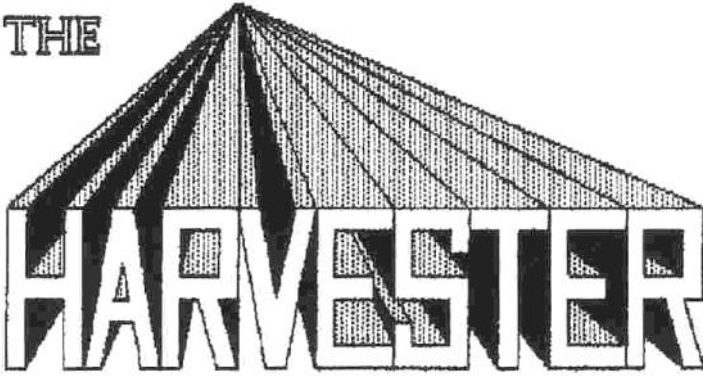


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*"The harvest truly is great, but the laborers are few: pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he would send forth laborers into his harvest" (Luke 10:2)*

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## THE CALLED, THE WILLER, AND THE RUNNER (PART I)

*And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose. (Rom. 8:28)*

*So then it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that sheweth mercy. (Rom. 9:16)*

Who are "the called," "him that willeth," and "him that runneth?" These three labels come from Paul's letter to the Romans in chapters 8 and 9, potentially two of the most debated, and perhaps most confusing, chapters within Romans. Paul is

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not strictly discussing the topic of “predestination” as we know and debate it today in these two chapters. However, it is in this context of discussing predestination that we come across these three labels. We don’t commonly delve too deeply into these labels during such discussions, but we’ll find they are crucial for understanding what Paul is trying to relay. In short, Paul is telling of a gift to all Christians that was not based on genealogy, despite the arguments of dissenting Jews.

When we talk about “predestination” in the context of religion with people of various beliefs, most people are referring to a belief that God pre-selected those he would save. Is that the case Paul is stating in Romans 8:29?

*For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren.*

To best understand what Paul means here, we must look at the surrounding verses to get context. Leading up to this portion of his letter to the Romans, Paul has established that we must put to death an old life - the life that served the flesh - as Christ died (Rom. 6:3-5). Similarly, we then are raised in newness of spirit where we serve a new master, God (Rom. 6:18). Paul notes that simply being raised in newness of spirit no longer makes the things which were formerly appealing suddenly unappealing (Rom. 7:22-24), but through Jesus Christ we lose the desire to give into these temptations by walking after the Spirit (Rom. 8:1-11). In the battle to overcome these old temptations of the flesh, God has promised to adopt us and become joint heirs with Christ (Rom. 8:12-17). That is, we receive the same which Christ received - eternal glory and a home in Heaven with God. This joint inheritance is essential for understanding Romans 8:29. Paul continues by noting our future glory which gives us patience in worldly tribulations (Rom. 8:18), the hope of the inheritance is never lost (Rom. 8:23), and the Spirit intercedes on our behalf to give us what we need here on this earth as we wait to receive the joint in-

heritance (Rom. 8:26-27). All of this is under the discussion of the future glory awaiting us.

With this context in mind, Paul then comes to the verse in question, giving an important preface in Romans 8:28:

*And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.*

Here, who are “*the called*?” Interestingly, there are several words in the original Greek which translate to “the called” as it relates to an invitation in English:

1. *Klēsis* = an invitation; calling
2. *Kaleō* = bid, call (forth), or name (was called)
3. *Proskaleomai* = to call toward oneself, summon, invite
4. *Klētos* = invited, appointed, or (specifically) a saint

*Klēsis*, *kaleō*, and *proskaleomai* are used as a general calling, but no specification is given to answering the invitation. *Klētos* is used to denote the sainted, or those who have answered an invitation. In Romans 8:28, Paul used *klētos*, for “the called,” and thus he is specifying those who have answered the call according to the purpose (the Messiah). That is, those who have heeded Jesus’ call and put Him on (Rom. 1:6 & 6:3, Gal. 3:27). Now, regarding these who have answered the call Paul says in 8:29,

