

1 Peter 1:20 - 21 – Part NN

1Pe 1:20 (NKJV) He indeed was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you ²¹ who through Him believe in God, who raised Him from the dead and gave Him glory, so that your faith and hope are in God.

These particular verses communicate several things about Christ and about ourselves. **TRUTH ONE:** The first truth is that Christ was “**foreordained before the foundation of the world**”. This is the only place that the word “**foreordained**” is used in the New Testament and it is the Greek word “*proginosko*”. It means to know something beforehand, to foresee, to foreknow in the sense of to ordain. It comes from “*pro*” or before and from “*ginosko*” to know – to know before. It is a word that is used to identify the divine foreknowledge of God, and in this case the divine foreknowledge concerning Christ. The term “**foreordained**” is also related to the term “**foreknowledge**” which is the Greek word “*prognosis*” which comes directly from the Greek word “*proginosko*”. “**Foreknowledge**” is simply one aspect of God’s omniscience in which He has always known all things.¹ So, when the word “**foreordained**” is used it is speaking directly about all things that God purposed to do prior to human history. As used in the Scriptures, when something is foreknown, it is not simply speaking about that which God was aware of prior to a certain point in time. Rather, it represents that which God gave prior consent to, that work or activity that received His favorable or special recognition. So, the word represents those matters which God favorably, deliberately, and freely chose and ordained to take place. Whatever God foreknew (which is everything because of His omniscience) is what God ordained. The reason that Christ is said to be “**foreordained**” is because God the Father in eternity past planned and determined to provide His Son as a sacrifice for His people. So, what Peter is saying here is that it is more than the fact that God foreknew that God the Son would become the Son of God and come and die for sin, but rather the fact that God actually planned and decreed that the Son of God would come and die for sin.²

The word “**foundation**” is the word “*katabole*” and refers to the absolute beginning of something. So, the phrase “**the foundation of the world**” is speaking specifically about that time in [Genesis 1:1](#) in which God created the present universe. It must be kept in mind that prior to “**the foundation of the world**” that time did not actually exist. God exists in a dimension in which time is non-existent. There are two other places where this phrase is used – [Matthew 25:34](#) and [Ephesians 1:4](#).

Mt 25:34 (NKJV) Then the King will say to those on His right hand, 'Come, you blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world:

Eph 1:4 (NKJV) 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,

So, when the word “**before**” is used in [1 Peter 1:20](#), it could actually be translated as “**before time began**”. [2 Timothy 1:9](#) uses different Greek words, but it speaks specifically of this event in which God foreordained that a specific redemptive work would take place.

2Ti 1:9 (NKJV) who has saved us and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace which was given to us in Christ Jesus before time began,

It should be understood and appreciated that once God makes a specific decree and promise, nothing can prevent that decree from taking place. It does not matter when God makes the decree, but simply that He has. In the case of [2 Timothy 1:9](#), the verse is literally pregnant with theological content. It says that God has both “**saved us and called us**”, not according to anything that we have done, but “**according to His own purpose and grace given to us in Christ Jesus before time began**”. Before the creation of the universe and before time ever existed, God in His omniscience and in His divine purpose “**saved us and called us**”. God did all of this before the universe was created, before time began, and before anyone even existed. The word “**purpose**” is the Greek word “*prothesis*” and is speaking of a divine determination and a divine plan that would be carried out by a divine will. “**Purpose**” is a word that specifically involves three distinct elements: intent, resolve, and design. In our vernacular, nothing could prevent God from fulfilling everything that He had purposed to do.

In this case it is specifically referring to salvation. [Romans 8:28](#) says that believers have been “**called according to His purpose**”. That phrase indicates that those who are called are called specifically because of God’s purpose and good pleasure, and not because they somehow deserve it. The entire concept of salvation was predetermined, and it always had God’s purpose, intent, and design as an integral part of it.³

The other place in Scripture where the phrase “**before time began**” is used is [Titus 1:1-2](#) which says,

Tit 1:1 (NKJV) Paul, a bondservant of God and an apostle of Jesus Christ, according to the faith of God's elect and the acknowledgment of the truth which accords with godliness, ² in hope of eternal life which God, who cannot lie, promised before time began,

TRUTH TWO: The second truth that [1 Peter 1:20-21](#) reveals is that Christ has been “**manifest in these last times**” for believers. The word “**manifest**” is the Greek word “*phaneroo*” and it means to make something known, to make something openly obvious and apparent, and to declare something. It is the idea that what has been made known is very conspicuous, very obvious.⁴ It is not something that is difficult to perceive or even to understand, but should be readily apparent to anyone. God was disclosing Himself, making Himself visible, known, and obvious. Jesus Christ was a divine revelation, a divine disclosure of God to men. Think of it this way. God was never trying to hide or to conceal what He was doing – never. To the contrary, He provided many infallible proofs so that what was done could not be mistaken. Raising people from the dead, feeding 5000 men with just five loaves and two fishes, healing the lame, blind, deaf, and demon possessed, and Himself being resurrected – none of those miracles were performed in a closed room, but were visibly open for everyone to see. [Acts 1:3](#) says this about what Christ did after His resurrection,

Ac 1:3 (NKJV) to whom He also presented Himself alive after His suffering by many infallible proofs, being seen by them during forty days and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God.

The words “**infallible proofs**” are just one word in the Greek text – “*tekmerion*”. Some of the translations actually leave out the word “**infallible**” in the translation because it appears to be redundant. I.e., to provide proof of something is assuming that it is infallible. So. The word “**proofs**” refers to a

fixed sign, something that is certain and sure.⁵ Whatever Jesus did during those forty days was more than adequate to prove that He was indeed the Son of God.

