

A BRIEF EXCURSUS IN PAULINE PREDESTINATION

Rom 8:28-31

Eph 1:3-12

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Introduction

1. We encounter the biblical doctrine of predestination primarily in Paul in Eph 1:3-12 and Rom 8:28, 29.
2. Predestination is a biblical topic and doctrine, but as Paul uses it his views are vastly different from Calvinistic Predestination.
3. This study does not portend to be an exhaustive study of Calvinistic Predestination. Our purpose will be to pursue what Paul has to say about predestination and then briefly compare this with Calvinistic Predestination,

4. Predestination is in Paul's theology closely tied to God's *foreknowledge* and a *plan* that God *determined before the foundation of the world*; not to some arbitrary choice God makes!
5. We will primarily examine 2 texts in which Paul discusses *predestination* (προορίζω *proorizō*) or the *foreknowledge* (προγινώσκω *proginōskō*), and God *destining* (προορίζω *proorizō*) something to happen in the future (Eph 1:5, 12, and Rom 8:29, 30) long before he created the world and man.
6. There are several other texts make statement regarding God's predetermined actions or knowledge; for example, Acts 1:23; 4:28; 1 Cor 2:7.
7. *As always it is imperative that we consider these texts in their immediate biblical and theological context to get the flow of thought Paul was making.*
8. **Eph 1:3-12**, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places, ⁴ even as *he chose us in him before the foundation of the world*, that we should be holy and blameless before him. ⁵ He *destined us in love to be his sons through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of his will*, ⁶ to the praise of his glorious grace which he freely bestowed on us *in the Beloved*. ⁷ *In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace* ⁸ which he lavished upon us. ⁹ For he has made known to us in all wisdom and insight the mystery of his will, *according to his purpose which he set forth in Christ* ¹⁰ *as a plan for the fulness of time*, to unite all things in him, things in heaven and things on earth. ¹¹ *In him*, according to the purpose of him who accomplishes all things according to the counsel of his will, ¹² we who first hoped in Christ have been *destined* and appointed to live for the praise of his glory."
9. **Rom 8: 29, 30**, "We know that in everything God works for good with those who love him, who are called according to his purpose. 29 For those whom he *foreknew* he also *predestined* to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the first-born among many brethren. 30 And those whom he *predestined* he also called; and those whom he called he also justified; and those whom he justified he also glorified." We will note below that a better translation of this initial text reads, "*We know that everything works for good for those who love God ...*"
10. **Acts 2:23**, "this Jesus, *delivered up according to the definite plan and foreknowledge* of God, you crucified and killed by the hands of lawless men ..."
11. **Acts 4:28**, "The kings of the earth set themselves in array, and the rulers were gathered together, against the Lord and against his Anointed'—²⁷ for truly in this city there were gathered together against thy holy servant Jesus, whom thou didst anoint, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles and the peoples of Israel, ²⁸ to do whatever *thy hand and thy plan had predestined* to take place."
12. **1 Cor 2:7**, "But we impart a secret and hidden wisdom of God, which *God decreed before the ages for our glorification*."

The Word Group Surrounding "Predestined":

1. Προέγνων, from προγινώσκω *proginōskō*, "to know before. To perceive or recognize beforehand, know previously, take into account or specially consider beforehand, to grant prior acknowledgement or recognition to someone, to foreknow ... Used of God's eternal counsel it includes all that He has considered and purposed to do prior to human history. In the language of Scripture, something foreknown is not simply that which God was

aware of prior to a certain point. Rather, it is presented as that which God gave prior consent to, that which received His favorable or special recognition. Hence, this term is reserved for those matters which God favorably, deliberately and freely chose and ordained.”¹

Several scholarly commentators observe the Old Testament background to the use of God’s foreknowledge as in the Hebrew behind the Septuagint (LXX) is *yāda* which used in reference to the covenantal love in which God sets his affection on those who he has foreknows and has chosen.² Thus we see in the use of *foreknew* a reference to those who are in a covenant relationship with God, which in the context of Paul’s discussion in Romans refers to those in a righteous relationship with God based on faith in Jesus. The Hebrew concept of *election* based on the *foreknowledge* of God and *covenantal faith* is evident in Paul’s use of foreknowledge in this pericope, Rom 8:26-30.