*For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be firstborn among many brethren.*

Now having the context of 8:28, we see the foreknown are those who have answered the call (i.e., those who have been added to God’s Church; the Christians). Before going further, we now have to distinguish the difference between “foreknow” and “predestinate.” Foreknowledge is knowing ahead of time, but it does not include any active intervention or “manipulation.” It is essentially being passively aware of the future without interfering in it. Meanwhile, predestinate means to predetermine or actively intervene in the future.

Now that we have a definition for each, it's clear Paul mentions them separately, and foreknowing is not predestination; they are two different things. One can foreknow without predestination. It is simply knowledge without intervention. However, one cannot predestinate without foreknowledge. One cannot rearrange and manipulate things in the future without first knowing (foreknowledge) where, when, and how they are positioned. Of course, God's eternal knowledge, having the very hairs of our head numbered grants Him foreknowledge of all. God foresees the future not because He has decreed it, but because there are no limitations on His knowledge.

From 8:28 and 29, we see God did not predestinate people to answer the call. God did not predestinate that people shall love Him. God did not predestinate that people should believe. Throughout the preceding portions of this letter as well as elsewhere, it is clear we have free will to make these choices, and it is our deeds done by free will for which we are answerable (2 Cor. 5:10). If we did not have this freedom, then we would not be answerable for our actions. In fact, Paul addresses this in the context of the dissenting Jews shortly afterwards in Romans chapter 9. So what indeed is predestined, or what does Paul specifically refer to as being predestined in 8:29? It is the being "*conformed to the image of his Son*" that is predestined. The only thing predestined - actively intervened upon - is that those who love God (those who answered the call [by free will]) shall become Christlike in eternity, or in other words, receive the joint inheritance mentioned in 8:17. To summarize, specific individuals are not predestined or pre-selected to be saved. The gift of joint inheritance is predestined to be given to those who answer the call.

Paul finishes the thought with 8:30:

*Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and*

*whom he justified, them he also glorified.*

Here, Paul concludes the discussion focusing on the future glory for those who answered the call and are awaiting the adoption. He further specified that those who receive the predestined gift were called and made the choice to answer the call (allowing them access to the predestined gift of joint inheritance with Christ). Interestingly, Paul uses the Greek word *kaleō* for both instances of “called” in 8:30. Again, this Greek word for “called” means an invitation or bidding, but not one that has specifically been answered. Meaning, those who answered the call (the foreknown) were not the only ones called. The call is wide, but only those who answer the call (via their free will) are justified and glorified. This wonderful gift, the justification, the eternal glory through the joint inheritance in Christ is predestined for those who choose to answer the call to heed His purpose and put on Christ. Lord willing, next month we’ll examine “*him that willeth*” and “*him that runneth*.”

BEN

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## SEARCH THE SCRIPTURES

Remember last month’s questions?

1. Who brought Elijah bread and meat to eat during the drought? RAVENS (1 Kings 17:4)
2. What did Elisha do for the Shunammite’s son? RAISED HIM BACK TO LIFE (2 Kings 4:32-37)
3. Complete the Beatitude: “Blessed are the pure in heart...”  
...FOR THEY SHALL SEE GOD. (Mat. 5:8)
4. Which city was the letter to Philemon written from? NO CITY IS SPECIFIED, BUT MANY ASSUME ROME, WHERE PAUL WAS UNDER HOUSE ARREST FOR AT LEAST TWO YEARS (Phm. 1:1, 23; Acts 28:16, 30)
5. The desolation of which city is described in Revelation chapter 18? BABYLON (Rev. 18:2)

## DO NOT HARDEN YOUR HEART

The Children of Israel were slaves in Egypt and they cried because of their taskmasters. God heard their cry and sent Moses to deliver them. After ten miraculous plagues that He sent upon the Egyptians, Pharaoh let them go. The Lord delivered them from Pharaoh by making a path through the sea so that they walked on dry ground. They entered the wilderness free from slavery. But they soon turned away from God and began worshipping a golden calf. They missed what they had in Egypt and desired to return. They complained and rebelled against God who had delivered them.

