

# THE MEANING OF PROGINWSKW ("FOREKNOWLEDGE")

by  
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## Introduction

"Foreknow," *proginwskw* (transliterated *proginōskō*), may be the most significant term in a key New Testament soteriological passage, Romans 8:28–30.<sup>1</sup> In Warfield's opinion, "it [foreknowledge] lies at the root of the whole process."<sup>2</sup> Foreknowledge is also a frequent topic of discussion in theological periodicals.<sup>3</sup> Recent turmoil provoked by the "Openness of God" theology is primarily due to its proponents' denial of God's omniscience, specifically foreknowledge.<sup>4</sup> As Vance observes, those who deny God's absolute omniscience commonly do so based on their view of foreknowledge.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Douglas Moo, *The Epistle to the Romans*, NICNT (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1996), 531–32.

<sup>2</sup> Benjamin B. Warfield, *Biblical and Theological Studies* (Philadelphia: Presbyterian and Reformed, 1952), 312.

<sup>3</sup> For example, recent articles in one periodical, *JETS*, include David Basinger, "Biblical Paradox: Does Revelation Challenge Logic?" *JETS* 30 (June 1997): 205–13; D. A. Carson, "God, the Bible and Spiritual Warfare: A Review Article" *JETS* 42 (June 1999): 251–69. The articles in the September 2001 issue alone devote almost 40% by content to this subject. The ATLA database lists 46 articles or essays on this subject in *JETS* since 1990.

<sup>4</sup> Robert A. Pyne and Stephen R. Spencer, "A Critique of Free-Will Theism, Part One," *BSac* 158 (July-September 2001): 259–86, esp. 259–63.

<sup>5</sup> Laurence M. Vance, *The Other Side of Calvinism*, rev. ed. (Pensacola, FL: Vance, 1999), 391. This seems to be the foundational problem of "Openness" theologians. Despite many lengthy discussions regarding their thinking, their basic problem seems to be the philosophical concept that God only knows because he determines. Clark Pinnock, *Predestination and Free-Will*, ed. D. Basinger and R. Basinger (Grand Rapids: IVP, 1986), 156–57, argues that just as Calvin says, strong omniscience implies strong predestination. He concludes that if a man's choice is foreknown it is not a choice.

The discussion regarding foreknowledge is more philosophical than exegetical.<sup>6</sup> In a book just published, Boyd, the only one of four writers who uses Scripture, is criticized for focusing on biblical passages rather than on philosophy.<sup>7</sup> Since Augustine's day, Christian theologians have primarily argued this issue on a philosophical basis. However, humans know nothing about God's foreknowledge aside from the information revealed in Scripture. Boyd's problem is not too much emphasis on Scripture and philosophical naiveté, as Craig charges.<sup>8</sup> Rather, it is exegetical naiveté coupled with flaws in logic. This centuries-old discussion is not unresolved because of too great a focus on Scripture, but because of a lack of objective, non-dogmatic focus on Scripture.

This present article is a study of the word to *foreknow* (*proginōskō* including the noun *foreknowledge*, *prognōsis*) to

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<sup>6</sup> Of course, openly philosophical discussions of this issue exist. A thorough discussion is William Lane Craig, *Divine Foreknowledge and Human Freedom*, vol.19: *Brill's Studies in Intellectual History* (Leiden: Brill, 1991). This work is intended to be philosophical and not theological. Craig discusses the opinions of numerous philosophers with little reference to biblical passages. There are also the recent articles by Robert E. Picirilli, "Foreknowledge, Freedom, and the Future," *JETS* 43 (June 2000): 259–71, and "An Arminian Response to John Sander's *The God Who Risks: A Theology of Providence*," *JETS* 44 (September 2001) 467–91. Other philosophy-based articles include, David Basinger, "Divine Control and Human Freedom: Is Middle Knowledge the Answer?" *JETS* 36 (March 1993): 55–64; Frederick Sontag, "Does Omnipotence Necessarily Entail Omniscience?" *JETS* 34 (December 1991): 505–8; and Paul Kjoss Helseth, "On Divine Ambivalence: Open Theism and the Problem of Particular Evils," *JETS* 44 (September 2001): 493–511.

<sup>7</sup> William Lane Craig, "A Middle-Knowledge Response," in *Divine Foreknowledge: Four Views*, eds. James K. Beilby and Paul R. Eddy (Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 2001), 57.

<sup>8</sup> Craig, "Response," 57. Neither Craig nor the other two writers focus on Scripture. This article was intentionally delayed until the book was published, in the hope that there would be some biblical discussion of this issue. However, it is only a study of divine foreknowledge in light of the Open Theism question. Most of the argument therein could be derived and maintained and is presented apart from any specific knowledge of Scripture and apart from any specifically Christian doctrine.

determine its meaning and basic implications. Conclusions of previously done studies range from the opinion that foreknowledge is strictly prescience (forethought) to the view that it has a deterministic nuance equivalent to predestination.<sup>9</sup>

### **THE BASIC SENSE OF FOREKNOWLEDGE IS CLEAR**

In secular Greek, *proginōskō* meant “to foreknow, to know beforehand.” Scholars do not seriously dispute this definition. It does not refer to electing, loving relationship, or predestination.<sup>10</sup> Biblical interpreters have provided no extra-biblical examples with a meaning other than “to know beforehand.”<sup>11</sup> The few examples in the apocryphal books of the Greek Old Testament agree.<sup>12</sup> Those who infuse certain New Testament occurrences with a different meaning rely on different words as the basis for their

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<sup>9</sup> F. Godet, *Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans* (reprint; Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1956), 324–25; Moo, *Romans*, 531–34. Some would disagree with the use of the term, “determinism” (D. A. Carson, *Divine Sovereignty and Human Responsibility* [Grand Rapids: Baker, 1994] 3–4). However, the position’s advocates use this term.

<sup>10</sup> LSJ, 1473, states the basic meaning as, “know, perceive, learn, or understand beforehand”. The idea of “judge beforehand” is listed but seems to be basically grounded in foreknowledge; i.e., to judge in the sense of evaluate beforehand on the basis of knowledge. MM, 538, gives the meaning as “foreknow, know previously.”

<sup>11</sup> James D. G. Dunn, *Romans 1–8*, vol. 38: WBC (Waco, TX: Word, 1988), 482–83; Joseph A. Fitzmeyer, *Romans*, vol. 33: AB (New York: Doubleday, 1993), 525; Moo, *Romans*, 532–36; Leon Morris, *The Epistle to the Romans* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1988), 332; Thomas R. Schreiner, *Romans: BECNT* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1998), 451–53. Joseph Shulam, *A Commentary on the Jewish Roots of Romans* (Baltimore: Lederer, 1997), 305, 364. Also, note works such as John Piper, *The Justification of God*, 2d ed. (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1993), 52–53. Moo, *Romans*, 532, asserts that the NT usage does not conform to the general pattern, thereby revealing that the general pattern does not include the interpretation he imposes on it.

<sup>12</sup> Paul Jacobs and Hartmut Krienke, “*proginōskō*,” *NIDNTT*, 1.692–93. This is a good summary of the situation in Classical Greek and the LXX.

interpretation.<sup>13</sup> The evidence definitely establishes “to know beforehand, foreknowledge” as the meaning for *proginōskō*.<sup>14</sup> The issue seems much clearer than with many other theological terms. However, in certain NT passages, many insist on interpreting this word as “to elect, to determine, or to indicate an intimate relationship.”<sup>15</sup> But which of these, if any, is the meaning? All three have been proposed for the interpretation of crucial New Testament passages containing this term. Interpreters tend to argue as if all three meanings were the same and then to select the one that seems most credible in a specific argument.<sup>16</sup> Nevertheless, the fact that the three are products of one dogmatic perspective does not mean that these three meanings are the same.

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<sup>13</sup> S. M. Baugh, “The Meaning of Foreknowledge,” in *Still Sovereign* (eds. Thomas R. Schreiner and Bruce Ware; Grand Rapids: Baker, 2000), 183–200; Dunn, *Romans*, 482; Fitzmeyer, *Romans*, 525; Moo, *Romans*, 532; Piper, *Justification*, 52, n. 13; Schreiner, *Romans*, 452–53, 580. Baugh is a particularly revealing example. Although this is an extended study of foreknowledge, he likewise gives no evidence for any deterministic meaning for *proginōskō*. To date, interpreters have not provided any examples where *proginōskō* has such a meaning. On the other hand, it is generally acknowledged that certain NT passages clearly use *proginōskō* with the meaning of prescience. In those NT passages where theology is not the obstacle, this is the recognized meaning.

<sup>14</sup> Louw and Nida, 30.100, equate *proginōskō* with *problepō* and give the meaning “to choose” (I.363). However, neither LSJ (1471) nor MM (538) give such a meaning for *problepw*, *problepō*. The definition, “select,” for the middle, given by BAGD (703), is based on a lexically unwarranted and apparently dogmatically influenced interpretation of Heb 11:40. Thus, since there is no basis in fact for this entry, there is little probability that this “semantic equivalent” will hold up with either verb. Vern S. Poythress, “Greek Lexicography and Translation: Comparing Bauer’s and Louw-Nida’s Lexicons,” *JETS* 44 [June 2001] 285–96, esp. 296), offers a realistic assessment of Louw-Nida, “It will not help the exegete who needs exact information about distinct meanings, uncluttered with an artificial multiplication of senses generated by metaphorical uses.” It is difficult to see how it will help either exegetes or translators who are concerned with accuracy.

<sup>15</sup> Baugh, “Foreknowledge,” 191; Dunn, *Romans*, 482; Fitzmeyer, *Romans*, 525; Moo, *Romans*, 532; Morris, *Romans*, 332; Schreiner, *Romans*, 452.