1. “**Προορίζω, *proorizō***; derives from *pró*, before, and *horizō*, to determine. Προορίζω, *proorizō* means to determine or decree beforehand.”³

“This comparatively rare and late word is used in the Gk. Bible only 6 times in the NT in the sense “to foreordain,” “to predestinate.” Since God is eternal and has ordained everything before time, προορίζειν is a stronger form of ὀρίζειν ... The synonyms and textual history show that the ref. in προορίσκω is the same. R. 8:29: οὐκ προέγνω, καὶ προώρισεν συμμόρφους τῆς εἰκόνης τοῦ υἱοῦ αὐτοῦ, R. 8:30: οὐκ ... προώρισεν ... The omniscient God has determined everything in advance, both persons and things in salvation history, with Jesus Christ as the goal. When Herod and Pilate work together with the Gentiles and the mob against Jesus Christ, it may be said: ἡ χεὶρ σου (God’s) καὶ ἡ βουλή προώρισεν γενέσθαι, Ac. 4:28. Herein lies the hidden wisdom of God in a mystery, ἣν προώρισεν ὁ θεὸς πρὸ τῶν αἰώνων εἰς δόξαν ἡμῶν, 1 C. 2:7, → IV, 819. *The goal of our predestination is divine sonship through Jesus Christ ...*”⁴

Bauer, Arndt and Gingrich, and Danker state that **προορίζω, *proorizō***, means “to decide upon beforehand, predestine.”⁵

2. “**Πρόθεσις *próthesis***; to purpose or plan ... setting forth, presentation, an exposition, determination, plan, or will. It involves purpose, resolve, and design. A placing in view or openly displaying something.”⁶
 3. “**Οἰκονομία *oikonomía*** ... from *oikonoméō* ... to be a manager of a household. The position, work, responsibility or arrangement of an administration, as of a house or of property, either one’s own or another’s (Luke 16:2; Sept.: Is. 22:19); a spiritual dispensation, management, or economy (1 Cor. 9:17; Eph. 1:10; 3:2; Col. 1:25). The “dispensation of God” means the administration of divine grace.”⁷
- “In the NT οἰκονομία first means ... *the office of household administration and the*

¹ Spiros Zodhiates, *The Complete Word Study Dictionary: New Testament*. Chattanooga: AMG Publishers, 2000.

² Cf. for instance Thomas R Schreiner, *Romans*, Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1998, p. 452, and other similar references in Fitzmyer, et al.

³ Spiros Zodhiates, *The Complete Word Study Dictionary: New Testament*. Chattanooga: AMG Publishers, 2000.

⁴ K. L. Schmidt in Kittel, G., Bromiley, G. W., & Friedrich, G., Eds., *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1964.

⁵ Walter Bauer, William F. Arndt, F. Wilber Gingrich, *A Greek English Lexicon of the New Testament*, Chicago: University of Chicago.

⁶ Spiros Zodhiates, *The Complete Word Study Dictionary: New Testament*.

