his son on the altar?" ([Jms. 2:21](#)). This justifying knowledge includes "the free gift" "unto justification" ([Rom. 5:16](#)) which makes us "free from sin" ([6:18](#)) as we freely "yield" to "righteousness" ([6:19](#)).

5) Glorification is a kind of divine knowledge: "For now we see through a mirror, dimly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know just as I also am known [by God]" ([1 Cor. 13:12](#)). In addition, those who are "glorified" ([Rom. 8:30](#)) are those who will experience "glorious freedom" ([8:21](#)). "Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom. . . . from glory to glory . . . by the Spirit of the Lord" ([2 Cor. 3:17-18](#)). The Spirit of freedom brings ultimate glorification at the resurrection. "If the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He . . . will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit" ([Rom. 8:11](#)).

Summary

In summary, according to the Bible, divine predestination does not limit human freedom. Instead, predestination facilitates freedom; we are predestined to freedom. In addition, there is no contradiction between foreknowledge and freedom. In fact, God facilitates human freedom according to foreknowledge and other kinds of divine knowledge such as predestination, calling, justification, and glorification.

Questions:

- What are the relations between freedom, predestination, foreknowledge and other kinds of divine knowledge?
- Do the different kinds of divine knowledge limit human freedom? If so, how does divine knowledge limit human freedom?
- Do the different kinds of divine knowledge facilitate human freedom? If so, how does divine knowledge facilitate human freedom?

Posted by [Martin Hanna](#) on November 12, 2010 in [Biblical Backgrounds](#) | [Permalink](#)

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God's foreknowledge does not limit what I do. He may order me to do something whether I like it or not. Will he know that I will rob a

bank tomorrow, even if I do not do it. If the answer is no, then is it a stretch to say that my actions/choices influences what he knows about me.

Posted by: Lynden | [November 13, 2010 at 08:46 PM](#)

God's foreknowledge does not interfere with our freedom of choice. In spite of his foreknowledge he continues to provide every opportunity for us to accept him. The book of life contains every story. The book is sealed and after 1000yrs when opened. It will prove that God did not manipulate and we were free even to rebel. This is proof of a God of love and when he creates new worlds once more the entire universe will know that he is justified in squashing any potential sin that may arise.

Posted by: Dee | [November 14, 2010 at 01:32 PM](#)

Is freedom the ability to choose between right and wrong or is it the freedom from choosing at all? Is it the exercise of free will or the surrender and death of our free will?

Posted by: David de la Vega | [November 14, 2010 at 08:12 PM](#)

Lynden, it seems to me that God's foreknowledge of what I would choose to do would be different if I would choose something different. And yet, if my future choice does not yet exist, it seems that my choice cannot influence God's knowledge. This is why the Bible's teaching that God foreknows free choices is so mysterious. We can believe it even if we cannot explain it.

Posted by: [Martin Hanna](#) | [November 14, 2010 at 08:58 PM](#)

Dee, I have often wondered what will be the case after the history of sin and redemption on planet earth is ended.

Will God quickly exterminate sin whenever it arises again because his love has already been fully demonstrated in our history?

Or will sin never arise again in God's universe because God's love has been fully demonstrated in our history?

I prefer the second option. I believe that in eternity we will remain free and will freely choose to remain faithful to God.

Posted by: [Martin Hanna](#) | [November 14, 2010 at 09:34 PM](#)

David, I believe that true freedom includes the freedom to choose. If freedom is simply the absence of choices then freedom seems to have no positive reality.

At the same time, you are right if you mean that true freedom involves choosing to surrender or put to death our free choices to act contrary to God's will.

To choose rebellion is a misuse of freedom which results in the loss of true freedom which is to choose surrender to God's will.

Posted by: [Martin Hanna](#) | [November 14, 2010 at 10:00 PM](#)

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