TRUTH THREE - The third truth that we want to see is that the reason that Christ was manifested the way that He was is so that our **“faith and hope”** could be in God. No one wants to believe in nothing, and God fully understands that reality. He knew that proof that authenticated His actuality and existence was not unreasonable. Just knowing that the Christian faith does not demand a blind allegiance or a blind faith should bring great hope to a believer’s life. My heart goes out to the millions and millions of people who grow up under another religion such as Buddhism or Hinduism. They have nothing, absolutely nothing to validate what it is that they blindly believe. As they approach death, there is no hope. If they believe in re-incarnation, they have no idea how that may turn out. Unfortunately, it will not be what they anticipated.

The believer’s faith and hope, however, are rooted in the reality of God’s Word which has been validated throughout all of the ages. God has not left Himself without a witness, or without proof of who He truly is. Everything in creation points to a Creator. All of history revolves around the birth of Christ. The Bible is the single most substantiated book in the world. Man in his utter ignorance and rebellion simply continues to fight the obvious and to dissent and to defy the only One who can save him. The lost man has no idea as to what awaits him in an eternity without Christ – no clue, no comprehension, no inkling. He is a man without faith and without hope. He denigrates the Christian faith as blind faith, and yet he blindly places his faith in his ideas and philosophies that are only theories at best. His brain is not much bigger than a grapefruit, but he believes he has great understanding about life, immortality, and eternity. His Big Bang theory is just that – a theory that literally makes no sense whatsoever. His theory of evolution has no substance and is proven to be false by man’s own physical laws that govern the universe. His ideas like re-incarnation and purgatory have no credibility whatsoever. Everything the lost man believes in is just an unsubstantiated idea, a false premise, and a demonic lie designed to keep him on the road to destruction. Why is everything that the lost man believes wrong? It is because **there is a God** and life has been created the way that He said that it was. It really is very simple – **“In the beginning God created...”** It is because what God says is true and He has chosen to authenticate and substantiate His truth and the reality of His existence to man. There are over 1800 specific prophecies in the Bible, and over 400 are specifically related to Christ. God’s greatest proof is what Peter says in v21 that He **“raised Jesus Christ from the dead and gave Him glory”**. One day, and probably soon, Jesus Christ will come for His church in the rapture, seven years of Tribulation will transpire as God has prophesied, and then Jesus Christ will appear in the heavens. Listen to how [Revelation 19:11-16](#) describes the event.

Rev 19:11 (NKJV) Now I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse. And He who sat on him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness He judges and makes war. ¹²His eyes were like a flame of fire, and on His head were many crowns. He had a name written that no one knew except Himself. ¹³He was clothed with a robe dipped in blood, and His name is called The Word of God. ¹⁴And the armies in heaven, clothed in fine linen, white and clean, followed Him on white horses. ¹⁵Now out of His mouth goes a sharp sword, that with it He should strike the nations. And He Himself will rule them with a rod of iron. He Himself treads the winepress of

the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God. ¹⁶ And He has on *His* robe and on His thigh a name written: KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS.

What we have just read is the exact reason that Peter began this passage in [1 Peter 1:13](#) with these words,

1Pe 1:13 (NKJV) Therefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and rest *your* hope fully upon the grace that is to be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ;

Peter’s constant encouragement was for believers to live in reverence for God and to be holy in all of their conduct. His final conclusion is in v21 where he says “**who through Him believe in God...**” The main theme of the passage is that believers should live their lives in a deep reverence for God. The reason is because they have been personally redeemed and, personally ransomed from the power of sin and the penalty of sin by the precious blood of Jesus Christ. However, as Peter has spoken in [1 Peter 1:20-21](#), what God has done in providing salvation is no afterthought.⁶ Take note that the birth and death of Christ was not Plan B. To the contrary, it was and always has been the only plan. God determined and foreordained before time even existed the exact day on which His Son would enter Jerusalem to be killed. The death of Christ was no accident, but rather the pinnacle of redemptive history.

TRUTH FOUR: The very reason that we are Christians is very simple - we “**believe**” in God. It is because we know that God the Father “**raised Christ from the dead and gave Him glory**”. When God the Father raised Christ from the dead, it was the glorious proof that He had fully accepted the redemptive work of His amazing Son.⁷ Make no mistake about it. The only reason that we can have a living hope ([1 Peter 1:3](#)) is because we have a living Savior. We have entrusted our life to that simple reality and it is the very source of salvation – faith in the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Every believer hearing these words should be thrilled. Why? It is because you “**believe in God**”. That is something that God has done. Your salvation is all of God. It is because you have believed the word that God has given concerning His Son. It is because God has revealed these things to you while they remain completely hidden from others. You should be thrilled because God has chosen you, called you, and saved you from the wrath to come. As Peter says, you “**believe in God**”. V21 is given to remind every believer that the holy life to which they have been called is a life in which they are trusting in God’s promises, which often are promises that for them are yet unfulfilled. The life to which every believer is called is a holy life that prizes God above all things. It is a life in which the believer puts his faith and his hope in the very goodness of God.⁸

ENDNOTES

¹ Strong, 1332-1333.

² Zodhiates, 1215-1216.

³ Zodhiates, 1219-1220.

⁴ Zodhiates, 1435.

⁵ Zodhiates, 1370.

⁶ Schreiner, 88.

⁷ Vaughn, 39.

⁸ Schreiner, 89.

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