<sup>16</sup> For example, see Moo who argues that since the love or intimate relationship leads to their choice, these meanings are virtually the same (Moo, *Romans*, 533). However, this is illogical. Love may lead to giving someone a gift, but “love” does not mean the same as “to give” or “gift.”

Does the fact that all three have been proposed by various interpreters for certain occurrences of *proginōskō* indicate that there is solid linguistic evidence for all three? Or does it rather imply that the interpreters are unable to demonstrate that any of these three meanings will consistently hold up to objective analysis?

What does this background demonstrate for the purposes of this study? It provides perspective for a correct approach to New Testament passages. Due to strong evidence for the meaning “know beforehand,” those who argue otherwise face the burden of proof for establishing the *exegetical necessity* for their proposed meaning. The theoretical possibility or the interpreter’s theological propensity is not sufficient. If “to know beforehand” fits the meaning in a New Testament passage, then this must be the preferred interpretation.

### **THE NEW TESTAMENT MEANING OF FOREKNOWLEDGE**

*All New Testament passages that use the term are relevant.* The verb occurs in Acts 26:5; Romans 8:29; 11:2; 1 Peter 1:20; and 2 Peter 3:17 and the noun, “foreknowledge” (*prognōsis*), occurs in Acts 2:23 and 1 Peter 1:2. We will discuss the two passages in Romans last due to their theological significance. It is exegetically incorrect to consider only those passages where God is the subject.<sup>17</sup> Still, this approach is common.<sup>18</sup> The assumption involved in so restricting the study is that the meaning is *different*, and not merely modified, when God is the subject.<sup>19</sup> Several

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<sup>17</sup> Baugh, “Foreknowledge,” 188–96. Baugh discusses only those passages he describes as speaking of God’s foreknowledge, Acts 2:23; Romans 8:29; 11:2; 1 Pet 1:2, 20. He does not discuss the other verses. He apparently holds the linguistically defective idea that the verb changes meaning if the subject or object is different (192).

<sup>18</sup> Moo, *Romans*, 532; Schreiner, *Romans*, 452.

<sup>19</sup> Baugh, “Foreknowledge,” 192. A word (verb) may be modified in a qualitative or quantitative way due to the context, including subject, and action

reasons show this approach to be incorrect: (1) The meaning of a verb is not dependent on, nor does it vary with the subject of the verb. (2) Other words do not have a different meaning when used of God. How do interpreters know that this one does? (3) God has given Scripture to communicate to humans.<sup>20</sup> He uses human language with its normal meanings. If words have different meanings when God is the subject, the interpreter cannot know what they are, nor if our concepts about God are accurate. (4) Why would God deliberately make the communication difficult? Why would He use words with different meanings than normal when He could use readily available words that clearly communicate? If this term normally means “foreknowledge,” but when used of God, it means “electing love, intimate knowledge, or determining choice,” why use it here? Why not say, “electing love.” Such an approach is illogical. (5) If words do not have their normal meaning when used to describe God, there can be no objective control on interpretation, leaving each interpreter to read in his theological opinions. Thus, to study only those uses of *proginōskō* where God is the subject is defective hermeneutically and logically.

*Acts 26:5.* Interpreters usually concede that, in Acts 26:5, *proginōkō* means “know beforehand.” However, they often handle this clear case in a cursory manner.<sup>21</sup> Yet, it is a very

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involved. For example, since only God has real foresight into the future, there may be some modification in the extent, quality, and means of the foreknowledge involved. But the basic meaning remains the same, “to know beforehand.” All passages using this verb must be considered. Although the usage may be modified in a given context, the basic meaning of a word is its customary usage in human discourse. Thus, the usage in instances pertaining to men is the usage that provides the understanding for those instances referring to God. This selective approach is seldom used where the customary meaning agrees with the interpreter’s point of view.

<sup>20</sup> Thomas R. Edgar, “Through the Written Word, Spiritual Truth Can Be Known,” *The Fundamentals for the Twenty-First Century*, ed. Mal Couch (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2000), 60–61, 65.

<sup>21</sup> Dunn, *Romans*, 482; Alexander Sand, “*proginōskō*, *proginōsis*,” *EDNT*, 3.153–54; Moo, *Romans*, 532; Schreiner, *Romans*, 452.

enlightening passage, particularly regarding the verb's syntax. In 26:2–4, the Apostle Paul testifies before Agrippa and reminds him that “all the Jews” know Paul's life from a youth, from the beginning among his nation and in Jerusalem (26:4). He continues, “Since they know me from before (*proginōskontes*), from the beginning (if they want to testify), that I lived according to the strictest sect of our religion, a Pharisee” (translations are the author's unless otherwise indicated). We should note several aspects: (1) *proginōskō* refers only to knowledge. There is no implication in the Jews' words of a choice or predetermined plan. Neither is there an implication of affection or intimate and loving relationship. The Jews referred to were Paul's enemies.

(2) Several phrases establish a chronology, i.e., “from a youth, from the beginning, before.”<sup>22</sup> (3) The most significant facet for this study is the syntax. The object of the verb *proginōskō*, “to foreknow,” is the personal pronoun, “me” (me). The passage is clear. Paul says, “foreknowing me . . . that I lived according to the strictest sect of our religion, a Pharisee.” The “that” (*hoti*) clause expresses the content of the concept “foreknowing me.” The apostle asserts “They knew me before; that is, they knew that I lived as a Pharisee.”<sup>23</sup> Thus, to “foreknow” a person means to *know something about that person beforehand*. The personal object does not imply any personal, intimate ramifications, nor does it imply any deterministic concept such as election.

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<sup>22</sup> This verb and the corresponding noun have a strong temporal aspect (*NIDNTT*, 1.692).

<sup>23</sup> Hans Conzelmann, *Acts: Hermeneia* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1987), 186, 208; *EDNT*, 3:153; Richard Longenecker, *Acts: EBC* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1995), 348; Moo, *Romans*, 532; Johannes Munck, *Acts*, vol. 31: AB (New York: Doubleday), 239–41; Ben Witherington, III, *The Acts of the Apostles: A Social Rhetorical Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998), 740; and an older work, H. A. W. Meyer, *Acts* (New York: Funk and Wagnall's, 1883), 463. The fact that the foreknowing concerns Paul's life; that is, something about Paul, is commonly recognized by interpreters. Cf. Bruce W. Winter and Andrew D. Clark, *The Book of Acts in its First Century Setting*, vol. 1: *Ancient Literary Settings* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1993), 329–30.

(4) In addition, Greek verbs commonly take an object with an idea such as “about” or “something about” implicit in the Greek verb itself, yet we must specifically supply it in English. For example, Hebrews 6:9 (NKJV) says, *But, beloved, we are confident of better things concerning you.* The verb, “we are confident” takes the object “better things” and could be woodenly translated, “We are confident better things.” However, the Greek verb does not need the additional word “of,” as in English, to translate “I am confident *of* better things.” The verb itself means “to be confident *of*.” This also occurs with the verb *ginōskō* (“know”). “The tree is known (*ginōsketai*) by its fruit” (Matthew 12: 33) does not mean there is an intimate relationship or electing love of the person for the tree. The tree is known *as to its character*; something about the tree is known by its fruit. Neither the context of Acts 26:5 nor the use of a personal object gives the slightest implication that *proginōskō* means anything other than “to know before,” specifically to know something about Paul beforehand. Thus, the verb *proginōskō* with a personal object means “to know something about the person beforehand.”

*1 Peter 1:20.* Referring to Christ, 1 Peter 1:20 says, “Foreknown before the foundation of the world; however, manifest in these last times for your sakes.” Baugh argues that the interpretation of “foreknown” is “a loving, committed relationship.” He says, “Here neither Christ’s faith nor any other action or attribute of his is the object of foreknowledge; rather, it was Christ himself foreknown.”<sup>24</sup> Thus, he concludes that the verb cannot mean “prescience.” This is an all too common argument based on the personal object.<sup>25</sup> This argument is erroneous. Acts 26:5 is particularly clear that, when this verb has a person as the object, it does not change meaning. It still means “to know before.” It specifically means to know beforehand *something about*

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<sup>24</sup> Baugh, “Foreknowledge,” 196. However, Baugh gives no evidence to show why it means “loving, committed relationship.” Many interpreters prior to Baugh have asserted this.

<sup>25</sup> This erroneous argument states that since Christ, a person, is the object, it does not refer to something about Christ but to Christ himself.

that person; e.g., an action or attribute. Both the syntax of *proginōskō* as revealed in Acts 26:5 and normal Greek usage (including other verbs) directly contradict the argument that a personal object requires or even implies a meaning other than prescience.

*Proginōskō* is commonly interpreted with a deterministic meaning in this verse.<sup>26</sup> However, the passage and context are contrary to this nuance. The severe chronological contrast in this verse between a manifest *now* and foreknown *before* should not be overlooked.<sup>27</sup> Aligning the statements in parallel will help clarify this since the parallel is particularly evident in the Greek:

proegnwsmenou men pro. katabolh̄j kosmou fanerwqentoj de. ep̄l̄ escatou tw̄h cronwn diV umaj i.e., “foreknown before the foundation of the world but manifested in the last times for your sakes.”
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One contrast between these two clauses concerns the two elements of time, “before the foundation of the world” and “in the last times.” The remainder of the contrast is between the two verbal ideas, “foreknown (before)” and “manifested (now).”<sup>28</sup> Just as the two temporal expressions, “before the foundation of the world” and “in the last times,” correlate by contrast, so “known

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<sup>26</sup> Paul J. Achtemeier, *1 Peter: Hermeneia* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1996), 130–32; F. W. Beare, *The First Epistle to Peter* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1976), 106; Edwin Blum and Glenn Barker, *1,2 Peter; 1,2,3 John; Jude*: EBC (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1996), 19; Fred B. Craddock, *1 Peter: Westminster Bible Companion* (Louisville, KY: Westminster/John Knox, 1995), 26; Peter H. Davids, *The Book of 1 Peter*: NICNT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1990), 73–74; *EDNT*, 3:153; Leonard Goppelt, *A Commentary on 1 Peter* (trans. John E. Alsup; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1993), 118–19; I. H. Marshall, *1 Peter*, vol. 17: IVPNTC (Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 1991), 54–55. None of these interpreters provides evidence, merely assertion.

