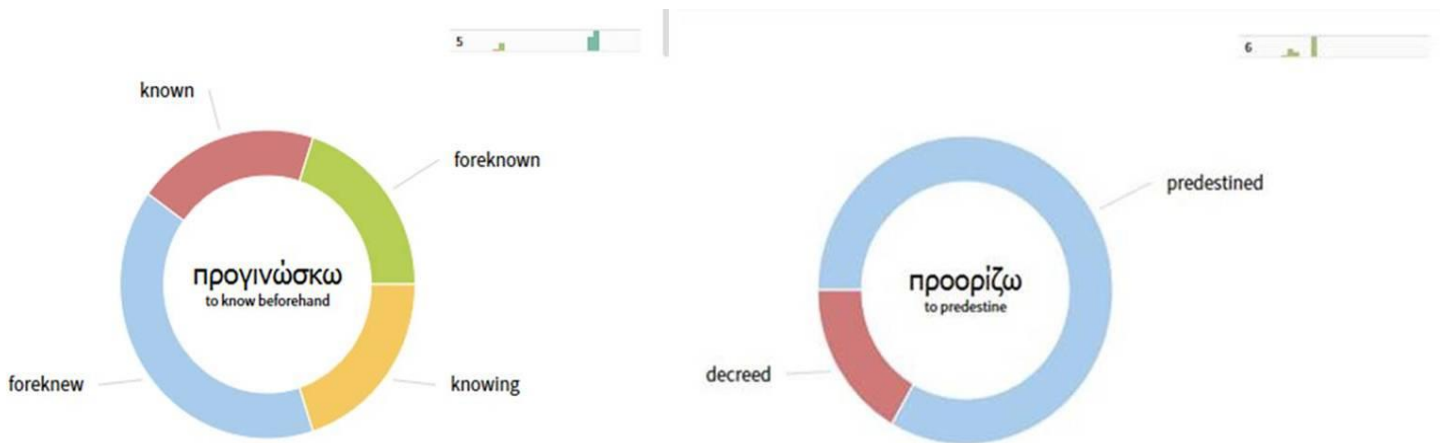


Predestination and Will:

How are predestination and election connected with foreknowledge?



Foreknowledge and predestination are taught in scripture. The meaning that we pour into these words is important. God has a plan and he is calling out a people for his namesake (Heb 2:10). God has predestined a people to be holy (or set apart). The word προγινώσκω means to know before hand or to choose before hand. The word προορίζω means to decide beforehand. For whom He foreknew, He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son (Ro 8-29).

Foreknowledge is not looking into a future that does not yet exist. It is not God seeing a person that has not yet been created. God does not have a movie of our future lives that he can play on a big screen in heaven. There is no fast forward button that displays our lives at any speed or timestamp. These ideas (e.g. time is created, God sees a non-existent future, God knows your future thoughts and decisions) come from Greek paganism not scripture.

God decided long ago to save men by grace through faith in his son, Jesus.

"Who has saved us and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace which was given to us in Christ Jesus before time began, but has now been revealed by the appearing of our Savior Jesus Christ, who has abolished death and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel (2 Ti 1:9-10)."

God is love (1 Jn 4:16). He creates each person with care in his mother's womb (Ps 139:13-15). Man is created to respond to a God who loves him (Eph 1:5). There is an inheritance waiting for him when he responds to his maker (Eph 1:11, 2:10).

God is sovereign (Ro 11:33). Some individuals will be saved and some will not (Mt. 24:22, 31; Mk 13:20, 27; Ro 8:33, 9:11, 11:5-7, 28; Eph 1:11; Col 3:12; 1 Thess 1:4; 1 Ti 5:21; 2 Ti 2:10; Tit 1:1; 1 Pe 1:1-2, 2:9; 2 Pe 1:10) but the

invitation to be saved goes out to all men (Mt 22:10).

God loves all that he created (Ge 1:21, 1 Ti 4:4, Jas 1:17). If an individual will live in God's love, he will live in him (1 Jn 4:16). We can trust that God has only good intentions for each person he created (1 Pe 4:19).

Men are sinners (Ro 3:23). God could rightfully sent people to hell (Ro 6:23) but he has provided a way for salvation through his son, Jesus (Jn 14:6). When one trusts in Jesus' work on the cross, he is saved from hell and damnation (Jn 3:16; Ro 10:9-10). God does not turn away anyone away who will trust in him (Deut 4:29). When a man trusts in the Lord, God draws him near (Jn 6:44, 12:32). His gospel has the power to save anyone (Ro 1:16, Jn 3:16).

Believing that God created people without an opportunity to be saved is to misunderstand his nature and character. If God is unjust, then God is not good; but, scripture tells us that God is good and just (Ps 143:10, Deut 32:4, Re 15:3).

How are predestination and election connected with foreknowledge?

