

Series: God Saves #1411

**Title: Romans 8.29a; Amos, Matthew, 2 Timothy
Knowing Is Loving**

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. Let's begin with the end. Huh? What did you say? Let's begin (a new week) by ending (our current discussion). We begin with the end. The beginning is Monday and the end is our comments on the word foreknowledge. For the last few weeks we have put this word, from the eighth chapter of Romans and verse 29, under our microscope. We have given the word "foreknew," as related to God, our critical examination and analysis. And I just have one other insight to leave with you before we move on to our next word in Romans and that is the word "predestined."

On Friday I left off saying that I find God's foreknowledge very comforting. I find re-assurance God's Word teaches that *God foreordains, God pre-plans, God has the predetermined plan, the determinate counsel* of His will before the foundation of the world *in my life*. To know that *God* has me in the palm of His hand and He has been thinking about me, little me, from before the beginning, to believe my life is in His hands from before the beginning until after the end – this encourages me to live my life by *faith* in God. And the foreknowledge of God teaches me something else. It is this: *God loves me*.

And of course *you!* You are who believers in the Lord Jesus Christ, God's people: God loves you! How is it that God *knowing* us, God *foreknowing* us reveals His love for us? It is like this, and here I want to quote our friend Dr. Martyn Lloyd-Jones from his commentary on Romans. He says, "When we read in the Scripture that God 'knows' someone, or certain people, it means that He has a special interest in them, that [God] has set His love upon them, that He is planning and has purposed certain things with respect to them (*Romans Chapter 8.17-39, 237*)." End quote.

Let's see this by contrasting just two Scriptures and then later I will add a third. One of these first two verses is in the Old Testament and the other in the New Testament. The first is in Amos, chapter 3. If you want to turn there, Amos chapter 3. Amos was a prophet and the Book by his name finds its place towards the end of the Old Testament. The context is God's message for Israel, although Judah not excluded, regarding their sin and God's punishment. Interestingly, in the context of punishment, God reminds His people of His love for them. In other words, whom God loves, He disciplines.

Let me read Amos 3, verses 1 and 2. **"Hear this word which the Lord has spoken against you, sons of Israel, against the entire family which He brought up from the land of Egypt: ² 'You only have I chosen among all the families of the earth; therefore I will punish you for all your iniquities.'**" In verse 2 I read what God says, "You only have I chosen among all the families of the earth..." That word "chosen" is of interest. This is how the New American Standard Bible translated the Hebrew word "chosen." Now listen as I read an older version of the Bible, the King James Version. Same verse, older version, **"You only have I known of all the families of the earth: therefore I will punish you for all your iniquities."** Ah, instead of the word "chosen," the King James and other versions have the word "known."

NASB: "You only have I chosen..." KJV: "You only have I known..." The Hebrew word there can be translated either chosen or known. Today, we find the King James Version helpful to show this: God knows Israel in the sense that He has a unique love for Israel. "You only have I known of all the families of the earth..." does not mean that God only knows the Jewish people. Of course not. God knows all people. God knows all ethnicities. God, as we have already demonstrated from the Scripture, knows everyone and everything! Dr. Lloyd-Jones again, "Obviously God knows, as a matter of pure knowledge, every family in the earth...It clearly does not just mean that He just knows about them and knows what they will do, or not do.

"It means, 'To you only have I given special attention,' 'you only have I selected as my own people,' 'you are the only ones on whom I have set my heart, and to whom I have given special treatment.' 'You alone – therefore I am going to punish you in an exceptional manner (237)." End quote.

God predetermined, before the foundation of the world, that Israel would be His chosen people purely because God loved them. It was nothing in them, it was what was in God. Read the Bible. This is obvious: God *knowing* Israel, God *choosing* Israel is because He loves Israel. His knowledge and foreknowledge of them demonstrates His love for them! Knowing is an intimate love, special attention, God setting His heart on the ones He has chosen. The same then is true of the church in the New Testament.

God predetermined Christians, before the foundation of the world, that we would be His chosen people purely because God loved us. It was nothing in us, it was what was in God. Read the Bible. This is obvious: God *knowing* true believers, God *choosing* Christians is because He loves the church. His knowledge and foreknowledge of us demonstrates His love for us! Knowing is an intimate love, special attention, God setting His heart on the ones He has chosen.

Now let's go over to the New Testament and watch as Jesus tells us about people whom God does *not* know and therefore does *not* love, has *not* set His heart on in the same way He has Israel and the church (the Christians). I am thinking about Matthew chapter 7, verses 21-23. At the end of His Sermon on the Mountain, Jesus reveals this *truth*. Matthew 7, beginning in verse 21, **"Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father who is in heaven will enter.** ²² **Many will say to Me on that day, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in Your name, and in Your name cast out demons, and in Your name perform many miracles?' ²³ And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness.'"**

Did you hear it? Jesus will say to those who are *not* genuinely Christian, "I never *knew* you; depart from Me." There is that word "knew" again." And the Lord, obviously, does not mean He does not know who these people are. On that (still coming) day of Christ's judgment He knows every single person that will kneel before Him. Jesus is all-knowing. Jesus is foreknowing. When He uses the term "knew," what He means is I do not have a special, unique relationship with you. I do not have an intimate love for you, I have not set my heart on you.

Lloyd-Jones again, quote, "When [Jesus] says, 'I never knew you', He means, 'you have never belonged to me', 'you have never been my people', 'you have never been in this peculiar relationship with me', 'I have never had a special interest in you.' It is the only conceivable meaning there; and it is the common meaning attached to this term 'knowledge' as used in the Bible (238)."

And now the last of the three Bible verses for today. In 2 Timothy 2, verse 19, Paul says this, **"The Lord knows those who are His."** The Lord "knows," there is that word again. The Lord knows those are His, those who belong to Jesus are deeply loved by God. And that includes me and so many of you. The knowledge and the foreknowledge of God teaches me something else. *God loves me*. And God loves you, dear brothers and sisters in the Lord!

Just before we take leave of this word "foreknew" in Romans 8, verse 29 I wanted to be sure and highlight this reality for you Christians. The word "knows" in the Bible is used in relation to a special intimacy in a love relationship. I only had time to share these verses. There are others. Here is what's important: the knowledge and foreknowledge of God teaches us that God loves us. We are deeply loved by Him. Let me repeat these wise words from Dr. Lloyd-Jones, "When we read in the Scripture that God 'knows' someone, or certain people, it means that He has a special interest in them, that [God] has set His love upon them, that He is planning and has purposed certain things with respect to them (237)."

God loves you. Tomorrow, we move on. Predestination awaits! Please join us as, together, we continue to discover who God Is!

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