<sup>27</sup> John E. Elliott, *1 Peter*, vol. 37B: AB (New York: Doubleday, 2000), 375–76; Marshall, *1 Peter*, 54–55; J. Ramsey Michaels, *1 Peter*, vol. 48: WBC (Waco, TX: Word, 1988), 66–67; Bo Reicke, *The Epistle of James, Peter and Jude*; vol. 37: AB (New York: Doubleday, 1964), 77.

<sup>28</sup> That the time of manifestation is the present is understood in the passage.

beforehand” and “manifested now” also correlates by contrast. Thus, the meaning “to know before” fits well in the passage. The expression “manifested now” is contrasted appropriately with “known beforehand,” but it does not correlate well with an entirely different idea such as a “loving, committed relationship”—this concept does not fit in the passage. Understanding it as “electing love, or committed relationship” violates the normal meaning of the verb, the syntax, and the correlation so evident in the passage.

We ought not, therefore, to read this meaning into the passage. Since there is good correlation when *proginōskō* is understood as prescience, neither ought we to depart from the normal meaning of *proginōskō* and read either of the meanings, “to choose, or to determine,” into 1 Peter 1:20. The passage teaches that the cross was not an afterthought. Christ’s mission as Savior was known before the foundation of the world, although He was not manifested as Savior until the last times, for our sakes.

*2 Peter 3:17.* Most concede that, in 2 Peter 3:17, the verb means “prescience.”<sup>29</sup> Peter reminds his readers that the Lord will come as promised and the earth and its elements will pass away (3:1–16); thus, since they know these things beforehand (*proginōskontes*), they should live accordingly (3:17). The verse is clear.

*Acts 2:23 (the noun).*<sup>30</sup> Peter tells the Israelites that, “by the determined plan and foreknowledge of God,” they killed Jesus by nailing Him to the cross. The construction is simple, direct, and also very popular with deterministically inclined interpreters.<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>29</sup> Baugh, “Foreknowledge,” 192; Dunn, *Romans*, 482; Moo, *Romans*, 532; Schreiner, *Romans*, 452.

<sup>30</sup> Although nouns do not always have the same meaning as the verb from the same stem, these are recognized as carrying the same basic meaning, and both are commonly included in this discussion.

<sup>31</sup> This is the only Bible passage mentioned by Helm (Paul Helm, “The Augustinian-Calvinist View,” *Divine Foreknowledge: Four Views* [Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 2001] 167, 180), other than a tangential use of 1 Cor 4:5, not to

The most natural meaning is that both God's determined plan and his omniscience, specifically foreknowledge, were involved in accomplishing Christ's death on the cross.<sup>32</sup> His crucifixion was not solely a matter of omnipotent determinism, but also effected in accordance with God's foreknowledge. The meaning "intimate, loving relationship" is very unlikely as a definition for "foreknowledge" in this passage. Nor does the meaning "election, choice" naturally fit.<sup>33</sup> The other alleged possibility creates a tautology: "by the determined plan and determination (determined plan) of God." Thus, none of these proposed meanings is an obvious choice for this passage. Certainly none fit better than or as well as the customary meaning, "to know beforehand."

*Not a hendiadys.* Despite this, arguments are commonly advanced to equate the two ideas or to absorb *prognōsis* into *wrismenh| boulh|* "the determined purpose."<sup>34</sup> Baugh alleges that this is a hendiadys because it has one article. "Therefore," he asserts, the "two nouns are expressly united."<sup>35</sup> He apparently means the two are not distinguished but overlap or take on basically the same meaning.

This argument, however, is incorrect. The fact that the expression has a single article has nothing to do with a hendiadys.

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support any comment about foreknowledge, but as a basis of appeal for skepticism regarding an opposing argument (166).

<sup>32</sup> Conzelmann, *Acts*, 209–10; Munck, *Acts*; 18; Winter and Clark, *Acts*, 86; Witherington, *Acts*, 144–145; Richard F. Zehnle, *Peter's Pentecost Discourse*, vol.15: *SBL Monograph Series*, SBLMS (Nashville: Abingdon, 1971), 21.

<sup>33</sup> The first would mean, "By the determined plan and loving relationship of God," the Jews killed their Messiah. The second would mean "By the determined plan and election of God," they killed him. This is a highly redundant expression. It would seem to stress that their election was for this purpose; neither seems a probable interpretation.

<sup>34</sup> "proginwskw( prognwsij(" EDNT, 3.153 for example.

<sup>35</sup> Baugh, "Foreknowledge," 190. What Baugh means by "united" is not clear in any precise sense. His discussion is exegetically vague. He definitely disagrees with interpreting the two terms as "distinguished." However, he never discusses this as a hendiadys and disregards any precise syntax of the two terms merely discoursing generally on philosophical relationships between the two.

In addition, a hendiadys would make little sense in this passage. Finally, this approach is backward. (1) A hendiadys is a specific rhetorical device where two different words are used to express a single idea. Normally, one functions adjectively and modifies the other, resulting in one concept.<sup>36</sup> The lexical meanings of the terms do not become the same nor change to a different meaning except for the fact that the usual meaning of one is slightly modified to function adjectivally. (2) Since the article is irrelevant to this rhetorical device, obviously, the article cannot indicate that this is a hendiadys.<sup>37</sup> (3) In Acts 2:23, the terms do not lend themselves to such an interpretation. A hendiadys in this case would mean something like “the planned foreknowledge of God,” or “God’s foreknown (by God) plan.” Neither is sensible. Does Peter state the illogical concept that God planned His foreknowledge, or would he

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<sup>36</sup> A hendiadys is defined as, “a single complex idea is expressed by two words connected by a conjunction; e.g., by two substantives with *and* instead of an adjective and substantive” (*The Oxford English Dictionary* [Oxford: Clarendon, 1933] V. 522). *Webster’s New Twentieth Century Dictionary, Unabridged 2d ed.* (New York: Collins/World, 1978), 848, defines it as “two nouns connected by *and* are used instead of one noun or a noun and an adjective; as *deceit and words* for *deceitful words*.” These definitions agree with the statements and examples in the NT Greek Grammars.

<sup>37</sup> A. T. Robertson, *Greek Grammar in the Light of Historical Research* (Nashville: Broadman, 1934), 1206, 1338, lists James 4:2 as an example. BDF, 228–29, gives Mark 6:26/Matt 14:9. Turner lists Mark 6:26; Luke 2:47; 21:15; Acts 1:25; 14:17; 23:6; Romans 1:5; 2 Tim 4:1; Ti 2:13; Jas 5:10; 1 Pet 4:14 and 2 Pet 1:16 (N. Turner, *Syntax*, vol. 3: *A Grammar of New Testament Greek* [Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1963] 335). and Beekman and Callow also include Matt 4:16; Col 1:28; and 2 Tim 1:10 (John Beekman and John Callow, *Translating the Word of God* [Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1974] 212–14). Out of seventeen examples, only three occur with a single article. Apparently this is the least likely construction. In Lucan writings there are five occurrences, but only one with a single article. That one is the article together with the demonstrative pronoun; thus, it is not precisely the same syntactical construction. The single article in Acts 2:23 is, therefore, more argument against this as a hendiadys than for it. Most of these examples have no article with either substantive.

bother to state the obvious fact that God knew his plan before he carried it out?<sup>38</sup>

Whether a construction is a hendiadys is usually a matter of opinion, an “educated guess.” This must be determined, not by the syntax, but by the established meanings. The syntax of a hendiadys is very simple; two words joined by *and*. However, this is so general that it is non-definitive. Thus, there is no syntactical *format* from which to first determine that something is a hendiadys and then alter the meaning of the terms to fit. This is logically backwards. It is assuming the conclusion.

The established *lexical meanings* of the terms and the context are the primary indicators that the relationship is a hendiadys in a particular statement. Thus, it is incorrect merely to announce that a construction is a hendiadys, as in this instance, and then to change the meaning of one of the words. In Acts 2:23, a hendiadys would greatly weaken the force and meaning of the verse. Even if this were a hendiadys, that fact would not give a deterministic meaning to “foreknowledge” (*prognōsis*). Therefore, it would not mean “electing love, choice, or intimate relationship,” but still retain its normal meaning, “to know beforehand.” A hendiadys would merely mean that the context uses a word in a literary device either as a substantive with its usual meaning, or with an adjectival force based on its usual meaning.

*Syntax does not nullify the lexical meaning.* Two substantives with one article joined by “and” (*kai*) can either be distinct, identical, or overlap semantically.<sup>39</sup> However, this is all of the possible relationships. Thus, the single-article construction *indicates* absolutely nothing regarding the *semantic* relationship between the two substantives. The lexical meanings determine this.

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<sup>38</sup> Note that according to this, it would be God’s determined plan that is foreknown, not the events described in Acts 2:23; thus, the foreknowing would be before the plan.

<sup>39</sup> D. Wallace, *Greek Grammar Beyond the Basics* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1996), 735–36, cf. 286–90.