God knows everything that there is to know. He does not know the number of hairs on the boogie man's head because the boogie man does not exist.^[2] He has a plan and being well-informed, God has a good idea about how men will respond to him. When people make choices, their choices are real (Ge 22:12). God asks men to trust him.

In Genesis 22, God challenged Abraham:

**Now it came to pass after these things that God tested Abraham, and said to him, "Abraham!"
And he said, "Here I am."**

Then He said, "Take now your son, your only son Isaac, whom you love, and go to the land of Moriah, and offer him there as a burnt offering on one of the mountains of which I shall tell you."

**So Abraham rose early in the morning and saddled his donkey, and took two of his young men with him, and Isaac his son; and he split the wood for the burnt offering, and arose and went to the place of which God had told him. Then on the third day Abraham lifted his eyes and saw the place afar off. And Abraham said to his young men, "Stay here with the donkey; the lad and I will go yonder and worship, and we will come back to you."
So Abraham took the wood of the burnt offering and laid it on Isaac his son; and he took the fire in his hand, and a knife, and the two of them went together. But Isaac spoke to Abraham his father and said, "My father!"
And he said, "Here I am, my son."**

Then he said, “Look, the fire and the wood, but where is the lamb for a burnt offering?”

And Abraham said, “My son, God will provide for Himself the lamb for a burnt offering.” So the two of them went together.

Then they came to the place of which God had told him. And Abraham built an altar there and placed the wood in order; and he bound Isaac his son and laid him on the altar, upon the wood. And Abraham stretched out his hand and took the knife to slay his son.

But the Angel of the LORD called to him from heaven and said, “Abraham, Abraham!”

So he said, “Here I am.”

And He said, “Do not lay your hand on the lad, or do anything to him; for now I know that you fear God, since you have not withheld your son, your only son, from Me.”

Abraham was tested and his faith was found to be true. He trusted God.

Men are able to move the heart of God. God is a person. He is able to be persuaded. He responds when men repent.

God had planned to destroy Nineveh but read from Jonah 3:5-10 what happens:

So the people of Nineveh believed God, proclaimed a fast, and put on sackcloth, from the greatest to the least of them. Then word came to the king of Nineveh; and he arose from his throne and laid aside his robe, covered himself with sackcloth and sat in ashes. And he caused it to be proclaimed and published throughout Nineveh by the decree of the king and his nobles, saying, let neither man nor beast, herd nor flock, taste anything; do not let them eat, or drink water. But let man and beast be covered with sackcloth, and cry mightily to God; yes, let every one turn from his evil way and from the violence that is in his hands. Who can tell if God will turn and relent, and turn away from His fierce anger, so that we may not perish?

Then God saw their works, that they turned from their evil way; and God relented from the disaster that He had said He would bring upon them, and He did not do it.

Because the Ninevites repented, God relented (or changed his mind) about destroying them.

God's foreknowledge about the future is an estimation of how men might respond in a given situation. God tested Abraham and he warned the Ninevites. Their responses were real choices and they mattered. Had they responded differently, history would read differently.

God has predestined men to be adopted as his sons through Jesus Christ in accordance with his pleasure and will (Eph 1:5). He wants men to be saved (2 Pe 3:9). Whether they become saved is their choice. A proper response to God's call matters (Jn 3:8).

God enables men to respond in faith because he is merciful. Men cannot take credit for a right response because God himself enables them to respond rightly to him (2 Ti 2:25). God gets the glory. Moses was not chosen by God because he was the *great* Moses. He was chosen--as all men are chosen--because God is good and just:

For He says to Moses, "I will have mercy on whomever I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whomever I will have compassion." So then it is not of him who wills, nor of him who runs, but of God who shows mercy (Ro 9:15-16).

Abraham believed and God credited him with righteousness. The Ninevites repented and God responded with graciousness towards them at that time. Belief and repentance are important to God. Men should believe and repent of their sins before a holy God.

God has chosen ornery men in the past who didn't always go along with his plan. God nearly killed Moses over an issue of circumcision (Ex 4:24). He was furious that Saul allowed some of his enemies to live (1 Sam 15:26) and he had to literally wrestle Jacob (Ge 32:24). These mishaps did not thwart God's plans and purposes. He is able to work around uncooperative individuals.

God elected (chose) Jacob rather than Esau (Ro 9:11). Jacob had not made a profession of faith. He wasn't born yet! It was God's intention to choose the elder of the two boys (Ge 25:23). Jacob would still have to repent and believe in the future to be saved.

Esau was not chosen by God. It just so happens that Esau was a man filled with pride. After Esau had lived his life we learn about God's assessment of him. He was prideful and scripture tells us that God hates pride (Mal 1:3).