⁷ Spiros Zodhiates, *The Complete Word Study Dictionary: New Testament*

discharge of this office ... Paul uses the term for the apostolic office, 1 C. 9:17: οἰκονομίαν πεπίστευμαι. He is entrusted with an office; he does not preach the Gospel of his own accord; he does what he has to do, cf. 1 Th. 2:4: δεδοκμάσμεθα ὑπὸ τοῦ θεοῦ πιστευθῆναι τὸ εὐαγγέλιον. The word also occurs, with paraphrases and embellishments, in the Prison Letters: Col. 1:25: κατὰ τὴν οἰκονομίαν τοῦ θεοῦ τὴν δοθεῖσάν μοι εἰς ὑμᾶς, *according to the divine office towards you with which God has commissioned me*; Eph. 3:2: τὴν οἰκονομίαν τῆς χάριτος τοῦ θεοῦ τῆς δοθείσης μοι εἰς ὑμᾶς, *you have heard of the office of divine grace* which has been laid upon me in service towards you. A distinctive feature in these epistles is that there is room for doubt whether οἰκονομία denotes office or the divine plan of salvation; the two are closely linked in the Prison Letters ... *The word also means “plan of salvation,” “administration of salvation,” “order of salvation.”* In this sense it has both a religious and a general significance ... *In Eph. 1:10 the reference is to God’s plan of salvation which He has undertaken to execute in the fulness of times* (εἰς οἰκονομίαν τοῦ πληρώματος τῶν καιρῶν). Eph. 3:9 also refers to the actualising of the mystery which was hidden in God, the Creator of all things, before the times (τίς ἢ οἰκονομία τοῦ μυστηρίου τοῦ ἀποκεκρυμμένου ἀπὸ τῶν αἰώνων ἐν τῷ θεῷ τῷ τὰ πάντα κτίσαντι).⁸

Brief Exegesis of Eph 1:3-12:

1. **Eph 1:3-12**, “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has *blessed us in Christ* with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places,⁴ even as *he chose us in him before the foundation of the world* (God’s corporate election in Christ according to his foreknowledge), that we should be holy and blameless before him.⁵ He *destined* (προορίζω, *proorizō, predestined, decided, or determined beforehand*) us in love to be his sons through Jesus Christ (a corporate not individual purpose), according to the purpose of his will,⁶ to the praise of his glorious grace which he freely bestowed on us in the Beloved.⁷ **In him** (corporately in Christ) we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace⁸ which he lavished upon us.⁹ For he has made known to us in all wisdom and insight the mystery of his will, according to *his purpose which he set forth in Christ*¹⁰ as a *plan* (οἰκονομία, *oikonomía, economy, plan, system*) for the fulness of time (an eschatological plan) to unite all things in him, things in heaven and things on earth.¹¹ **In him** (corporately), according to the purpose (πρόθεσις, *próthesis, determined plan*) of him who accomplishes all things according to the counsel of his will,¹² we who first hoped *in Christ* have been *destined* (προορίζω, *proorizō, predestined, decided, or determined*) and appointed to live for the praise of his glory.”
2. **This text is extremely important to any understanding of predestination:**
 - a. **Several points stand out from this text:**
 - i. **God knew what he was doing when he planned his creation;** creation did not happen serendipitously, or by accident!
 - ii. **God had a plan to save, redeem man even before he created the world and man!**
 - iii. Before creation God *destined* or *predestined* man’s salvation, that is, **he had a plan to save or redeem fallen man in Jesus Christ.**

⁸Otto Michel, Οἰκονομία, *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, Gerhard Kittel, G. W. Bromiley, and G. Friedrich, Eds., 1964.

