



"An education isn't how much you have committed to memory, or even how much you know. It's being able to differentiate between what you do know and what you don't."

—Anatole France

02-Feb-18

Did God Know You Before Your Birth?

Notice this remarkable statement from the apostle Paul in [Ephesians 1:4](#):

Even as [in His love] He chose us [actually picked us out for Himself as His own] in Christ before the foundation of [the world](#), that we should be holy (consecrated and set apart for Him) and blameless in His sight, *even above reproach*, before Him in love. (*The Amplified Bible*, Classic Edition)

For those called by [God](#), this verse seems to say that God knew each of us and had determined before the foundation of the world to call each of us into His Family. Can this be true? Was each of us individually in God's blueprint from the beginning? In terms of accomplishing His purposes, what does the Bible reveal about how detailed and advanced His plans are?

We will begin in [1 Kings 13:1-3](#):

And behold, a man of God went from Judah to Bethel by the word of the LOORD, and Jeroboam stood by the altar to burn incense. Then he cried out against the altar by the word of the LOORD, and said, "O altar, altar! Thus says the LOORD: 'Behold, a child, [Josiah](#) by name, shall be born to the [house of](#)

[David](#); and on you he shall sacrifice the priests of the high places who burn incense on you, and men's bones shall be burned on you." And he gave a sign the same day, saying, "This is the sign which the LOORD has spoken: Surely the altar shall split apart, and the ashes on it shall be poured out."

In his commentary on verse 2, John Gill says about Josiah:

[W]ho was not born until three hundred years after this, according to the Jewish writers: but it is generally reckoned to be more, even three hundred and fifty or three hundred and sixty years; this is a clear proof of the prescience, predetermination, and providence of God with respect to future events, contingent ones, such as depend upon the will of men; for what more so than giving a name to a child?

Over three hundred years before he was born, God picked out Josiah by name for Himself as His instrument to accomplish a specific purpose. Over three hundred years later, Josiah completed that task as recorded in [II Kings 23:15-20](#):

Moreover the altar that was at Bethel, and the high place which Jeroboam the son of Nebat, who made Israel [sin](#), had made, both that altar and the high place he broke down; and he burned the high place and crushed it to powder, and burned the wooden image. As Josiah turned, he saw the tombs that were there on the mountain. And he sent and took the bones out of the tombs and burned them on the altar, and defiled it according to the word of the LOORD which the man of God proclaimed, who proclaimed these words. Then he said, "What gravestone is this that I see?" So the men of the city told him, "It is the tomb of the man of God who came from Judah and proclaimed these things which you have done against the altar of Bethel." And he said, "Let him alone; let no one move his bones." So they let his bones alone, with the bones of the prophet who came from Samaria. Now Josiah also took away all the shrines of the high places that were in the cities of Samaria, which the kings of Israel had made to provoke the LOORD to anger; and he did to them according to all the deeds he had done in Bethel. He executed all the priests of the high places who were there, on the altars, and burned men's bones on them; and he returned to Jerusalem.

Is this the only example in which God had foreknowledge long before the birth of

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someone that He would call by name to accomplish His purpose? What about Cyrus? "Who says of Cyrus, 'He is My shepherd, and he shall perform all My pleasure, saying to Jerusalem, "You shall be built," and to the temple, "Your foundation shall be laid"' ([Isaiah 44:28](#)).

In his 1685 commentary, Matthew Poole wrote about this verse:

Cyrus, whom God here designeth by his proper name two hundred years before he was born, that this might be an undeniable evidence of the certainty and exactness of God's foreknowledge, and a convincing argument, and so most fit to conclude this dispute between God and idols.

In addition to mentioning how long before Cyrus' birth God uttered this prophecy, Poole notes it is evidence of the exactness of God's foreknowledge. God plans, and He made those plans before the foundation of the world with every part precisely placed. Not only is this prophecy's fulfillment reported in [Ezra 1:1-3](#), but a secular source, Josephus, also confirms it:

This was known to Cyrus by his reading the book which Isaiah left behind him of his prophecies; for this prophet said that God had spoken thus to him in a secret vision:—"My will is, that Cyrus, whom I have appointed to be king over many and great nations, send back my people to their own land, and build my temple." This was foretold by Isaiah one hundred and forty years before the temple was demolished. Accordingly, when Cyrus read this, and admired the divine power, an earnest desire and ambition seized upon him to fulfill what was so written. . . . (*Antiquities of the Jews*, XI, 1.2)

There is also what God says about Jeremiah: "Before I shaped you in the womb, I knew all about you. Before you saw the light of day, I had holy plans for you: A prophet to the nations—that's what I had in mind for you" ([Jeremiah 1:5](#), *The Message*).

[King David](#) writes of himself: "Your eyes saw me when I was formless; all my days were written in Your book and planned before a single one of them began" ([Psalm 139:16](#), *Christian Standard Bible*).