God chooses all men (Ro 9:11, 16; 10:20; 1 Co 1:27-29; 2 Ti 1:9). Men must choose him back or suffer the consequences for their sin (Ex 33:19; Deut 7:6-7; Ro 9:10-24; Ac 13:48; 1 Pe 2:8).

Men are predestined to obtain an inheritance through faith in Christ (Eph 1:11). Salvation is not based on something men do or will do. It is based on God's

grace. He desires men from every: tribe, tongue and nation to be saved (Mk 16:15, Re 5:9). This was his plan before the foundation of the world (Eph 1:4).

God knits each individual together in his mother's womb. He formed each person's inmost being (Ps 139:13). Men are fearfully and wonderfully made by him (Ps 139:14). Those he foreknew, he also predestined (Ro 8:29). He created men to respond to him. God did not look down through a crystal ball and see an already created future person. The future is just that--future. Life and one's innermost being (or soul) begins at fertilization (Jer 1:5, Ps 139:15).

Not all men respond positively to the light given them. Jesus said, "But you do not believe because you are not of My sheep (Jn 10:26)." If one is filled with rebellion and pride--if he prefers darkness to light--he will not hear God's voice (Jn 3:19). He does not believe the Word of God (Jn 1:1); therefore, he does not belong to God. God draws men to himself when they trust in him (Jn 6:44, 12:32). No one naturally seeks God (Ro 3:11). Only He can open their eyes (Ac 26:18).

Men should seek God though he is not far from anyone (Ac 17:27). Whoever pursues righteousness and love finds life. He that follows after righteousness and mercy finds life, righteousness, and honor (Pr 21:21). God has given every person general grace and he will not withhold his saving grace to honest seekers (Jer 29:13). Jesus said: All that the Father gives Me will come to Me, and the one who comes to Me I will by no means cast out (Jn 6:37). It is written in the prophets, 'And they shall all be taught by God.' Therefore everyone who has heard and learned from the Father comes to Me (Jn 6:45). All three persons of the trinity participate in justification. Whom He predestined, these He also called; whom He called, these He also justified; and whom He justified, these He also glorified (Ro 8:30). We become citizens of heaven (Phil 3:20), members of a holy and royal priesthood (1 Pe 2:5, 9), family members (Eph 2:19), reborn spiritually (Jn 3:5), married (Rev 19:7), and adopted (Gal 4:5).

Men who will listen to God's voice (1 Ki 19:12), can be granted repentance (1 Pe 2:12, 2 Ti 2:25, Mt 24:44). If one wants to belong to God, he can belong to God. Men are responsible for the light given them (Jn 9:41). If one responds positively to the light given them, God gives him more understanding (Heb 5:12, Jn 16:12, Jn 14:6).

God chooses unlovely people to be his own. Jesus was called friend of sinners not friend of prideful elites (Mt 11:16-19). God has predetermined the relationship that he would like to have with his creation. He would like to know each individual in a personal way. It is his hope that men are saved but there is no guarantee that he will receive a response in kind.

God has demonstrated his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us (Ro 5:8). He has proven his love for mankind (Jn 3:16). A response is

required. God could have left men helpless in their sinful rebellion but he has reached out to us (Ge 3:9, Isa 65:1, Heb 4:6, 7:25, Lk 11:9-10, 19:10, Pr 8:17). God is faithful (1 Jn 1:9). Men must respond in kind (Jn 3:3-8, 6:44, 45, 65, Eph 2:8, Phil 1:29, 2 Pe 1:2). Men should repent (Eze 18:30-32; Ac 17:30) and believe (Mk 9:23).

God has perfect knowledge of man. He is the craftsman of our lives: "Your eyes saw my substance, being yet unformed. And in your book they all were written, the days fashioned for me, when as yet there were none of them (Ps 139:16)." He thinks about us, enjoys us, and cares for us: "But the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Do not fear therefore; you are of more value than many sparrows (Lk 12:6-7). Knowing that he knows us should comfort us.

The name of any man can be added to his Book of Life: "He who overcomes shall be clothed in white garments, and I will not blot out his name from the Book of Life; but I will confess his name before My Father and before His angels. He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches (Re 3:5-6)."

The world system, the flesh, and the devil work against God's plan for men (Eph 2:2-3). These foes have been defeated in Christ (Jn 16:33, 1 Jn 5:5). Our affections must match his (Lev 11:44). God hates the wicked (Ps 11:5) and he has every right to send men who refuse him to hell (Ro 9:21).

It is God's desire that all men come to the knowledge of the truth (1 Ti 2:4). The Holy Spirit works to woo men (Heb 3:15). It is the human heart filled with pride that stands in the way of a right relationship with God (Ac 17:26), The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it? Jer 17:9.

^[1] Apples of Gold Bible Study: Does God Elect Everyone?

^[2] Enyart, Bob, Denver Bible Church sermon.: Does God Know Your Entire Future?.