

Who Are We, and Where Did We Come From?

We Know Our Destiny, But What About Our Beginning?

Do you know who you really are? That may sound like a silly question, because all of us can point to a mother and a father who came together and conceived a child that became us. The process of being conceived, gestated, and born is rather complicated we well know, but at least we can point to that moment when the sperm and the egg united as our starting point ... or can we? Is that all there is to our beginning, or is there more to it than that?

And, frankly, does it matter if we know anything more about our existence than the fact that we just *are here*? We know that we, as Christians, have ahead of us an eternal existence with Jesus Christ and our heavenly Father, and we will rule with Christ and all of the saints for a thousand years on the earth. Isn't that enough to understand, or is there more to this picture that we may have missed ... things that God has revealed which will help us gain insight into who we really are. After all, knowing ourselves is perhaps the greatest challenge we have here in this physical life, and that includes knowing our past as well as our future. God has seen to it that extensive lineages are preserved in the Bible, and that must be for good reasons; otherwise they would not be there. Don't we all express some keen interest in our own ancestry, and find it fascinating to know their character and the lands from which they emigrated?

We are given the promise that He will reveal the hidden things through His spirit, "...

yes, the *deep things* [*bathos*, "fullness, immensity, extreme degree, profundities, deep-laid plans"] of God" (I Corinthians 2:10), so with that spirit we can explore and understand this past reality of who we are and add to the knowledge of our identity. Although most people believe our lives began at conception, maybe there is more to our beginning than that simple explanation.

Two Essential Concepts

When exploring this intriguing subject, we need to understand two very important concepts.



To know who we are from the beginning is an enigma that Scripture tells is closely allied with predestination.

(a) Our reality is spirit. The "real me" is in fact spirit. Yes, we are flesh and blood, a material body, but what is the true person? We have all descended from Adam, and Adam was the son of God (Luke 3:38). God, or Elohim, is a spirit, so Adam was made in the express image of Elohim (Genesis 1:26-27), a spirit ...

which came from the spirit realm. The first Adam came from the spirit realm, the "imager of God," just as the second Adam did (I Corinthians 15:45), whose Father also was the heavenly Father (Luke 1:35).

"And the angel answered and said to her, 'The holy spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Highest will overshadow you; therefore, also, that Holy One who is to be born will be called the Son of God.'"

Paul made plain who the *real me* is in several places, such as in II Corinthians 5:6 when he said,

“Therefore we are always confident, knowing that while we are at home in the body we are absent from the Lord.”

In Romans 7:22 to 24, Paul revealed how the *real me* was the spirit living within his animal flesh, that was subject to the passions of the flesh.

“For I delight in the law of God according to the inward man [God’s spirit in him]. But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members. O wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me from this body of death?”

The body of death, Paul’s “animal nephesh”, was not the real Paul, but the real Paul was the spirit *in* him, from which the carnal physical body was eventually, at death, to be separated. Paul’s physical body was the machinery guided by the true Paul ... his spirit. In Philippians 1:23-24 he was “... *hard pressed between the two, having a desire to depart and be with Christ, which is for better. Nevertheless to remain in the flesh is more needful for you.*” The real Paul could be present in the flesh or in the spirit; in either case the real person was the same, the spirit that was Paul.

As stated in James, “*Exactly as a body is dead without a spirit, so faith is dead without actions*” (James 2:26). Furthermore, God said to Daniel, “*But you, go your way until the end, for you shall rest and will arise to your inheritance at the end of days*” (Daniel 12:13). In both of these cases the true person transcended the flesh, even as the spirit of the person can be returned to the lifeless body and cause it to resume living: “... *her [Jairus’ daughter] spirit returned, and she arose immediately*” (Luke 8:55). Death of the flesh is the process of the spirit returning to the God who

first gave it (Ecclesiastes 12:7). This reality of the *real me* is akin to the “I Am” identity of God Himself, as revealed by Moses’ encounter with the burning bush. When asked what His name was to tell his fellow Israelites, Elohim replied “I AM WHO I AM” (Exodus 3:14). *I AM* comes from the Hebrew *ehyeh*, meaning “I am, and I will be.” What better term is there to denote the eternal nature of God. Is there any likeness to this I AM identity that we, as God’s predestined people, have been given?

(b) God makes a big issue of predestination. In two places within the New Testament God dwells upon this term, which is the Greek *proorizo*. “to limit or mark out beforehand, to design definitely beforehand”. Let us examine these two references.

“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the

*heavenly places in Christ, just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love, having **predestined** us to adoption as sons by Jesus Christ to Himself that in the dispensation of the fullness of the times He might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven and which are on earth — in Him. In Him also we have obtained an inheritance, being **predestined** according to the purpose of Him who works all things according to the council of His will ...”* (Ephesians 1:3-5, 10-11).

