

**Series: God Saves #1401**

**Title: Romans 8.29a**

**Proginosko, Part 4**

Thank you for joining me today from wherever you are and by however you listen as we meet together coast-to-coast here in the United States and all the way around the world. A brief reminder as we get moving again after our two-day hiatus for the weekend, we have identified a certain key word in Romans chapter 8, verse 29. The word in English is “foreknew” and this word in the original biblical language of Greek is *proginosko*. This word is very important because when we put it together with the next word (which we have yet to get to – that’s coming up later), these two words together form the first link in the golden chain of God’s salvation or the first move in the order of God’s salvation (the *Ordo Salutis*). And that constitutes our present study. The Bible says God saves people from our sin. The question is *how* does He do this? We are answering that question and it will take us some time to comprehend the whole answer. So please do stick with us!

Now, we have said this word “foreknowledge,” *proginosko* is used seven times in the New Testament in its verb and noun forms. Two of those seven times it is used in reference to a man (the Apostle Paul). Last week we explored those uses, and we learned that when referring to Paul the word only means the Jews and Gentiles had a previous knowledge of Paul. They had foreknowledge of him. They had known him beforehand. They had a previous knowledge of who Paul was and what he wrote. This is previous knowledge based on circumstances, the circumstances of them knowing him.

*But*, when this same word *proginosko* is used in relation to God, ah, the meaning changes. It means more than God possessing previous knowledge. It means God possesses a predetermined plan to do something; God foreordained something that will come to pass in the future (He planned it before it happens). He does not just know about it before it happens. He plans for it to happen. He makes it happen. And this is what God does with our salvation. He predetermines who will be saved long before we actually, in our human experience, are saved. Capture this: **God knows the future and makes it come to pass as part of His eternal plan.**

How do we know this? We know because we study the five times in the New Testament this word is used in relation to God. If you were with us on Friday then you (likely) remember we explored the grammar of the first of these uses which was in Acts chapter 2 and verse 23 where Peter says in his sermon at Pentecost, “... **this Man [Jesus], delivered over by the predetermined plan and foreknowledge of God, you nailed to a cross by the hands of godless men and put Him to death.**” The Granville Sharp’s Rule, developed to explain the Greek language, demonstrates with clarity that *proginosko*, used of God, means more than mere previous knowledge.

Yes, God obviously, because He is all-knowing knew that Jesus Christ would be crucified. God knows that because God knows all. But it is more: *God foreordained, God pre-planned, God had the predetermined plan, the determinate counsel* to cause Christ’s sacrifice for sin *long before* Jesus in human form actually lived, and died, and was resurrected from the dead. And when did God exercise this foreknowledge? When did He foreordain? When did He pre-plan? When did God determine the plan? He did so from *before the foundation of the world*. That is, before God did anything else, He did this. He made Jesus our Savior.

So that in Acts 2.23 we have what God does and we have what godless men do. God, by His predetermined plan and foreknowledge, set aside His Son Jesus to die. Godless men then nailed Jesus to the cross and put Him to death. There is interplay between the act of God and the act of men. From the divine perspective God pre-planned for the sacrifice of Christ. From the human perspective men carried out that divine plan. That is what we might call, for the godless people involved, the negative side. God will hold them accountable and judge them for their sin against Christ.

But then there is the positive side of Christ's crucifixion for people that we find in the other four remaining New Testament passages that use *proginosko*. That is, God provides salvation, pre-planned in advance, to certain other people, in which Jesus' death forgives our sin and we do not face God's judgment for Christ has already faced the wrath of God on our behalf.

Let me show you what I mean by turning to these other passages. Let me take them in the order the Bible gives them to us. We started in Acts chapter 2 and now let's come back to Romans and our text. Romans 8, verse 29 uses the word *proginosko*. Reading Romans 8.29 again, **"For those whom [God] foreknew, [God] also predestined..."** As we have already learned and will be reiterated to us again and again, the context of these words is that God has foreordained, pre-planned, God has chosen well in advance those whom He saves from sin. What Acts 2.23 says in regards to Christ, Romans 8.29 says in regards to Christ's people. Let me repeat that: what Acts 2.23 says in regards to Christ, Romans 8.29 says in regards to Christ's people. (More on this soon.)

Then we turn just a few pages in our Bibles to Romans chapter 11 and in verse 2 we have this same word, with the same meaning. For context, let me read Romans 11, verses 1 and 2. **"I say then, God has not rejected His people, has He? May it never be! For I too am an Israelite, a descendant of Abraham, of the tribe of Benjamin. <sup>2</sup> God has not rejected His people whom He foreknew."** The Apostle Paul emphatically states that the Israelites disobedience towards God does *not* nullify God's predetermined love for His Jewish people. Romans 11.2, "God has not rejected His people whom He foreknew." Foreknew is *proginosko*. God has foreordained, pre-planned, God has chosen well in advance the Jews. He will not forsake them! God still has saving work to do among the Jewish people! Praise God!

Do you see how this word is used in the context of the New Testament? It is amazing how one word can tell us so much about who God is. As Christ was chosen in advance, by the foreknowledge of God, to die for sin, so too Christ's people, who benefit from his death in taking away our sins, we were chosen in advance by the foreknowledge of God for salvation. Christ was chosen. We are chosen. And so, pressing on, we come to the epistle of 1 Peter. And there are two verses in 1 Peter that use this word *proginosko*.

Again we take them in order and so first up is 1 Peter chapter 1 and verse 2. I will read 1 Peter 1, verses 1 and 2. **"Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, to those who reside as aliens, scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia, who are chosen <sup>2</sup> according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, by the sanctifying work of the Spirit, to obey Jesus Christ and be sprinkled with His blood: May grace and peace be yours in the fullest measure."** (That was 1 Peter 1, verses 1 and 2.)

Peter's audience are the early Christians, scattered due to persecution, and he writes to assure them that they have been chosen by God, according to what? Yes! "According to the foreknowledge of God," that is *proginosko*. God has foreordained, pre-planned, God has chosen well in advance those early Christians to be saved!

And what a wonderful re-assurance this must have been to them, suffering under severe persecution. God has chosen them before the foundation of the world. The Holy Spirit was sanctifying them. Jesus Christ has sprinkled them with His blood. Therefore, grace and peace were theirs in fullest measure! Maybe you are under some persecution today? This is a good word for *you too*, dear twenty-first century Christian! God has saved you, so God will keep you. May you have grace and peace.

And, the final use of our word *proginosko* is in 1 Peter chapter 1 and verse 20. And here it is used in relation to Christ. 1 Peter 1, verse 20 reads, **"For He was foreknown before the foundation of the world..."** The context, which I do not have time to read, tells us "He" is Christ. What does this mean? Friends, Jesus Christ was chosen to be our Savior from "before the foundation of the world!" *God foreordained, God pre-planned, God had the predetermined plan, the determinate counsel* to cause Christ to be Savior before He did anything else. More tomorrow because God Is!

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