We must learn from the bad example of the Israelites.

*Wherefore (as the Holy Ghost saith, To day if ye will hear his voice, Harden not your hearts, as in the provocation, in the day of temptation in the wilderness: When your fathers tempted me, proved me, and saw my works forty years. Wherefore I was grieved with that generation, and said, They do alway err in their heart; and they have not known my ways. So I swear in my wrath, They shall not enter into my rest.) Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God. But exhort one another daily, while it is called To day; lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin. For we are made partakers of Christ, if we hold the beginning of our confidence stedfast unto the end; While it is said, To day if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts, as in the provocation. For some, when they had heard, did provoke: howbeit not all that came out of Egypt by Moses. But with whom was he grieved forty years? was it not with them that had sinned, whose carcasses fell in the wilderness? And to whom swear he that they should not enter into his rest, but to them that believed not? So we see that they could not enter in because of unbelief. (Heb. 3:7-19)*

We, as Christians, are like the Israelites. They were delivered

from slavery to the Egyptians and we are delivered from slavery to sin. They saw the power of God in the miraculous plagues sent on the Egyptians, in the pillar of cloud and fire, in the parting of the Red Sea, in the manna and the quail and other signs. We have seen the power of God through His creation, the forgiveness of our sins, the changes in our lives and the gift of the Holy Spirit. They were promised the land of Canaan which was described as a land flowing with milk and honey. We are promised eternal life with God and Jesus in the Holy City where there will be no more pain, death, sorrow or crying. They wandered in the wilderness for forty years before they could enter the Promised Land. We spend however long we live here upon this earth with trials and tribulations in anticipation of entering the Holy City.

A soft heart trusts God and is obedient, accepts criticism, correction and discipline and in humility changes when there is a need. A hard heart is proud, stubborn and rebellious and is calloused and blind to the love and blessings received from God. The Israelites saw the power of God and received His blessings, but they hardened their hearts. God said *"They do alway err in their heart; and they have not known my ways."* Their desire for the things of the world was strong in them so they developed unbelief and departed from the living God. They tested, tried and disobeyed God; they complained and rebelled against Him. As a result, He swore in His wrath *"They shall not enter into My rest."* All those who left Egypt died in the wilderness. The exceptions were Joshua and Caleb who believed, trusted and obeyed God.

So what about you? I doubt that you will fall down before a graven image like a golden calf and worship it. But you can

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worship the things of this world. You can love money and the things that money can buy. You can follow your fleshly lusts. You can complain and rebel against God. Your heart can go astray from God and not follow His ways. You can get caught up in the things of this world so that you don't believe or trust in God. You can develop a hard heart.

After the Israelites wandered in the wilderness for forty years, Joshua became their leader. He led the Israelites into the Promised Land and they conquered the peoples and divided up the land. Afterwards, he gathered all the people together and spoke to them.

*Now therefore fear the LORD, and serve him in sincerity and in truth: and put away the gods which your fathers served on the other side of the flood, and in Egypt; and serve ye the LORD. And if it seem evil unto you to serve the LORD, choose you this day whom ye will serve; whether the gods which your fathers served that were on the other side of the flood, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land ye dwell: but as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD. (Jos. 24:14-15)*

I exhort and encourage you to be like Joshua, and purpose in your heart that you and your household will serve the Lord. The writer of Hebrews wrote in Hebrews 3:12-14,

*Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God. But exhort one another daily, while it is called To day; lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin. For we are made partakers of Christ, if we hold the beginning of our confidence stedfast unto the end;*

The "pleasures" of sin can deceive you and cause you to harden your heart toward God. So we need to exhort each other daily to be steadfast to God to the end. Then we will receive the promised rest with God and Jesus Christ.

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