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- iv. Paul argued later in Ephesians that fallen man is saved by God's grace through faith in Jesus Christ. **Eph 1:3**, In Christ we have every spiritual blessing. **Eph 2:1-8**, "And you he made alive, when you were dead through the trespasses and sins ² in which you once walked, following the course of this world, following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience. ³ Among these we all once lived in the passions of our flesh, following the desires of body and mind, and so we were by nature children of wrath, like the rest of mankind. ⁴ But God, who is rich in mercy, out of the great love with which he loved us, ⁵ even when we were dead through our trespasses, *made us alive together with Christ* (by grace you have been saved), ⁶ and raised us up with him, and made us sit with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, ⁷ *that in the coming ages he might show the immeasurable riches of his grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus.* ⁸ For by grace you have been saved through faith; and this is not your own doing, it is the gift of God— ⁹ not because of works, lest any man should boast. ¹⁰ For we are his workmanship, *created in Christ Jesus* for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them."
- v. ***God's plan was predetermined (predestined) according to his foreknowledge as a corporate plan, in Christ. He planned, destined, decided before creation that those in Christ would be saved and bring glory to himself.***
- vi. **Eph 1:3-121 speaks of corporate predestination in Christ, not private personal predestination!**
- vii. ***Fallen man decides after hearing the gospel message whether to believe in Christ and be saved by Christ, or not to believe.*** It is within man's freedom to make this decision to have faith. If not, then all of the calls on men to believe mean nothing!
- viii. **Rom 10:14-16**, "But how are men to call upon him in whom they have not believed? And how are they to believe in him of whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without a preacher? ¹⁵ And how can men preach unless they are sent? As it is written, "How beautiful are the feet of those who preach good news!" ¹⁶ But they have not all obeyed the gospel; for Isaiah says, "Lord, who has believed what he has heard from us?" ¹⁷ *So faith comes from what is heard, and what is heard comes by the preaching of Christ.*"
- ix. ***Salvation is the result of God's grace in sending Jesus to die on the cross, and his power to raise him from the dead, and man's belief in what God is doing in Jesus.***
- x. **1 Cor 15:1-5**, "Now I would remind you, brethren, in what terms I preached to you the gospel, which you received, in which you stand, ² by which you are saved, if you hold it fast—unless you believed in vain. ³ For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received, that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the scriptures, ⁴ that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the scriptures ..."
- xi. **Calvinistic Predestination holds that Jesus died only for those who would be saved not for all fallen men.** We will examine this later. John however, wrote, "*For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.*" ¹⁷ For God sent the Son into the world, not to condemn the world, but ***that the world might be saved through him.*** ¹⁸ *He who believes in him is not condemned; he who does not believe is condemned already, because he has not*
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believed in the name of the only Son of God.” **John 3:16-18.** *Sounds like God was offering salvation to all the world if they would believe in Jesus!*

- xii. **There is a strong eschatological emphasis on this predestined plan, (proleptic inaugurated and final end time), it will begin in history in Christ and ultimately be full realized at the end of time, the general resurrection and final judgment. The plan was conceived by God in eternity before creation and be finalized at the end of time.** Note Paul’s comment at Eph 1:9, 10, “For he has made known to us in all wisdom and insight the mystery of his will, according to *his purpose which he set forth in Christ*¹⁰ as a *plan* (οἰκονομία, *oikonomia*, *economy*, *plan*, *system*) **for the fulness of time** (an eschatological plan) to unite all things in him, things in heaven and things on earth.

Brief Exegesis of Rom 8:29, 30:

1. **Rom 8: 29, 30**, “We know that in everything God works for good with those who love him, who are called according to his purpose. 29 For those whom he *foreknew* he also *predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son*, in order that he might be the first-born among many brethren. 30 And those whom he *predestined* he also *called*; and those whom he *called* he also *justified*; and those whom he *justified* he also *glorified*.”
2. **First, to begin with, Rom 8:28 is a notoriously difficult text to translate!**
 - a. The Greek reads “οἶδαμεν δὲ ὅτι τοῖς ἀγαπῶσιν τὸν θεὸν πάντα συνεργεῖ εἰς ἀγαθόν, τοῖς κατὰ πρόθεσιν κλητοῖς οὖσιν.” Translated literally it reads “Now/and we know to/for the ones loving God all things work together for good, for those being called according to purpose.”
 - b. The passage is complicated in that there is no subject/nominative (Θεός, *Theós*, God) to the verb συνεργεῖ, *is working* in the better manuscripts, but Θεός is found as a subject/nominative in some good manuscripts. Should we read that *God works all things for good* (RSV, RSV) or simply that *all things work together for good* for those who love God? The better manuscripts support the last reading, as do Fitzmyer, Schreiner, Barrett, Dunn, and Käsemann⁹!
 - c. Second, how do we understand ἀγαθόν, *good*! In the Jewish context it usually meant *spiritual good*, not necessarily all kinds of good. Most scholarly commentators observe that what Paul has in mind with his reference to *good* is the ultimate eschatological good that comes at the end of time, especially in the general resurrection of the saints to glory with Christ.¹⁰ When this text is considered in the context of suffering, the assistance of the Holy Spirit in prayers difficult to express, and being more than conquerors in Christ, the eschatological *hope* and *good* defines everything working for *the ultimate good of those who love God* becomes clear.
 - d. If we see Rom 8:28 as a transitional verse between the Holy Spirit interceding for us and God having predestined us to be conformed to the image of his Son, the spiritual sense seems more appropriate to the context.
 - e. Joseph A. Fitzmyer observes, “The overall context of this pericope is that nothing in this life can harm Christians, whether it be suffering or the attack of hostile evil

⁹ Cf. The bibliography above for these authors.