In the same context, two substantives may occur together with one article and again with separate articles without any change in meaning.<sup>40</sup> An author may, by one article, simply group substantives for some point of discussion. Nevertheless, this does not affect their actual relationship nor deny their separate identity. In Acts 2:23, repetition of the article would tend to *stress* the distinctiveness of “determined plan” and “foreknowledge,” whereas the stress seems to be on their coordination. The emphasis on coordination fits with the single article, fits the context, reads nothing into the passage, and maintains the lexically supported meanings for the terms. Whether there is a single article or the article is repeated, the valid lexical meanings and distinctiveness of the terms do not change. Any overlap in meaning would not be due to inclusion under one article. It would occur only if *the words overlap in meaning apart from this construction*. The precise semantic relationship between the two nouns (i.e., identical, distinct, or otherwise) one may determine only by the lexical meanings of the two nouns and the context.<sup>41</sup>

This passage does not support the idea that God’s prescience depends on His determination to bring events to pass, as if God lacked genuine omniscience. The fact that Acts 2:23 mentions God’s foreknowledge as well as his “determined plan” makes a strong and specific statement that the effecting of God’s plan depends on more than his omnipotent “will,” or “determined plan.” It also depends, and not merely as an incidental appendage to his “determined plan,” on his foreknowledge.

*1 Peter 1:2 (the noun).* In the original, 1 Peter 1:1–2 states, Petroj apostoloj Vhsou/ Cristou/ ekletoij parepidhmoij diasporaj Pontou( Galatijaj( Kappadokijaj( VAsijaj kai. Biqunijaj( kata. prognwsin qeou/ patroj en agiasmw/ pneumatoj eij upakohn kai. rantismon aifmatoj Vhsou/ Cristou (NA27).

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<sup>40</sup> For example, Acts 15:2 and 4.

<sup>41</sup> Although Wallace inclines toward interpreting Acts 2:23 as overlapping, he makes it clear that he has no grammatical reason. His reasoning is dogmatic.

*Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, To the pilgrims of the Dispersion in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia, elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, in sanctification of the Spirit, for obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ (NKJV).*

Most commentators take the prepositional phrase, “according to the foreknowledge” (*kata prognōsin*), to modify “elect”.<sup>42</sup> Logically, all three prepositional phrases in this construction must qualify the same term and be appropriate to whatever they qualify. Therefore, the three phrases “according to God’s foreknowledge, by sanctification of the Spirit,” and “for obedience,” must refer to persons.<sup>43</sup> Although they say nothing specifically related to an apostle or sojourners, all three phrases do fit very precisely with the term, “elect.”<sup>44</sup> Thus, in effect, the expression under consideration says, “elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father.” The meaning, “know before,” fits perfectly in this verse.<sup>45</sup>

What does “elect according to God’s foreknowledge” mean? Peter hardly states that election was merely *in agreement* with—that is, it did not contradict—God’s foreknowledge. How could it be otherwise? The apostle mentions foreknowledge, in this context, as a major factor together with the other two phrases that concern the means and the goal. In this phrase, foreknowledge is the criterion in accordance with which the election took place.

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<sup>42</sup> Michaels, *1 Peter*, 10–11; E. G. Selwyn, *The First Epistle of St. Peter* (London: Macmillan, 1964), 119. Selwyn is unusual in that he also relates the phrase to “apostle.” However, it is highly improbable that a prepositional phrase would simultaneously qualify the nominative of the writer and the dative of the addressees.

<sup>43</sup> Only persons could be described as sanctified by the Spirit, and for obedience.

<sup>44</sup> Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 86; Steven R. Bechtler, *Following in His Steps*, no. 162: *SBL Dissertation Series*, SBLDS (Atlanta: Scholars, 1998), 77; Elliott, *1 Peter*, 315–17.

<sup>45</sup> It fits this verse and coordinates well with the soteriological concepts and God’s foreknowledge as described in Acts 2:23; 1 Peter 1:20; and; as we will see, with the passages in Romans.

Various grammars and theological dictionaries agree on the customary uses of *kata*, with the accusative.<sup>46</sup> Uses such as local, temporal, purpose, distributive, manner, and attributive do not fit in this verse. The idea of reason or grounds seems most probable.

An analysis of the approximately 200 instances of the preposition *kata*, in the epistles reveals certain patterns of usage.<sup>47</sup> The preposition commonly qualifies the action idea when used with a verbal term such as “elect.” For example, consider 2 Thessalonians 2:9, “Whose coming is *kata*, (“according to”) the working of Satan”; that is, this individual comes into his position due to or because of Satan’s working. In 1 Peter 1:2, the *kata* phrase qualifies the verbal idea (“to elect”) in the verbal adjective “elect” (plural). This is amply demonstrated by the fact that the other two prepositional phrases, “by sanctification of the Spirit,” and “for obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ,” qualify this verbal idea. Thus, the most likely meaning of the *kata* phrase in this verse is to qualify the action idea in “elect” (*eklektoij*) by giving the ground or reason for that action (i.e., elected due to or based on God’s foreknowledge). Foreknowledge is the ground or reason for the electing.<sup>48</sup> Kelly interprets it as “grounded in, as a result of.” Moreover, Bigg says, “election depends on foreknowledge” and “foreknowledge is the condition.”<sup>49</sup> Some who acknowledge this, then, apart from any evidence in the passage, simply assert that election is deterministically oriented.<sup>50</sup> But the objective evidence of this

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<sup>46</sup> W. Köhler, “*kata*,” *EDNT*, 2:253–54; BDF, 120; BAGD, 405–8; Turner, *Syntax*, 268.

<sup>47</sup> W. F. Moulton and A. S. Geden, *A Concordance to the Greek Testament*, 4<sup>th</sup> ed. (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1963), 528–31.

<sup>48</sup> Elliott, *1 Peter*, 318.

<sup>49</sup> J. N. D. Kelly, *A Commentary on the Epistles of Peter and Jude* (New York: Harper and Row, 1969), 42; C. Bigg, *An Exegetical and Critical Commentary on the Epistles of St. Peter and St. Jude*, ICC (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1901), 92.

<sup>50</sup> Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 86; Beare, *First Peter* 76; Bigg, *Peter and Jude*, 92; Blum, *1 Peter*, 13; Craddock, *1 Peter*, 19–20; Davids, *1 Peter*, 47–48; Elliott, *1 Peter*, 318; Goppelt, *1 Peter*, 72–73; Kelly, *1 Peter*, 42; R. Leighton,

passage says nothing to this effect, but refers to believers as those who are elected according to God's foreknowledge. To summarize, an analysis of the occurrences of *kata*, in the NT and the syntax of the passage reveals the probable force of this verse. God's foreknowledge is the ground for election. Therefore, whatever meaning is assigned to *proginōskō*, this verse apparently regards God's foreknowledge as the primary factor in election.

### THE PASSAGES IN ROMANS

*Romans 8:28–30.* One may summarize Romans 8:28–30 as follows: “We know all things work for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to (God's) purpose. We know this because all those God foreknew He also destined to glory just like His Son. In order to accomplish this purpose, he calls these same individuals, justifies them, and finally glorifies them.” This seems clear enough. The passage states each step as distinct and chronologically and/or logically successive, moving from the beginning, “foreknowledge,” to the goal, glorification.<sup>51</sup> Foreknowledge is foundational. It is prior to all the other elements.

According to this passage, God's foreknowledge is the initial element that separates a specific individual from mankind in general. The syntax of the verb *proginōskō* and the accusative of the person as object indicate that this is God's foreknowledge about, or of something about, this individual. Thus, the

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*Commentary on First Peter*, reprint (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 1972), 20; Scot McKnight, *1 Peter*: NIVAC (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1996), 52–53.

<sup>51</sup> To argue that foreknowledge and predestination are not logically/chronologically successive here contradicts the evidence of this passage which is explaining the accomplishment of God's purpose. This concerns those individuals with whom God begins and moves them to the eschatological goal. Thus, it describes a chronological/logical movement from the beginning to the accomplishment of God's purpose. All the remaining phases are of necessity successive. To interpret this first one differently is contrary to the argument of the verses. This order agrees with 1 Peter 1:2 and Acts 2:23. There is no logical, exegetical, or Scriptural problem with regarding this as logically/chronologically successive.

“something” that God foreknows of necessity must be something wherein this particular individual differs from mankind in general, from those not destined for glorification. Prescience fits well in this passage. Due to his omniscience, God certainly knows beforehand who will believe; therefore, the meaning “to know beforehand” will fit logically, semantically, and theologically in this verse.<sup>52</sup>

There are several explanations often used either to equate or overlap “foreknow” with “predestine.” An unenlightened explanation is that this merely means that God foreknows what He is going to do. Certainly this is comforting; however, this cannot be Paul’s point, for it does not fit the syntax of the passage. The passage discusses God’s plan for certain persons. Paul does not say, “*What* things or events God foreknew, he also predestined and called,” but “*Whom* he foreknew.” As Acts 26:5 and the syntax of the Greek verb show, this specifies that he knew something about the person, rather than asserting that he knows his own plans.

Others argue that foreknowledge is really election; thus, the passage says that God chooses some, then predestines them to glory, then carries out their glorification.<sup>53</sup> But, it is clear from the connection of 8:28 and 8:29f by “because” that 8:29 sets forth the purpose of God for those described, i.e., those He foreknows. Thus, if *proginōskō* means “choose,” of necessity it means choose for this purpose. So God would by that very choice be predestining

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<sup>52</sup> All who believe God is omniscient will acknowledge that God knows beforehand who will believe and be justified. This concept is not contrary to fact or Biblical teaching. Nor is there a logical problem with the idea that God knows this beforehand. The clear semantic meaning of *proginōskō* is to know beforehand. Thus, there is no theological, logical, or semantic problem with this interpretation. Interpreters do not tend to resist this view because it contradicts any orthodox Christian belief or contradicts any passage of Scripture but because it might allow for a nondeterministic Soteriology.