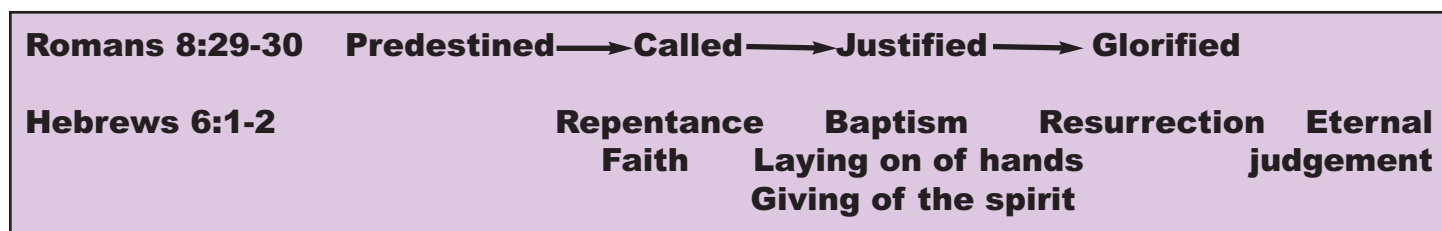


Then, in Romans 8:29-30 we read,

*“For whom He foreknew, He also **predestined** [proorizo] to be conformed to the image [eikon, “a material image, likeness, representation, exact 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.”*

Note that Ephesians 1:4 states that we, the elect, were individually chosen before the present world order [kosmos, or “world, earth”] was founded [foundation = katobole, “laying the foundation, beginning”]. Somehow we were individually known, in order to be chosen [eklegomai, “to choose out as the recipients of special favor and privilege”], as the elect of God in this present age. How is such foreknowledge possible, except that the omnipotent God can bring this about?

We note in Romans 8:29 and 30 that we, the firstborn, were predestined to become of like form as Jesus Christ, He the firstborn of many brethren. This predestination is then brought into the entire salvation process, of being called, justified, and glorified. The parallel of this process with Hebrews 6:1-2 is unmistakable, as diagrammed below.



While it is well understood that repentance, faith, baptism, the laying on of hands, receiving the holy spirit, the resurrection, and eternal judgement are all essential parts of the salvation process, Paul in Romans makes the point that *predestination is likewise an essential part*. Is Paul saying that one cannot take part in salvation unless individually predestined to be called and chosen by our heavenly Father (John 6:44)? Is he saying that

some people are born to repent and be resurrected to eternal life, while others are condemned to eternal death and destruction ... by design?

“The wicked are estranged from the womb; they go astray as soon as they are born, speaking lies” (Psalm 58:3).

“You will say to me then, ‘Why does He still find fault? For who has resisted His will?’ But indeed, O man, who are you to reply against God? Will the thing formed say to him who formed it, ‘Why have you made me like this?’ Does not the potter have power over the clay, from the same lump to make one vessel for honor and another to dishonor? What if God, wanting to show His wrath and to make His power known, endured much long-suffering the vessels of wrath prepared for destruction, and that He might make known the riches of His glory on the vessels of mercy, which He had prepared beforehand for glory, even us whom He called, not of the Jews only, but also of the gentiles” (Romans 9:19-24)?

Here again we see predestination, of a people that had been “... *prepared beforehand for glory ...*” and some individuals in God’s creation *prepared*, or predestined [*proe-*

toimazo, “to appoint beforehand”] for destruction. It was God’s design for His creations, of those made in His image, each for a specific purpose: some for good, and some for evil.

This preparation beforehand is reiterated in Acts 13:48, where we read,

“And when the Gentiles heard this they were glad, and glorified the word of the Lord, and as many as were ordained

to eternal life believed.”

The word for *ordained* here is *tareo*, meaning “to arrange in an orderly manner, i.e. assign or dispose (to a certain position or lot).” These individuals were predestined to eternal life, since they were “assigned” to this illustrious destiny, supporting the claims in Romans 8:29-30 and Ephesians 1:3-6.

Our Parallelism With Jesus Christ

These questions of who we are drive us to consider even more some direct indications that our future will parallel the life of Jesus Christ. Notice Hebrews 2:14-15.



Jesus is our Brother, and we should look upon Him as just that, not someone who is unapproachably above us and unreachable.

“Inasmuch then as the children [the saints, the elect] have partaken of flesh and blood, He Himself likewise shared in the same, that through death He might destroy him who had the power of death, that is, the devil, and release those who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage.”

To make sense of this verse it is necessary to understand that, for the elect to “partake of flesh and blood”, they first had to be something that was not flesh and blood ... namely

spirit. Furthermore, we note that Jesus Christ “shared in the same”: He Himself became flesh and blood from a previous spirit existence in the heavenly realm. This reality is easily proven in John 1:1-14, 10:30, 17:5, and Philippians 2:6-9, as well as in other scriptures. What was Jesus before He became flesh? We know He was with the Father as a Son of God, and we read in Hebrews 1:9,

“You have loved righteousness and hated lawlessness; therefore God, Your God, has anointed You with the oil of gladness more than Your companions.”