¹⁰ Cf. Joseph A. Fitzmyer; Ernst Käsemann; Thomas R. Schreiner; R. D. G. Dunn in the bibliography.

powers, for all of these can contribute to the destiny to which Christians are called, and they are now referred to as ‘those who love God’.”¹¹

f. Joseph Fitzmyer has a few significant statements regarding Rom 8:29:

One encounters in these verses the first mention of “predestination,” which Paul will again mention in chap. 9. The combination of Pauline verses on the topic in these chapters led to a preoccupation with them in predestinarian controversies of later centuries. What Paul asserts here in this regard is stated from a corporate point of view. He does not have in mind the predestination of individuals (either to glory or damnation).¹²

g. I particularly like the approach of J. D. G. Dunn to this text:

Paul assumes that his readers will have in mind the continuity of thought from the previous verses in which human suffering and creation’s travail have been integrated. The assurance that he offers his readers here then is that the experience of human contradiction in which they share as believers is no cause for despair, because God is also God of creation; his purpose for believers is also his purpose for creation and works through creation. His people therefore can be confident that their place within God’s purpose is basically in harmony with the unfolding history of creation. Those who love God are those who have acknowledged their creatureliness and let that fact shape their living. Their confidence is in God who is both Creator and Father. Just as believers can still pray even when their prayer is marked by complaint and irritation or the complete frustration of speechlessness, so they can still trust even when their sense of alienation and contradiction is at its sharpest, the sense of complete helplessness in the face of nameless forces. They can draw on the assurance that the Spirit who is active in these very frustrations and groanings is active also in these dark providences to bring about good—that is, presumably, for Paul, in helping forward the maturing of the believer (cf. 5:4) and the mortification of the deeds of the body (8:13) ... But in fact, the idea of *loving* God is untypical of Greco-Roman religiosity, while being characteristically Jewish. Paul therefore draws the vaguer hope of all religious piety within the circle of the more distinctive Jewish faith in the one God. The vaguer, more speculative piety of Greco-Roman religiosity is given clearer definition and more substantial foundation in the Jewish trust in God as Creator and Father ... Having hidden nothing of the contradiction and temptation in which believers find themselves, Paul rounds off his discussion of what God’s righteousness means for believers in the harsh reality of daily existence, by voicing his firm certainty that God’s will stands over all, in control of all, and that his purpose to bring his creation and creatures to their full intended potential is undefeatable. The goal he purposed for his people was formulated in the mists of time, effected by his own summons, to bring his human creation back into fullness of relation with himself, owned by him and sustained by him and given to share in his splendor. In the full assurance of faith Paul sets aside all the “ifs” and “buts,” the qualifications and warnings of the previous three chapters, and affirms

¹¹ Joseph A. Fitzmyer, *Romans*, The Anchor Bible Commentary, New York Doubleday, 1992.

¹² Joseph A. Fitzmyer, *Romans*, The Anchor Bible Commentary, New York Doubleday, 1992.

the certainty of God fulfilling his purpose of creation and salvation in the tense of action already completed ... The goal of the creator-savior is expressed in terms of the original creation transposed into eschatological mode, as Paul could expect his readers to recognize. It is a transforming of believing man back into the image of God which disobedient man lost.¹³

3. **Robert H. Mounce astutely observes,**

In the present context predestination is not concerned with election to salvation. Rather, God has foreordained that believers be brought into “moral conformity to the likeness of his Son.” What is predestined is that we become like Christ (cf. 2 Cor 3:18).¹⁴

4. **Rom 8:29, 30: A string of aorist verbs!**

“For those whom he *foreknew* he also *predestined* to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the first-born among many brethren.³⁰ And those whom he *predestined* he also *called*; and those whom he *called* he also *justified*; and those whom he *justified* he also *glorified*.”