<sup>53</sup> For example, BAGD, 703; L&N (30:100, 1.363); John A. Witmer, “Romans,” *Bible Knowledge Commentary, NT*, eds. John F. Walvoord and Roy B. Zuck (Wheaton, IL: Victor, 1983), 474. The philosophical opinion that God cannot know unless he causes will be discussed under “Definition.”

them to glory, which is predestination. However, in this passage, predestination is *carefully separated* from foreknowledge and is *based on* foreknowledge. The two do not overlap. Thus foreknowledge, in this context, is not “choice.” Baugh correctly observes that *proginōskō* does not mean either “predestine” or “choose” in this passage “since these ideas are already clearly stated otherwise in the passage” and that Paul would have said “love” directly if the verb implied this.<sup>54</sup> 1 Peter 1:2 also differentiates foreknowledge and election. Of course, the consistent obstacle to equating or overlapping the meaning of these two verbs is the fact that there is no evidence that *proginōskō* ever has the meaning of “predestine.” Thus, both the passage itself and lexicography are against these explanations.

*The erroneous argument based on the personal object.* There are two reoccurring arguments used to support a deterministic interpretation for this passage. We may state them as follows: (1) The meaning of *proginōskō* in this passage is to be derived from the use of *ginōskō*, “know,” in the LXX, and *yâdau* in the MT (Hebrew Old Testament) *rather than from proginōskō*, and (2) the personal object, “whom,” requires the meaning of “intimate relationship,” or “electing choice,” for *proginōskō*. Moo’s argumentation is typical.<sup>55</sup> He, as many others, also includes certain common ancillary arguments.<sup>56</sup>

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<sup>54</sup> Baugh, “Foreknowledge,” 192.

<sup>55</sup> Moo, *Romans*, 532ff. Schreiner, *Romans*, 452f.

<sup>56</sup> None of these will hold up to examination. (1) Determination is not an aspect of foreknowledge either by definition or by usage of the verb *proginōskō*. (2) The statement that only two NT instances of the verb mean “prescience” is merely an assertion contrary to the evidence. (3) Those concerned can hardly be Christians prior to their predestination, calling, and justification. However, the fact that these are Christians would not change the meaning of the verb. For example, the verb would not then change to mean “call, justify, glorify,” or some concept such as “sanctify,” all ideas which pertain to Christians and are in the context. (4) The passage may highlight the divine intention but this does not necessitate nor even imply that the various words used in the passage, including *proginōskō*, all take on this meaning. For example, the verb *kaleō* still means “to call” and does not change to mean “determine.”

As previously discussed, Acts 26:5 reveals the error of this common argument regarding the personal object. Scholars apparently base the argument on the English rather than Greek syntax. In Greek, a personal object is used with this verb meaning to foreknow something about the person. “Foreknow” [*proginōskō*] means “to know something beforehand” and, when used of a person or object, to know something about the object. Verbs functioning this way are common in Greek, and there is no need for the Greek specifically to state the words “something about.”<sup>57</sup> Thus, the specific example of Acts 26:5 and the customary syntax of the Greek verb destroy one of two major arguments for a deterministic interpretation of *proginōskō* in Romans 8:29.<sup>58</sup>

*Incorrect dependence on different words.* The other main argument for a deterministic interpretation of *proginōskō* in Romans 8:29 is that its meaning can be deduced from *ginōskō* in the LXX and *yâdau* in the Hebrew text. It should not be overlooked that this is an overt admission that the deterministic meaning desired by many interpreters cannot be derived from *proginōskō* itself. Interpreters use this highly irregular procedure to give an *entirely different and otherwise unsupported* meaning to the verb in this passage, despite the fact that the normal meaning fits very well. To dismiss the normal meaning and derive an alleged meaning from different words is *contrary* to acceptable interpretive procedure.<sup>59</sup> Yet this is merely the beginning of the improper linguistic procedures in this instance.

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<sup>57</sup> It is much more realistic to understand “something about” than to assume that the verb without any reason to do so takes on a new, unsupported meaning, a meaning for which sufficient well known words already exist.

<sup>58</sup> Any argument based on an “antonym” derived from this misunderstanding of the personal object is of no force. Despite Schreiner’s approval (*Romans*, 452), Baugh’s “antonym” argument not only assumes his conclusion, but depends on this erroneous “personal object” argument. Baugh’s argument is based on this misunderstanding of the personal object and on the additional misunderstanding that the meaning of the verb changes with the subject or object.

<sup>59</sup> Carson critiques an interpretation of a Pauline passage where an appeal is made to a meaning that does not conform to Paul’s own usage. He concludes,

It is erroneous to say, as Baugh does, that we can legitimately interpret *proginōskō* by “studying the verb without the prefix *pro-* (‘fore-’).”<sup>60</sup> It is not true that one should study a word without its prefix. For comparison in English, one cannot interpret “uneasy” by studying the word “easy” and ignoring or dismissing the prefix, “un.” Nor does “forestall” merely mean “stall” with an inconsequential prefix. Likewise in Greek, neither do verbs formed from “to stand” (-*isthmi*) and various prefixes, such as the words “resist, withstand” and “revolt, apostatize, and withdraw” mean merely “to stand.” Their prefixes are not insignificant; rather, the resulting combinations are different words. It is an elementary principle of interpretation that one derives the meaning of a word, including a compound word, not from its etymology but from its usage.<sup>61</sup>

Although in *some cases* the word’s usage may be generally the same as the usage of its root word, we know that this is not the case here. “Foreknow” does not mean “know” in Greek any more than in English. There is definite evidence that *proginōskō* means “know beforehand,” but no evidence exists to show that it merely means “to know.” Neither does the prefix simply give a temporal thrust to this verb. It also narrows its semantic range, in this case to

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“The only time such a highly unlikely appeal is justified occurs when other interpretations of the passage are so exegetically unlikely that we are forced to offer some fresh hypothesis. But, when this takes place, we need to admit how tentative and linguistically uncertain the theory really is” (D. A. Carson, *Exegetical Fallacies*, 2nd. ed. [Grand Rapids: Baker, 1996] 40). He continues, “In this case, however, there is no need for such a procedure of last resort. The passage can be and has been adequately explained in its context.” These comments are particularly *apropos* to the use of *yāda*, and *ginōskō* in Old Testament passages such as Amos 3:2 to avoid the normal meaning of *proginōskō* in Romans 8:28–29, since it is a much more blatant example than the one he discusses.

<sup>60</sup> Baugh, “Foreknowledge,” 192, who also states that the prefix only indicates temporal priority.

<sup>61</sup> Peter Cotterell and Max Turner, *Linguistics and Biblical Interpretation* (Downers Grove: IVP, 1989), 178; M. Silva, “God, Language, and Scripture,” in *Foundations of Contemporary Interpretation* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1996), 245–46.

knowing beforehand. The entire semantic range of the root verb *ginōskō* is not carried over to the compounded form. For example, even though *ginōskō*, on occasion refers to sexual relations, *proginōskō* does not mean “to have sexual relations beforehand.” Nor is there reason to expect other alleged secondary and derived uses such as to elect, choose, or love beforehand, if they did occur, to carry over from *ginōskō* to the compound form. There is no evidence that they have.

Although it is common practice, it is incorrect to use the Hebrew word *yâdau* to determine the meaning of *proginōskō*, a different word.<sup>62</sup> The connection is made via the Greek word *ginōskō*, “know.” However, the Greek word *ginōskō* is not *proginōskō*. Thus, it does not reveal the meaning for *proginōskō*. Nor does any connection *ginōskō* may have with the Hebrew *yâdau* indicate a connection between the entirely different Greek word *proginōskō* and the Hebrew *yâdau*.<sup>63</sup> The word *proginōskō* was in use during Classical times and known by the translators of the LXX.<sup>64</sup> However, they did *not* use *proginōskō* to translate *yâdau* in any Old Testament passage; thus, they did not connect *proginōskō* with *yâdau*, nor did they connect it with any specific word in the Old Testament. Since it is so commonly understood that a compound word does not necessarily have the same meaning as the basic verb stem, it is surprising how often

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<sup>62</sup> As Carson says, it is “methodologically irresponsible to read the meaning of a Hebrew word into the Greek without further ado” (*Fallacies*, 61–62). Two facts are striking in this entire interpretational procedure. First, is the unquestioning use of this erroneous argument by almost every interpreter of deterministic leaning. Second, is the fact that no evidence other than dogmatic assertion is given for this claim, although it is contrary to acceptable exegetical procedure.

<sup>63</sup> One cannot obtain the meaning of Greek words through Hebrew equivalents. This cannot be stated more directly and clearly than Carson has already done (Carson, *Fallacies*, 61–62). See also Moisés Silva, *Explorations in Exegetical Methodology* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1996), 58.

<sup>64</sup> LSJ, 1473.

those who discourse on *proginōskō* base their conclusions on “evidence” derived only from *yâdau* and *ginōskō*.<sup>65</sup>

Not only is it improper to study *proginōskō* on the basis of either *yâdau* or *ginōskō*, those using this approach base it on uncertain meanings for both verbs. There is no valid reason to dismiss or ignore the meaning “to know,” which is basic to both verbs.<sup>66</sup> This is particularly true in this instance, since the basic and common meaning for each of these verbs actually supports the normal and already substantiated meaning for the verb *proginōskō*. To state it more clearly, this approach does not even use the usual meaning of both *yâdau* and *ginōskō*. Instead, its proponents select an unusual meaning that is not certain for either verb. It is not certain that *ginōskō* ever specifically means “to elect,” “to determine,” or “to love.” Although the Hebrew verb *yâdau* has a broader semantic range than *ginōskō*, the same is true of it.<sup>67</sup> The Old Testament passages alleged to support this

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<sup>65</sup> Carson, *Fallacies*, 28–32; Peter Cotterell and Max Turner, *Linguistics and Biblical Interpretation* (Downers Grove, IL; IVP, 1989), 113–15, 132–33; J. P. Louw, *Semantics of New Testament Greek* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1982), 26–28. Walter Kaiser and Moisés Silva, *An Introduction to Biblical Hermeneutics* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1994), 54–57.

