

7. God knows and deals with Christians as individuals. Paul was known and separated from his birth to preach the gospel among the Gentiles (Gal.1:15,16). But he was not called for that work until after he had persecuted the church for some years. Again, Peter says Christians are elect according to the foreknowledge of God (I Pet. 1:2). **And Paul says the children of God are chosen in Christ before the foundation of the world, and foreordained to adoption as sons through Jesus Christ (Eph.1:3-5). Here we find several elements in the foreknowledge of God: (a) that man would sin and need redemption; (b) that there would be certain conditions for sinners to meet in order to become sons of God; (c) God would have to know who among men would meet those conditions. It is not enough to say that God knew some, a class of people, would obey the Lord, but he did not know the people by name, for it is said he foreordained them to adoption as sons. God would certainly know the names of his children. Not only did he know their names, but he wrote their names in the * Lamb's book of life "from the foundation of the world" (Rev.13:8;17:8). And Paul said, "Howbeit the firm foundation of God standeth, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are his" (II Tim,2:19). If God chose us, foreordained us, and wrote our names in the book of life before the foundation of the world, he has known them that are his from before the foundation of the world. If he has not known them, it follows that he knows something now that he did not know before, so was not omniscient before he learned who his children are.**

But what of the nature of God's foreknowledge? Strong makes this statement:

Since it is free from all imperfection, God's knowledge is immediate, as distinguished from the knowledge that comes through sense or imagination; simultaneous, as not acquired by successive observations, or built up by processes of reasoning; distinct, as free from all vagueness or confusion; true, as perfectly corresponding to the reality of things; eternal, as comprehended in one timeless act of the divine mind.^M

God does not have to go to school to learn; no one has been his teacher. The prophet said, "Who hath directed the Spirit of Jehovah, or being his counsellor hath taught him? With whom took he counsel, and who instructed him, and taught him in the path of justice, and taught him knowledge, and showed to him the way of understanding?" (Isa.40:13,14). Nor does God have to reason things out and come to a conclusion; his knowledge is immediate and simultaneous. By his knowledge being eternal is meant that he knew the "end from the beginning." God has not learned anything by his observation and experience with men. **If he has learned one thing by his dealings with humanity, he was not omniscient before he learned that one thing.** And by the learning of that one thing he has proved that he is mutable, changeable. **So to affirm that God**

has learned from his experience with humanity is to deny his immutability and omniscience, which would mean that he is not the infinite God.

But we must be careful to maintain a distinction between God's foreknowledge of men and events, and the predetermining of men and events. **God can foreknow an event without predetermining that event. God foreknew Adam's sin, since he had already purposed from eternity to save man from his sin, but he did not predetermine that Adam should sin.** In other words, God's foreknowledge did not force, or influence, Adam to sin. Adam had the power to choose whether he would do right or sin. If God's foreknowledge necessitated Adam's sin, God's punishment of Adam for the sin would have been unjust. **Jesus knew that Judas would betray him, but that fact did not force Judas to do what he did. God foreknew, from eternity, that the Jews would betray, condemn, and crucify Jesus (Acts 2:23), but this did not keep Peter from accusing them of being lawless men to crucify him (Acts 2:23}; nor did it keep Stephen from accusing them of being "betrayers and murderers" (Acts 7:52). So God can know that a man will obey the Lord, live a faithful life and die in the triumphs of a living faith, and go home to glory, without robbing that man of his choice, or freedom, to do either right or wrong. And God can know, from eternity, that a certain man will refuse to obey the Lord, refuse to live a Christian life, die the death of the wicked and suffer eternal destruction from the presence * of the Lord, without robbing that man of his right and freedom to choose his course of life. God's foreknowledge of a man's choice a course in life has nothing to do with the man's freedom to choose his own course.** (All Emp. Mine, w.d.) (The Timeless Trinity for The Ceaseless Centuries pp.142-145)