- a. Käsemann and others point to the unique string of aorist verbs Paul has strung together in this text. The aorist indicative verb has many possibilities but most agree that this construction is making a positive statement of what has happened.
- b. Fitzmyer and others point to the possibility that we might have in this pericope an early Christian confession of faith, one possibly related to baptism, or a possible baptismal chant or hymn.
- c. Paul makes reference to this to assure the saints that at some point they had made such a confession.
- d. The purpose would be to confirm the security of the saints and assure them that God has been working for them since before creation (the foreknowledge of God) and would not fail them. In God’s eternal plan they were destined by God to be conformed into the image of his son, an eschatological concept, both proleptic and final transformation.

4. **Rom 8:29: The purpose of God’s predestination!**

- a. “For those whom he foreknew he also predestined *to be conformed to the image of his Son ...*”
- b. The point is that the biblical predestination as referenced by Paul in this pericope was not to salvation or damnation as is claimed by Calvinistic predestination, but to an eschatological transformation into the image of God’s son, or into the image of their creator (Eph 4:23; Col 3:10; 2 Cor 3:18).

Summary of Eph 1:3-12 and Rom 8:29, 30:

1. God has an eternal plan, *determined before creation*, to *redeem those in Christ* who loved him and shared in his covenant relationship based on faith.
2. God knows, foreknew, certain things and based on his foreknowledge he decided to do something so we could be his children. He decided to send Jesus to die for our sins, and then called us to faith through the gospel message proclaiming the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus, the heart of the gospel to which he calls us through faith.

¹³ J. D. G. Dunn, J. D. G. *Romans 1–8*, Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 1998, p. 494 f.

¹⁴ Robert H. Mounce, *Romans*, Nashville: Broadman and Holman Publishers, 1995, p. 189.

3. This predestination is not simply to salvation but to being transformed daily into the image of our creator; that image which we lost through sin and disobedience, and not simply through Adam's sin, which sin we have chosen to emulate.
4. Calvinistic Predestination holds that God arbitrarily decided beforehand that some persons (individuals) should be saved, and some persons (individuals) should be lost.
5. Pauline and biblical predestination holds that based on his foreknowledge that man would sin God decided "beforehand" that Jesus would die for sin, and that through Jesus believers in Jesus would or could become His sons (or as Paul puts it "be conformed to his image"). God predestined, decided beforehand according to his foreknowledge, that those in Christ would become his children and be transformed in to the image of Christ! This is a *corporate* predestination, not an *individual* predestination; it refers to those who love him and who are in Christ, corporately. We might claim that God knows before we obey him that we will and that we will become his children, but the predestination Paul describes is a *corporate* one that proclaims that those in Christ would become God's children.

Calvinistic Predestination:¹⁵

1. Briefly speaking Calvinistic Predestination arises out of the Augustinian and Roman Catholic doctrine of Inherited Sin and total depravity.
2. Calvin inherited this doctrine and out of this following Augustine developed his doctrine of predestination.
3. Calvinistic (Reformed Theology) and Lutheran theology holds that in the fall of man (Adam's sin) man lost his image of God (*Imago Dei*) and in consequence lost the ability to understand God fully.
4. It is only through the direct action of the Holy Spirit that man can fully understand God and come to faith; faith thus is not man's working, but the work of the Holy Spirit.
5. Luther held that unregenerate man can understand the outer clarity of Scripture, but without the Holy Spirit cannot understand the inner meaning of the Scriptures.

We can summarize Calvinistic Predestination under the acronym TULIP.

T represents total depravity and holds that every person is born inheriting Adam's sin and is therefore totally depraved and unable to understand God.

U represents unconditional election. God chose some to be saved and some to be lost as an arbitrary choice by his grace and we have no say in his choice since we all deserve condemnation for our sin.

L represents limited atonement. Jesus died only for the elect; God limits his choice and calling.