<sup>66</sup> Selective use of evidence is described by Carson as an “appeal to select evidence that enables the interpreter to say what he or she wants to say, without really listening to what the Word of God says” (*Fallacies*, 54).

<sup>67</sup> The new Koehler-Baumgardner lexicon lists the meanings “to know,” various synonyms of “know,” and the meaning “sexual relations.” However, if it lists any meaning such as “to choose, to determine,” or refers to some intimate relationship other than sexual, it is difficult to find (*HALOT*, 2.390–92). The same applies to Brown, Driver, and Briggs *Lexicon*, which also lists the meaning “to recognize” (*BDB*, 393–95). Deterministic interpreters cannot agree on the specific interpretation of Amos 3:2, this “most unambiguous example.” For example, the same interpreter will say it means something such as “intimate relationship” or perhaps, “electing choice,” or “love.” The reason they cannot be specific is because the word *yâda* does not mean any of these. All Amos 3:2 means is “You only I know of all peoples.” This anthropomorphic statement may well mean that Israel is the only national entity with which God is personally acquainted, has made personal contact, recognizes, or communicates. As a result, neither can these interpreters agree on the specific interpretation of *proginōskō* they allegedly derive from these few Old Testament passages.

meaning for *ginōskō* and *yâdau* are only a few. Amos 3:2, a verse quoted by almost every deterministic interpreter, is usually considered “one of the most unambiguous examples of this personal use.”<sup>68</sup> However, it is mistaken to proceed as if the meaning of *yâdau* were certain, even in Amos 3:2.<sup>69</sup> There is no certain basis upon which to take Amos 3:2 in any deterministic sense, particularly when the verb does not have this meaning.<sup>70</sup> Significantly, although this verse is constantly and unquestionably quoted as evidence by deterministically oriented interpreters, it is used apart from any specific evidence to justify this connection.<sup>71</sup> In the final analysis, even if such a meaning were valid in Amos 3:2 and a few other Old Testament instances, this still has no bearing on the meaning of *proginōskō*. Thus, we may accurately

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<sup>68</sup> Baugh, “Foreknowledge,” 192–93.

<sup>69</sup> Amos 3:2 is an anthropomorphic statement. Thus it cannot be used to define or control the meaning of a direct factual statement such as Romans 8:28–29. As an anthropomorphic statement, Amos 3:2 can mean that God truly knows Israel’s character in contrast to other nations, or their actions or motives, or that he recognizes them alone. Gen 18:20–21, for example, is an anthropomorphic statement where God, as God, certainly is already cognizant of the facts involved, but in the anthropomorphism this is expressed in the sense of to know. Amos 3:2 could use the verb as in Isa 1:3, “The ox knows his master,” that is, recognizes him.

<sup>70</sup> The fact that interpreters cannot settle on which deterministic meaning Amos 3:2 has, “to choose, to determine, or loving relationship,” does not enhance the credibility of this allegation.

<sup>71</sup> Carson states that the concept of Israel’s election is throughout the Old Testament (*Sovereignty*, 3–4). This may be true. However, this cannot be used to read such a meaning into individual words that otherwise do not have this meaning. Unless every word in the NT must take on the meaning of all the motifs in the OT, how does this connect the concept of election with a different word (*proginōskō*) in Romans 8:29, a different passage that does not discuss Israel? There are numerous motifs in the OT, including faith, God’s omniscience, and God’s foreknowledge. These are even more prevalent in the Old Testament than the idea of Israel’s election. If for some strange reason, a general concept in the Old Testament must be assigned as the meaning of this NT word, why not one of these? Why dismiss the certain meaning of *proginōskō* for a dubious one and on such skimpy evidence?

conclude that this interpretation is not objective, but extremely selective at every step, being theologically driven.<sup>72</sup>

Contrary to sound exegesis, this procedure relies on etymology rather than usage to determine meaning. It also uses a Hebrew word to derive the meaning for a Greek word. Yet even these improper approaches, if used objectively, would still support the established meaning for *proginōskō*. Thus, the deterministic interpretation must ultimately rely on an illogical, highly selective use of improper evidence. It dismisses the well known and clear meaning for the words and forces upon *proginōskō* one obtained improperly. But there is no need to go to the Old Testament or to another word to derive the meaning for *proginōskō*. The meaning is very clear and every passage, including Romans 8:29, makes perfect sense using the accepted lexical meaning.

*The “antonym” argument.* Although not as common, we must discuss a more recent argument based on alleged “antonyms.” Baugh argues that the understanding of a word can be “honed” by contrasting it with its antonym. Thus, he argues that in Romans 8 this verb cannot refer to “mere intellectual apprehension,” since the “use of negation” would mean that “Those of whom God was not previously cognizant are the ones he did not predestine.” He then asks, “Was it through God’s ignorance of them that some people were not predestined to glory?”<sup>73</sup> This specific argument is misguided.<sup>74</sup> Few, if any, would claim that *proginōskō* in this passage describes “mere

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<sup>72</sup> Carson, *Fallacies*, 54–55.

<sup>73</sup> Baugh, “Foreknowledge,” 191. Whether it is reasonable for a word to be assigned an otherwise entirely unsupported meaning on a theoretical concept such as the “antonym” argument is a question that needs to be answered. However, this is a hermeneutical question and will not be discussed at this time.

<sup>74</sup> Solely as an antonym argument, based on semantics and logic it fails since if God was not cognizant of them, He certainly could not predestine them; thus, logically there is no antonym. Baugh must read in his ideas about God, and is in fact not really arguing based on antonyms but on a mixture of his theology and the words.

intellectual apprehension” that a person exists, making this a “straw man.”

The “antonym” approach presents a completely different perspective if, instead of using this “straw man,” we use the normal meaning for the verb; i.e., “to know something about.” For illustration, let us assign the commonly accepted meaning, “to know that they will believe.” The resulting antonym construction would then say, “Those whom God does not know beforehand that they will believe (foreknows that they will not believe), he does not predestine to glory.” This statement makes good sense and is certainly true. The proper antonym of *proginōskō*, “to foreknow something about” (the person, in this context), is not “to be ignorant,” as alleged, but “not to foreknow this fact” or “to foreknow that this fact is not so.” Accordingly, the “antonym argument” is a “straw man” based on an erroneous view of Greek.

*Each stage has its own nuance.* Schreiner uses a similar type of reasoning to argue for a deterministic perspective of Romans 8 when he argues that the “call” of 8:29 must be an effectual call, since all those “called” certainly are also “justified.” He then extrapolates this nuance to all the stages.<sup>75</sup> First, even if some phases in this passage are deterministic, this does not mean that all phases must have this nuance. In Romans 8:28–29, the passage in question, this is most obvious in the case of *proginōskō*, which is the initial step in the entire series. All the remaining steps result or follow from it and, therefore, more than any of the phases it stands on its own.

Schreiner makes a horrendous leap in logic to conclude, “Now if all those who are called are also justified, then calling must be effectual and must create faith.”<sup>76</sup> Not one of these ideas follows from the passage, but only from a process of circular reasoning. Using the lexically supported meaning for *proginōskō*

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<sup>75</sup> Schreiner, *Romans*, 451.

<sup>76</sup> *Ibid.*

reveals the error of this deduction. God foreknows who will believe. He predestines these, these same individuals he calls, and these same individuals he justifies because they believe. All of them believe, not because they receive a special “effectual” or “irresistible” call that men in general do not receive, but because they were the ones God foreknew would believe.

We are certain that God foreknows who will believe since He is omniscient, but we do not know that there is such a thing as an effectual call. Thus, this argument for an effectual call, based on this passage, is of no force because it assumes its conclusion.

Furthermore, the fact that all who are called are also justified provides no evidence for such a conclusion. The passage only discusses the individuals who are “foreknown,” those with whom God begins. The point is that God takes the necessary steps to insure that all reach the goal. Paul is not discussing men at large. These verses in themselves do not indicate whether or not others are predestined, called, or justified, only that these are. Whether or not others are called or justified *must be determined from other passages*. It is clear *from other Scripture* that only those who believe are justified, but it is not clear *from other scripture* that God only calls those predestined. Rather, it is clear that many more are called than believe and are justified. On any view of this passage, since it only describes this one group, it can provide no evidence for an effectual call. The proper lexical interpretation of *proginōskō* makes this even more obvious. Thus, unless the lexical and syntactical evidence supports it, one should not read a deterministic nuance into the individual phases.

In concluding our discussion of Romans 8:28–30, let us look at the result. Is it true that God knows who will believe? Certainly! Is it true that He predestines these individuals, and that He calls these individuals, and that He justifies these individuals, and that He glorifies these same individuals? Certainly! There is nothing in this interpretation that is not true or with which a Christian should disagree. Neither is this a complex passage as far as its clarity,

syntax, and lexicography. The resistance to a straightforward interpretation of this clear passage is not due to any complexity involved in its exegesis.

