

“KNOW” & “FOREKNOW” & FREE GRACE!

The **free and sovereign grace of God** is central in Scripture! Those who *despise* this truth attempt to do away with it in any way they can; yet they know that just *denying it* or *ignoring it* will not work; it's too predominate in the Word of God. Their scheme has to show at least a measure of intelligence! They want *God's will* off the throne and *man's will* exalted to that lofty position. One of their *grandest plots ever* is to take the words “**know**” and “**foreknow**” in the Bible, ignore how they were used in the original languages, and give them a simple definition of how **we** would understand them, and how **we** would use them in our everyday usage. That's it! and it worked! **By** perverting the definition and usage of these two biblical words, they achieved their goal! Not only did they succeed in making man's will superior to God's will, they even made **God's decrees dependent upon** and **determined by** fallen man's decisions! And this lie is ever so popular!

They hate **unconditional election**! They want it **conditioned** upon man's will. So they say *foreknow* simply means *to know beforehand*; and they take the verses, “whom he did *foreknow*, he also did *predestinate*” (*Rom 8:29*), and “*Elect* according to the *foreknowledge* of God” (*1 Peter 1:2*); and they say that God elected these to salvation and predestinated them because he “*foreknew*” something about them—that they would repent and believe! He *looked down through the ages* and “*foresaw*” that *they would choose him*—**so he chose them!** There it is! *Man's will* now not only has taken precedence over *God's will*, but **God's decree of election** is *subservient to* and *contingent upon* the “free-will” of man! But let it be known! **That is not** the biblical usage of *know* and *foreknow*!

Hear it carefully: “Adam **knew** Eve his wife; and she conceived” (*Gen 4:1*); “Ye have been rebellious against the Lord from the day that I **knew** you” (*Deut 9:24*); “Before I formed thee in the belly I **knew** thee” (*Jer 1:5*); “You only have I **known** of all the families of the earth” (*Amos 3:2*); “Then will I prove I **knew** you, I never **knew** you” (*Matt 7:23*). “I am the good shepherd and **know** my sheep, and am **known** of mine” (*John 10:14*). “If any man love God, the same is **known** of him” (*1 Cor 8:3*). This is quite a bit more than just *knowing something* about someone! Adam wasn't just *acquainted* with Eve; he **knew** her, and she *conceived*. What we're seeing in these passages is not just *acquaintance of*, but *love and affection for*: “Adam **knew** Eve; I never **knew** you; I **know** my sheep.”

And the apostles' usage of this word doesn't *change* when they attach *before* to it, meaning *back in eternity*: **foreknow**: “whom he did **foreknow**, he also did *predestinate*” (*Rom 8:29*). This is “**God's elect**” (*v33*), those God “**before loved**” before time began! Paul has *love* as a running theme throughout this entire context (*vv28-39*); and he begins with the saints' love for God (*v28*), then immediately goes to the *source* of that love: God's *love and purpose* toward them from all eternity! (*v29*) “For whom he did *foreknow*.” Paul is saying: we love God **because he first loved us!** John taught this same truth: “We love him, **because he first loved us!**” (*1 John 4:19*). This is *basic* to preaching the gospel: he **first** loved us back in eternity! “Yea, I have loved thee with an *everlasting love*: therefore with lovingkindness have I drawn thee” (*Jer 31:3*). God **foreknew** (*before loved*) with a special *everlasting love* his “**elect**!”—those whom he calls, justifies, and glorifies (*v30*). And Paul cannot stress this *any stronger than he does*—that **nothing** is able to separate us from this **love of God!** (*see vv35-39*). It stretches from *eternity past* to *eternity future!*

Then Peter bases our salvation upon this same truth, using the same word Paul used, *proginosko*, in its noun form, *prognosis*—“Elect according to the **foreknowledge** of God the Father” (*1 Peter 1:2*). In other words, our *election* flows out of this *distinguishing love* that God set upon us in eternity. God's **decree of election**,—as Paul put it, “he hath *chosen* us in Christ before the foundation of the world” (*Eph 1:4*), and “God hath from the beginning *chosen you* to salvation” (*2 Thess 2:13*)—Peter is assuring us here that this decree did not spring from anything *within us*, but entirely and only from *within the heart of God!* He chose us “*according to*” his love for us! This makes election **unconditional**; there was nothing *foreseen* in “God's elect” that moved him to choose them for his own: not their repentance, for that's God's *gift* (*2 Tim 2:24-26*), and not their faith, for that, too, is “*the gift of God*” (*Eph 2:8; Phil 1:29*).

What destroys this false doctrine is that *God's foreknowledge* is never said to be of *what the persons do*, but of *the persons themselves*—“**whom** he did *foreknow*,” not “**what** he did *foreknow*.” It's not what they would do, it's *them!* **They** are the objects of his *foreknowledge*; he loved *them!* And something else, if God chose us because he *fore-saw* something that we would do, then his choice of us is not of *grace*, but of *debt*. But Paul states plainly that our “**election**” is “**of grace!**” (*Rom 11:5*). We would also have something to *boast about*—our believing! But the Bible says we “**believed through grace!**” (*Acts 18:27*). Any doctrine that has one sinner making himself “*different*” from another one is to be rejected outright!—“**Who maketh thee to differ from another?** and what hast thou that thou *didst not receive?* now if thou *didst* receive it, why dost thou glory, as if thou *hadst not received it?*” (*1 Cor 4:7*). □