I represents irresistible grace which means when God chooses you he sends his Holy Spirit to bring about your conversion, and you cannot resist the working of the Holy Spirit.

P represents preservation of the saints. The Holy Spirit sees to it that you cannot and do not fall away from grace. No matter what happens, you will get to heaven! It is on this

¹⁵ For studies in Calvinistic Predestination for the purposes of this study I recommend Alan Richardson, *A Dictionary of Christian Theology*. The topic is widely discussed in most major theological or biblical dictionaries. Cf. also Donald G. Bloesch, *Essentials of Evangelical Theology*, Vol. 2, and Donald Guthrie, *New Testament Theology*.

point that we have the doctrine held by some that once you are saved, you are always saved.

Classical Restoration Movement (Church of Christ and Christian Church) thinking:

1. Followers of the Restoration Movement - Church of Christ and Christian Church - (obviously influenced by John Locke [ca. 1700] and Alexander Campbell [ca 1800], both classical rationalists) have traditionally and theologically held that the origin of faith in an individual is located in the belief that the Scriptures are rational and can be understood by rational man, even fallen man.
2. Faith, then, according to this view results from an individual's *rational comprehension* of Scripture and a *decision* to accept that rational conclusion.
3. Although Campbell had an appreciation for the working of the Holy Spirit he would not consider the direct operation of the Holy Spirit on man in the initial development of faith in the individual. Faith had to be a rational conclusion to the evidence of Scripture.
4. Some of Campbell's followers took Campbell's views to the extreme and held that the only way the Holy Spirit ever works in one's life was through the Word.
5. This may help us understand why members of Churches of Christ have until recently had a difficult time accepting the work of the Holy Spirit in that by doing so we may detract from a rational approach and comprehension of Scripture.
6. This is unfortunate and has led to a diminution of appreciation of the working of the Holy Spirit in the *maturation* of faith.
7. It would have been better had members of the Church of Christ paid closer attention to Barton W. Stone, who although similar in approach to Campbell in a rational understanding of Scripture, also accepted the working of the Holy Spirit in the development of faith!
8. Stone was perhaps a more balanced approach than that adopted by Campbell's extreme rationalist followers!

Several Scriptures however support the conclusion that faith results from the hearing, learning, and a comprehension of Scripture:

1. 2 Tim 3:14-16; "But as for you, continue in *what you have learned* and have firmly believed, knowing from whom you learned it ¹⁵ and how from childhood you have been *acquainted with the sacred writings which are able to instruct you for salvation* through faith in Christ Jesus. ¹⁶ *All scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness,* ¹⁷ *that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.*"
2. 2 Tim 2:15; "Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a workman who has no need to be ashamed, *rightly handling the word of truth ...*"
3. Rom 10:16; "'Lord, *who has believed what he has heard from us?*'" ¹⁷ *So faith comes from what is heard, and what is heard comes by the preaching of Christ.*"
4. Note particularly John 5: 39: "You search the scriptures, because you think that in them you have eternal life; and *it is they that bear witness to me ...*"
5. Also John 20:30, 31, "Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book; ³¹ *but these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in his name.*"