*Romans 11:2.* In Romans 11:2, Paul answers the question he raised in the previous verse (11:1) by affirming that *God did not reject his people whom he foreknew*. Some consider this statement to be definite evidence for interpreting the verb *proginōskō* as “intimate relationship,” or “electing choice.” They commonly argue that the relative clause containing the verb refers to the noun, “people,” i.e., Israel or God’s people.<sup>77</sup> However, it can just as easily retain the known meaning for the verb, i.e., “know beforehand,” and still refer to Israel as a whole. Surely, in his omniscience, God foreknew Israel and all that they would do. As Acts 2:23 states, it is this foreknowledge that enables him to carry out his plan, a plan that includes Israel’s present situation. Thus, there is no reason to read in a different, unsupported meaning for the verb.

However, it is more probable that the apostle uses the verb *proginōskō* here in a sense similar to the one in Romans 8:29.<sup>78</sup> Paul’s answer in 11:2 then helps reveal the meaning of the question in 11:1.<sup>79</sup> He answers, “No! Israel has not been rejected,

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<sup>77</sup> C. E. B. Cranfield, *The Epistle to the Romans*, vol. 2: ICC (2 vols.; Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1979), 545; Dunn, *Romans*, 634; Morris, *Romans*, 399.

<sup>78</sup> Moo, *Romans*, 674. Lodge interprets this as referring to Israel as a whole, and then applies it by comparison with Romans 8:29. Thus, God foreknew and these he predestined, etc. (John G. Lodge, *Romans 9–11: A Reader Response Analysis* [Atlanta: Scholars, 1996] 139–40).

<sup>79</sup> Dunn, *Romans*, 635; Fitzmeyer, *Romans*, 603. A common view is to stress the idea of Israel as a whole and argue that Paul says, in effect, “No! I am an Israelite and the idea is too horrible for me to accept.” However, not only would this emotional outburst be a meaningless answer without any argumentative force but it would be contrary to Paul’s usual method of argument based on solid reason. An unusual view regards Paul as arguing that he is a Jew, yet the apostle to the Gentiles, thus Israel is not set aside (Cranfield, *Romans*, 544). Not only would this argument prove nothing, but the passage says nothing regarding Paul’s apostleship.

for (because) I am a full-blooded Israelite.” Paul himself is evidence that God has not rejected Israel.<sup>80</sup> He then argues that, just as in Elijah’s day (11:2–4), there is also a remnant now of believing Israelites (11:5–7). Those whom God “foreknew” (11:2) refers to this believing remnant. Although both Moo and Schreiner seem to follow this interpretation, they read an unnatural interpretation into the passage in Paul’s conclusion.<sup>81</sup>

Schreiner interprets 11:4 as saying that God reserved the remnant for himself by deterministic election, as if the verse said, “I reserved for myself 7000 who *will not* bow the knee to Baal.” However, the verse clearly says, “I reserved for myself 7000 men who *did not* bow the knee to Baal.”<sup>82</sup> God connects this reserving with the fact that they abstained from idolatry.<sup>83</sup>

Schreiner also interprets Paul’s statement that there now is a “remnant according to an election of grace” in 11:5 as referring to a deterministic election. However, Paul makes clear in the following words that, by an “election of grace,” he means an election “not of works.” These verses say nothing regarding a deterministic election, but instead stress that this is a remnant according to an election of grace, i.e., not of works. Paul in Romans and elsewhere consistently contrasts faith and works. Thus, in Romans 11:5, He means “by faith.” There is no

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<sup>80</sup> Halvor Moxnes, *Theology in Conflict* (Leiden: Brill, 1980), 49, 57, 93. Moxnes, as do many others, recognizes this clear argument of Paul’s; however, there is little agreement on the specifics.

<sup>81</sup> Moo just assumes without any evidence that “foreknow” means “choose” (*Romans*, 674–75). Cp. Schreiner, *Romans*, 580–83.

<sup>82</sup> This is aorist tense.

<sup>83</sup> The relative clause does not say “men who do not bow,” or “men who will not bow,” but “men who did not bow.” The context does not stress determinism but that God has not rejected all Israel. There is a present remnant that consists of those foreknown by God, who are accepted, just as the 7000, by an election of grace, not works; i.e., by faith. This is the main point of Romans chapters 9–11.

deterministic inference.<sup>84</sup> Thus, “know beforehand” is the only justifiable interpretation.

*Another “antonym” argument.* Schreiner further argues for a deterministic meaning based on the allegation that *proginōskō* in Romans 11:2, “whom He foreknew,” is an antonym to *apwsato*, *apōsato*, “reject, put away,” in 11:1. Thus, he asserts, it means the opposite of “reject,” namely “to select,” or something similar.<sup>85</sup> But the opposite of “reject” is not “to select” as Schreiner alleges but “not to reject.” This is not only the logical antonym but is specifically stated in the passage as the antonym. In verse one,

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<sup>84</sup> It is a common practice to attempt to rule out faith in the gospel as fitting under the definition of grace by considering it a work or meritorious. Carson uses a “loaded” illustration to equate faith with wisdom to choose. He concludes that this engenders pride. The entire illustration and conclusion is based on opinion rather than Scripture (Carson, *Fallacies*, 122). Even if it were wisdom to choose, this is not a work. However, it is doubtful that anyone who responds to the gospel, a response that God desires, considers their salvation as due to their own wisdom. Carson has erected a “straw man” in this. Adapting the illustration to the opposing viewpoint, however, results in the judge arbitrarily forgiving a few criminals who are his “pets,” but sending all the others to prison without a chance of the same forgiveness (determinism). Although the judge may have the authority to do so, it certainly is not consistent with the biblical picture of a righteous judge. Regarding the matter of engendering pride, it is difficult to conceive of anything engendering more pride than the concept that out of all the humans I am one of God’s chosen ones in total contrast to the majority of mankind who are not even considered. Heeding the apostle Paul rather than either of these illustrations, we learn that grace rules out works. It definitely does not rule out faith, which Paul specifically says is not a work (Romans 4:5). Nor does it rule out everything that is positive such as response to the gospel. Grace, according to Paul, only rules out works.

<sup>85</sup> Schreiner, *Romans*, 452, 580. During his discussions about “antonyms,” Schreiner footnotes several scholars. It is difficult to tell how he uses the footnotes. They give the impression that they support this “antonym” argument. But this would be inaccurate. For example, he refers to Bultmann’s article in *TDNT* (Rudolf Bultmann, “*proginōskō, prognōsis*,” *TDNT* 1:715). However, Bultmann simply makes the brief and unsupported assertion that “foreknowledge” is “election, or foreordination.” He says nothing about regarding these verbs as antonyms nor implies that he would regard them this way.

Paul asks, “Did God reject, set aside his people?” He answers, “Definitely not.” It is clear from both the construction and context that Paul’s answer means, “Definitely not! He did not reject them.” This is even more explicitly stated in 11:2, where the main idea, “He did not reject,” is stated by using the same verb, *apwsato*, *apōsato*, as in 11:1, “cast away” or “reject,” with the negative. Therefore, the antonym to “reject” in 11:1 is not “foreknew,” but “not reject” in 11:2. “Reject” and “not reject” are the two opposites explicitly stated in the passage.

In contrast, the verb “foreknew” occurs in a relative clause referring to the *subjects* of the action. It does not oppose the action of the main verb; rather, it describes the ones who are not rejected. Therefore, neither lexically, syntactically, nor structurally is there any contrasting or antonymous relationship between this word and the verb “reject” in 11:1. Even if one interprets the verb “foreknow” in a deterministic sense, the structure of the passage shows that in these verses it is not functioning nor can it function as an antonym to the verb “reject.” Thus, the “antonym” argument is not valid.

### DEFINITION

The exegetical evidence for *proginōskō* agrees with the objective lexical evidence for the meaning of this word. It means “to know beforehand” and has no deterministic meaning or inference, such as electing, choosing, or intimate or loving relationship.<sup>86</sup> Now we must briefly consider a common

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<sup>86</sup> Carson tends to nullify the force of this by saying that many interpreters have understood “foreknow” as a “technical term;” that is, they have reduced an entire doctrine to one word (*Fallacies*, 45–47). However, the generalizations he uses as argument (Carson, *Divine Sovereignty*, 3–4) can provide no evidence for precise facts, such as the basis for election. Certainly, they cannot serve as evidence to change the clear objective lexical meaning of *proginōskō*. Theological doctrines are to be developed from the objective, lexically and syntactically supported exegesis of the scripture. The lexical meanings and exegesis are not developed from one’s opinion; i. e., theological preference.

philosophical approach to the meaning of this verb. Many interpreters acknowledge that this verb means “to know beforehand.” However, some argue from a philosophical basis that God only foreknows *because* He predestines.<sup>87</sup> Thus, on the basis of philosophy they nullify the exegetical evidence and gild “foreknowledge” (*proginōskō*) with a deterministic perspective. This deterministic philosophical assumption is a major contributor to the “Openness of God” theology.<sup>88</sup> Since deterministic theologians generally hold this same philosophical assumption, they seemingly fail to realize that this is perhaps the primary logical basis for the “Openness” position. If God foreknows only *because* he predetermines, and he foreknows everything, then obviously he foreknows man’s decisions only because He determines them. The “Openness” theologians err in accepting the logic of this philosophical assumption. As a result, they attempt to defend man’s freedom and responsibility by excluding man’s decisions from God’s foreknowledge, thereby limiting God’s foreknowledge.<sup>89</sup>

Only God has genuine foreknowledge. This is due to His omniscience. Omniscience is, by definition, knowledge of everything, “knowledge unbounded or infinite; an attribute of God.”<sup>90</sup> By definition, God’s foreknowledge is the knowledge of

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<sup>87</sup> Robert H. Mounce, *Romans*, vol. 27: NAC (Nashville: Broadman and Holman, 1995), 188–89. Mounce’s statement actually denies God’s omniscience since he asserts that God cannot know unless he determines it. Loraine Boettner, *The Reformed Doctrine of Predestination* (Philadelphia: Presbyterian and Reformed, 1976), 46.