This quote from Psalm 45:7 is accurately rendered in Hebrews 1, and shows that Jesus Christ was, in a ceremony of dedication, given divine power to accomplish a special task [Hebrew *masah*], with oil of joy more so than his associates [Hebrew *haber*]. Who were these “associates” or “companions”? Are they us, who did not excel in righteousness as did Jesus, who was the Christ, the Anointed One [Greek *Christos*]?

I have composed a paper entitled *Man’s Destiny — to Become God Like Jesus Christ* which outlines many identities of the saints with Christ, including the following.

1. We have an eternal nature.
2. We are destined to receive rulership over the nations as spirits.
3. We are to inherit all things.
4. We receive God’s spirit at baptism and the laying on of hands.
5. We are spiritual brothers, with the same father, family, and potential.
6. We are sent to earth by the Father.
7. We will reign with the Father on His throne.
8. We will be worshiped. [Only Gods can be worshiped.]
9. We pray directly to the Father.
10. The Father speaks directly to us.
11. We endure trials, suffer, and overcome as living sacrifices.
12. We are ministered to by angels.
13. We forgive the sins of others.
14. Christ and the elect are equivalent at the resurrection.

15. The law is written in our hearts, we do the Father's will, and we have His mind.
16. We are given a name that no one else knows.
17. We are to be examples of Godly living to the world.
18. There is hope of great glory in the spirit realm after physical death.
19. We have been sent into the world.
20. We are not of the world.
21. We are tempted with evil.

Perhaps our conception can be likened in some ways to that of Jesus Christ, to explain that our origins are from the spirit realm. We are told in Luke 1:35 that the holy spirit overshadowed and impregnated Mary with the "sperm of God", as it were, so the child that developed within her was holy, the Son of God. Likewise, each of us has been "... made in secret, and skillfully wrought in the lowest places of the earth" (Psalm 139:15), and "Your hands have made me and fashioned me, an intricate unity; yet You would destroy me. Remember, I pray, that You have made me like clay, and will You turn me into dust again?" (Job 10:8-9).

Who, Then, Are We (or Were We)?

Knowing who we were before we were born as humans is perhaps not essential, for nothing is changed if we do not understand. Our calling is offered by an all-knowing Creator God whose utmost interest is in our personal salvation, who knew us from the foundation of the present eon, even before mankind was placed on the earth. Knowing who we were at that time will not change God's plan for us.

It may be interesting to speculate on who we were. Some have conjectured we are the "fallen angels" who followed Satan in the great rebellion against God, as chronicled in Revelation 12:3-4, and we are being given a "second chance" to reform and not be destroyed. Others think we could be the "companions" of Christ at the Father's throne in heaven who were less than perfect, and needed to be tried and tested in some way so they too could

excel in righteousness as did Jesus (Psalm 45:7). Whoever we were, we can be assured that God has promised us an illustrious future beyond anything our mind can imagine: it is the future that Solomon acknowledged man cannot find out in detail in this world. "For though a man labors to discover it, yet he will not find it; moreover, though a wise man attempts to know it, he will not be able to find it" (Ecclesiastes 8:17).

We are to be looking forward towards our illustrious future as kings and priests in the Kingdom of God (Revelation 5:10), taking Paul's admonition,

"But what things were gain to me, these I have counted loss for Christ. Yet indeed I also count all things loss for the excellence of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them as rubbish, that I may gain Christ and be found in Him, not having my own righteousness, which is from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which is from God by faith; that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death, if, by any means, I may attain to the resurrection from the dead. Not that I have already attained, or am already perfected; but I press on, that I may lay hold of that for which Christ Jesus has also laid hold of me. Brethren, I do not count myself to have apprehended; but one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forward to those things which are ahead, I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus" (Philippians 3:7-14).

That is where we are going. Who we are is most acceptable to God, whether male or female, bond or free, Israelite or gentile, short or tall, rich or poor (Galatians 3:28-29), for He has called us and given us His spirit, which is sufficient to carry us through this day and

every day, until we inherit all things as brothers of Jesus Christ.

Knowing that we were predestined beings before the foundation of the world can have great value if we understand just how important we are in the sight of our Creator, to have made us for the very purpose of becoming Kings and Priests in the coming government of God (Revelation 5:10), and who has invested an immeasurable amount of love and concern for us to see that we will be in that government.

“Being confident of this very thing, that

he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ ...” (Philippians 1:6).

Knowing that we are predestined to be the inheritors of salvation should be a driving impetus to renew our zeal to serve God each day, and to attain unto the character of our Elder Brother through obedience to His commandments ... to know that we are unique in all the earth today, and tomorrow will rebuild this earth so that all of mankind may enjoy life to full, even as Jesus Christ came so that we might have abundant life!