6. It seems certain that Scripture and the understanding of Scripture have a large part to play in the development and maturation of faith, but this does not exclude prayer and the working of God, Holy Spirit, and biblical teaching in the development and maturation of faith.
7. The issue or difference between a Restoration view of faith and that of Luther/Calvinism is the relationship of man's unregenerate mind (Luther and Calvin), man's rational capability, and the involvement of the Holy Spirit in the origin of faith. Radical Calvinism holds that without the *initial direct operation* of the Holy Spirit one cannot reason and believe, for man is primarily totally depraved! Moderate Lutheranism holds that *without the assistance of the Holy Spirit one is not able to understand the inner meaning of Scripture*. One can read the outer nature of Scripture but not receive the inner regenerating nature of Scripture. Both Luther and Calvin held that man's *imago dei* (the *image of God*, that is, the rational nature of man) was destroyed by Adam's fall which lost nature man inherited in birth. Both Calvin and Luther held to the importance of Scripture but in addition held that without *the direct intervention of the Holy Spirit* one would not be able to understand the inner regenerative nature of Scripture that brings one to a redeeming faith in Jesus. Scripture, and *sola scriptura*, without the direct involvement of the Holy Spirit is either not understandable or beyond man's unregenerate rational comprehension.
8. Cf. my PhD dissertation of *Wolfhart Pannenberg as a Reaction to Dialectical Theology: Carl Barth and Rudolf Bultmann*, University of KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa, in which Barth stressed the direct operation of the Holy Spirit in the creation of faith, and Bultmann stressed an exegetical experience in the creation of faith. Pannenberg rejected both approaches and stressed a rational approach to Scripture in the creation of faith, which conclusion I supported.
9. Cf. also an ACU CBS faculty discussion of three positions regarding man and the role of reason and the Holy Spirit.
 - a. A low estimate of man's potential and a high estimate of the Holy Spirit intervention (Calvin and Luther).
 - b. A high estimate of man's potential and a low estimate of Scripture and the working of the Holy Spirit (classical liberalism and some post-modern views).
 - c. A Restoration Movement reasonable estimate of man's rational ability and a high estimate of Scripture and the operation of the Holy Spirit.

Low estimate of man.
High estimate of the Holy Spirit intervention.
 Calvin and Luther

Reasonable estimate of man.
High estimate of Scripture and the operation of the Holy Spirit.
 Restoration Theology

High estimate of man.
Low estimate of Scripture and Holy Spirit intervention.
 Classical Liberalism
 Some Post-modern views.

THE ORIGIN AND CYCLE OF FAITH

Introduction:

In the origin and development of faith as saving faith or trust there are four elements, information (*notitia*, to take notice), knowledge (*assensus* the acceptance of that information), and trust (*fiducia*, the decision to act on that information or knowledge), and the cycle of returning to reexamine the information and build on it from a deeper understanding of the information, in the Christian faith, Scripture.¹⁶

Notitia. *Notitia* refers to the **content** of faith, or **information** that we believe. We place our faith in something, for example, **Scripture**. We examine Scripture to determine whether it is sound or reliable.

Assensus. *Assensus* is our **decision to accept the information** provided by Scripture which becomes knowledge or *Assensus*. We give our assent to, or **accept** the information. But one can know about the Christian faith from Scripture and yet decide to do nothing about that knowledge. You might believe it to be true, but not act on it. Many people believe in Jesus, they accept the information regarding Jesus, but ignore him as the Lord that Scripture teaches. Jesus is just part of the **knowledge** (*Assensus*) one gains from the information one accepts, (the *Notitia* or information gained from Scripture) and even believe that knowledge to be true, but that is not saving faith or trust (*Fiducia*). Saving faith or *Fiducia* derives from a wilful decision to accept and act on the knowledge we have. The knowledge may not be perfect, but that is what faith is, it is a decision to accept the knowledge we gain from evidence such as Scripture.

Fiducia. *Fiducia* or **trust** results from the decision to accept and act upon the evidence of Scripture. This leads to **personal trust** and reliance. Knowing and believing the content of the Christian faith is not enough, for even demons can do that (James 2:19). Faith is only effectual if, knowing about and assenting to the claims of Jesus, one personally trusts in Him for salvation.

The Cycle of Faith. Faith often begins slowly and may begin as an immature faith and trust, but one returns to the source of the faith, the *Notitia* which is Scripture and continues to examine Scripture and its teachings and implications, learning more and growing on one's knowledge of the faith.

THE ORIGIN OF SAVING FAITH-TRUST

¹⁶ This cycle is adapted from information from Wolfhart Pannenberg, *Basic Questions and Answers*, Vol. 2, Philadelphia; Fortress Press, 1971, pp. 30 ff; Ian A. Fair, *Wolfhart Pannenberg's Reaction to Dialectical Theology*, PhD dissertation, University of KwaZulu-Natal, 1975; E. Frank Tupper, *The Theology of Wolfhart Pannenberg*, Philadelphia; The Westminster Press, 1972, pp. 122 ff.