<sup>88</sup> Hunt also realizes that both sides hold this same philosophical assumption (David Hunt, “A Simple-Foreknowledge Response,” in *Divine Foreknowledge: Four Views* [eds. James K. Beilby and Paul R. Eddy; Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 2001]), 53–54.

<sup>89</sup> Pyne and Spencer, “Free-Will Theism,” 259–63. David Bennett, “How Arminian Was John Wesley,” *EQ*, 72 (July 2000): 237–48; Picirilli, “An Arminian Response,” 467–91, esp. 467. “Openness theology” is not normal for Arminianism. Thus, it is the combination of the Calvinistic, deterministic concept of foreknowledge and the Arminian concept of free will that drives these theologians to “Openness.”

<sup>90</sup> *The New Webster Encyclopedic Dictionary of the English Language*, 580.

everything that will happen, the “knowledge of the future in exhaustive detail.”<sup>91</sup> There is no logical correlation with causation. Thus, God knows everything that will happen if he causes it, if he causes only some of it, or if he merely allows it to happen. Since he is omniscient, he knows what will happen even if he allows the universe to be completely random. He knows what will happen regardless of the cause. Whether man can philosophically explain how this works is irrelevant, since man has no ability to explain something only God possesses and about which man knows nothing apart from Scripture.

A few observations are in order. To say that God foreknows *because* He predetermines is to deny God’s omniscience by limiting His foreknowledge to those things He determines, or causes. It is true that “Openness” theologians by a philosophical assumption limit God’s omniscience and foreknowledge to what is knowable.<sup>92</sup> However, many deterministic theologians who are strongly opposed to this tenet of “Openness theology” in reality have the same or similar view. The commonly held assumption that God’s foreknowledge is due to His predetermination is, likewise, a philosophical assumption that also limits God’s foreknowledge to what is knowable, that is, predetermined. Both assumptions deny that God has genuine foreknowledge in the sense of omniscience.

This deterministic assumption defines God’s foreknowledge from the perspective of human logic and on the same qualitative level as man’s knowledge. Man “foreknows” certain things that he intends to do. The more powerful the man, the more certainly he “foreknows.” Nevertheless, man cannot really foresee what will happen in the sense of actual knowledge. His “foreknowledge” is limited to what he intends and has some possibility of implementation. God’s foreknowledge would, by this causally

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<sup>91</sup> Picirilli, “Arminian Response,” 467–83; Pyne and Spencer, “Free-Will Theism,” 259.

<sup>92</sup> Pyne and Spencer give this description and show that it is not new (“Free-Will Theism,” 259).

based definition, be different only in the sense that He can “intend” everything and has the power to execute it. Thus, it would not be a function of omniscience, but of omnipotence. It would not be genuine foresight, but only intention, and would not differ from man’s foreknowledge qualitatively, but merely quantitatively. We should see this deterministic assumption for what it is. It is a *philosophical* attempt to explain, on the human level, the unexplainable: divine foreknowledge. According to this deterministic assumption, God’s foreknowledge is merely a result of His intention and omnipotence, rather than a full and equal aspect of His omniscience.

There is a more specific error related to this assumption. A deterministic limitation of God’s omniscience is directly contrary to Jesus’ statement in Matthew 11:20–24 that He knows what Sodom would have done in different circumstances than the historical, determined ones.<sup>93</sup> Further, if God foreknows everything in this causal deterministic sense, then He causes everything including every individual sin, action, and even thought. This is contrary to James 1:13–14. It also conflicts with numerous statements in the Old Testament, where God held various kings of Israel accountable “because they *caused* Israel to sin.”<sup>94</sup> Thus, both the Old Testament and New Testament show that God considers it a sinful action to cause others to sin.

In addition, if God would or could only know what He determined, He would be placed in the unlikely position of determining what He is going to do and deciding on His plan for

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<sup>93</sup> This passage is a straightforward, explicit statement of Jesus Christ that if Tyre, Sidon and Sodom had seen the miracles and heard Jesus’ preaching as the cities of Israel had, then they would have responded. Craig dismisses this as “probably religious hyperbole” (*Divine Foreknowledge*, 329), although there is not even a hint that Jesus meant it that way. There is no basis upon which to dismiss its clear meaning and implication by treating it as figurative or hyperbolic.

<sup>94</sup> 1 Kings 14:16; 15:26, 30, 34; 16:2, 13, 19 and many other verses, such as Jeremiah 23:13.

everything without knowing what will happen until it is fixed. Nor could God know how this plan might compare with other possible plans, for better or worse, since He could not know anything about possible plans, but only about the actual one. Thus, God is forced blindly to resolve on a plan without knowing what will happen, only what he intends, and he has no way to know the alternative plans. Nor can he even know how His own plan will work until he has already determined it and it cannot be changed.

Thus, the idea that God selected the best of all possible plans is ruled out because God could neither know any other possible plans nor foreknow His own until he had already determined it. He could, of course, make guesses about other possibilities much as we do. Thus, with regard to God's omniscience, according to this view, God is roughly equal to an omnipotent human. Picirilli thoroughly discusses the concept of a causal foreknowledge from a more philosophical perspective and adds various additional ramifications.<sup>95</sup> Acts 2:23 states the scriptural perspective: God's foreknowledge as a facet of omniscience *and* his determined intention work together to accomplish his plan. It is not a blind plan based on sheer determinism.

### **A PRACTICAL APPLICATION**

This study enables us better to analyze various interpretational statements regarding *proginōskō*. In a recent attempt to refute "Free-Will Theism," Pyne and Spencer attempt to force a deterministic meaning on this verb in still another way. They argue that in Acts 4:28 "the *orizein* [to destine, mark out] and *prognwsij* [foreknowledge], separated in 2:23, are combined in a single word, *prowr̄isen* [predestine], thus showing that Luke wishes to emphasize the elements both of impregnability and of foreordination."<sup>96</sup> However, although stated as a fact, this is

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<sup>95</sup> Picirilli, "Foreknowledge," 259–71.

<sup>96</sup> Pyne and Spencer, "Free-Will Theism," 259–86, esp. 279. English meanings in brackets added.

merely philosophical speculation rather than a linguistically based comment. The word for foreknowledge does not appear in this passage and it is certain that the Greek word “predestine” is not a combination of the Greek words “destine” and “foreknowledge,” either lexically or in this passage.<sup>97</sup>

The concept “predestine” may be *based on foreknowledge, prognōsis*, as indicated in Romans 8:28-30, and this fact may be *understood* in Acts 4:28. However, there is no manner in which “foreknowledge” becomes absorbed into and, thus, can be understood as a relatively inconsequential part of “predestine.” “Foreknowledge” is a distinct word and concept. In addition, Acts 2:23 reveals more than 4:28 *how* these two ideas, “destine” and “foreknowledge” relate in God’s purposes; i.e., both the “determined plan” and “foreknowledge” of God were involved in bringing the crucifixion to pass. Although the specific relationship is not stated, the verse does not give priority to “determined plan.” Therefore, Acts 2:23 clarifies Acts 4:28 rather than the reverse.

However, as we have seen, the case is different in Romans 8:29, where the relationship between “foreknowledge” and “predestine” *is specified*.<sup>98</sup> According to Romans 8:29, “predestine” is a separate step and is based on “foreknowledge” (*prognōsis*).

The answer to “free-will” theism is not to force more deterministic interpretation on relevant passages, but to promote

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<sup>97</sup> Lexically, *ōrizō* and the preposition *pro* combine to make *proōrizō*. “Foreknowledge,” *prognōsis*, is not involved in any way. Conceptually, the different words “know beforehand” and “predestine” are of equal lexical and semantic weight and do not combine so that only the one survives. Neither word can be read into the passage when it does not occur and then stated as if it were a fact.

<sup>98</sup> Both Acts 2:23 and 4:28 specifically refer to the crucifixion and not to history in general or to Soteriology. This single historical instance cannot, in direct contradiction to the specific and clear teaching of Romans 8:29, be transferred *en masse* to Soteriology.

the objectively derived and proper meaning of “foreknowledge.” First of all, this is true to Scripture. At the same time, since it eliminates the erroneous deterministic view of foreknowledge, it also eliminates any perceived necessity to deny God’s foreknowledge to retain the soteriological responsibility of man.<sup>99</sup>

### CONCLUSION

What is the meaning of “to foreknow” (*proginōskō*)? There is no complexity or reason to doubt its meaning on a lexical basis. It clearly means to know beforehand. Neither is there any reason to question its meaning in the New Testament passages in which it and the corresponding noun form occur; that is, on any exegetical basis.

Acts 26:5 and 2 Peter 3:17 are straightforward. One must consider all the passages rather than a select few. In several theologically significant passages, interpreters have utilized “exegetical” methods considered as invalid when applied to other passages. An example is the dismissal of the clear lexical meaning of *proginōskō* in Romans 8:29 and the utilization of different words, *yâdau* and *ginōskō*, to derive the meaning. Not only this, but the normal meaning of these two words is also dismissed, although it agrees with and supports the lexical evidence for *proginōskō*.

Then some utilize an uncertain meaning derived from a few selected Old Testament passages to obtain the “desired” solution. Romans 8:28–30 is the only passage that explicitly discusses step by step God’s plan for the individual believer, including his election and calling. The basis is clearly foreknowledge, and not determinism.

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

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<sup>99</sup> Pinnock, *Predestination*, 156–57.

*For whom He foreknew, He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren. Moreover whom He predestined, these He also called; whom He called, these He also justified; and whom He justified, these He also glorified.*

Again, *proginōskō* means “to know beforehand.” Biblical interpreters need to deal with the passages involved and with theological issues such as “Free-will theism” by utilizing this meaning for this verb.

—End—

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