To add a New Testament example, Paul writes, "But when he who had set me apart before I was born, and had called me through his grace . . ." ([Galatians 1:15](#), *Revised Standard Version*).

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During the Council of Jerusalem in [Acts 15:18](#), the apostle James says, "Known to God from eternity (*from the beginning of the world*, KJV) are all his works." This verse specifies that He has known "all his works," and it cannot be denied that we are among His works: "We are His work. He has made us to belong to Christ [Jesus](#) so we can work for Him. He planned that we should do this" ([Ephesians 2:10](#), *New Life Version*).

So, did God know *you* before the foundation of the world? The Bible suggests it is not out of the realm of possibility.

- Pat Higgins

World News Highlights

[Amazon, Berkshire Hathaway and Jpmorgan Team up to Try to Disrupt Health Care](#)

The New York Times 30-Jan-18

[Satellite Images Show Cape Town's Dwindling Reservoir as the City Slowly Runs Out of Water](#)

CNN 31-Jan-18

[Stockton Gets Ready to Experiment With Universal Basic Income](#)

KQED 22-Jan-18

[Ai in the Court: When Algorithms Rule on Jail Time](#)

Associated Press 31-Jan-18

[Drought Deepens Dramatically in Southern California](#)

Phys.org 01-Feb-18

[Islamic Based Banking on the Rise in Germany](#)

PM News Nigeria 22-Jan-18

[Kabul on High Alert After Ambulance Bomb Toll Tops 100](#)

Yahoo/AFP 28-Jan-18

[House Memo States Disputed Dossier Was Key to Fbi's Fisa Warrant to Surveil Members of Team Trump](#)

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Fox News 02-Feb-18

[**The Robot Revolution: Humanoid Potential | Moving Upstream**](#)

The Wall Street Journal 29-Jan-18

[**The Question That Reveals the Heart of the Culture Wars**](#)

The National Review 29-Jan-18

New Transcripts

[**1347: Amos 5 and The Feast**](#)

Given by John W. Ritenbaugh on 15-Oct-16

Prayer Requests

New prayer request updates have been posted for the following people:

[**Allen Dickens**](#)

[**Carolyn Finklea**](#)

[**Rick Hallar**](#)

[**Robert Madden**](#)

[**Carol Montgomery**](#)

[**Kondwhani Sakala**](#)

[**Musonda Sakala**](#)

From the Archives: Featured Sermon

[**Why Is God Doing This, This Way?**](#)

by John W. Ritenbaugh

John Ritenbaugh, citing in Romans 11:26, which states that the calling of God is irrevocable and eventually the vast majority of Israel will be saved, suggests that the conversion of the Gentiles is part of God's plan to bring maximum conversion. As God's called-out ones, having been gifted with special spiritual gifts, we must learn to see ourselves and our function as God sees us—as a distinct, unique entity—a holy people,

a special treasure above all people on the face of the earth. God loves the church in a way He does not love the world. Among the billions of people, we are separated out, set apart from the aggregate of people, identified as a special people gifted for a special purpose, and called to His marvelous light. God has chosen the weak and base things in order that nobody would glory in the flesh, but God would receive all the glory. We received our calling before the foundation of the world, children of the Promise to Abraham and Isaac, part of the Great Creator's personal selection. We should know and appreciate that we have been called, walking by faith rather than sight. As we walk in humility, God gives us spiritual gifts to accomplish His purpose, preparing us to live by faith. God actively involves Himself in the process, giving us life, education, conversion, faith, gifts, His Word, and the resurrection to come. Very few people, apart from the Church of God, are living their lives by faith, allowing our worldview to change from the perspective of the flesh to the perspective of Christ. The world should be able to marvel at the drastic transformation in our orientation and behavior. God will be holding us responsible for the gifts He has entrusted; we have no excuse to fail.

From the Archives: Featured Article

[Will You Marry Me? \(Part One\)](#)

by Staff

As Christians, we sometimes fail to appreciate our calling: We have been invited to participate in the very Marriage Supper of Jesus Christ—and not just as a guest, but as the Bride! The Bible is full of marriage symbolism, suggesting just how important marriage is to God.

Featured Audio Schedule

Friday Night Bible Study

The next Bible Study will be **Acts (Part 13)**, given by **John W. Ritenbaugh** on **Friday 02-Feb-18**. The Bible Study will be continuously available from **6:00 pm Friday** until **12:00 pm Saturday (EST)**.

Daily Audio Programs

Hear previous sermons, sermonettes, and Feast of Tabernacles messages, **Sunday through Friday**. [Available from the homepage](#).

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Date	Title
Sunday 04-Feb-18	Moral Courage
Monday 05-Feb-18	Troubling the Household of God
Tuesday 06-Feb-18	Christian Marriage (Part Two)
Wednesday 07-Feb-18	Understanding the Azazel Goat
Thursday 08-Feb-18	Esther (Part Three)
Friday 09-Feb-18	Hope to the End (Part Three)

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