

The Epistle of Paul to the *Romans*

Sanctification: The Demonstration of God's Righteousness (6:1 – 8:39)

8:29-30 For those God foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the likeness of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brothers. And those he predestined, he also called; those he called, he also justified; those he justified, he also glorified. Paul continued to discuss how humans become true believers in God/Jesus, as well as the process by which God leads a person from depravity to glory, through the sanctifying work of the Spirit ^{2 Thessalonians 2:13}. Notice that all of the steps in the sanctification process are in the past tense as if these future events had already happened – this was Paul's way of emphasizing their certainty ^{Romans 9:23}.

Note the progression in these two verses ^{v.29-30}: foreknew ⇒ predestined ⇒ called ⇒ justified ⇒ glorified. This pattern seems to be similar to the chronological process of the maturing of a Christian described in the NT ^{Matthew 5:3-12, Romans 5:3-5, James 1:2-4, 2 Peter 1:5-8}.

There are two Greek words (*pro*: before, some time ago and *ginōskō*: to know, recognize, understand, have intimate relations) that form the Greek word "foreknew" (*proginōskō*). The Greek word for "predestined" is *proorizō*: decide beforehand, predestine.

Within orthodox Christianity the views on the subject of 'predestination' and 'election' range from (A) no man is able to come to faith in God/Jesus without God specifically choosing him/her before time began ^{Ephesians 1:4} to (B) God's call is to each person, who must decide whether to respond or not, and God (being outside of time) recognizes which of 4 groups each person truly belongs in: [1] Those who obviously/outwardly reject God/Jesus, [2] Those who live a 'good' earthly life, but inwardly reject God/Jesus, [3] Those who outwardly confess to be followers of God/Jesus, but are not sincere, and [4] Those who outwardly confess to be followers of God/Jesus, and their faith is genuine. Being omniscient, God determines which group a person is in, and on the basis of that perfect insight, His foreknowledge gives Him the right to "predestine" all those who, during their life on earth, fall into group 4 ^{1 Peter 1:1-2}.

In the remaining verses of Romans 8 ^{v.31-39}, Paul concluded his passionate teaching about the Christian's eternal security in Christ by answering the following series of seven (7) questions:

1. **What, then, shall we say in response to this?** ^{v.31}
2. **If God is for us, who can be against us?** ^{v.31}
3. **He who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all – how will he not also, along with him, graciously give us all things?** ^{v.32}

4. **Who will bring any charge against those whom God has chosen?** ^{v.33}
5. **Who is he that condemns?** ^{v.34}
6. **Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?** ^{v.35}
7. **Shall trouble or hardship or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword?** ^{v.35}

8:31-32 What, then, shall we say in response to this? If God is for us, who can be against us?

He who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all – how will he not also, along with him, graciously give us all things? A better translation of the second half of verse 31 is:

“Since God is for us...”, because there is no doubt God loves and cares for all mankind, the crown of His creation ^{Psalms 8:3-8}. But, if a person chooses to reject God, He allows them to live under the judgement of their own actions. So in context, Paul used the strongest evidence to prove his lower ranking point: believers can know God loves and will provide for them, because of His willingness to sacrifice His only Son on their behalf. Furthermore, God’s greatest gift is grace, which was provided through His Son’s life and death, and all of His blessings are manifestations of His grace ^{Psalms 45:2, Romans 12:6-8}.

Paul’s answer to the first question (“What...shall we say” ^{v.31}) is the rest of chapter 8 ^{v.33-39}.

The answer to the second question (‘Who can oppose/defeat us?’ ^{v.31}) is ‘**No One!**’ ^{1 John 4:4}.

Paul provides the answer in his third question (‘Will God provide?’ ^{v.32}) ‘**Yes!**’ ^{Philippians 4:19}.

The Greek word for “graciously” ^{v.32b} (*charizomai*) is usually translated in a form of “forgive”, indicating Paul’s phrase “all things” referred to the forgiveness of all sin ^{Colossians 1:13-14}.

8:33-34 Who will bring any charge against those whom God has chosen? It is God who justifies.

Who is he that condemns? Christ Jesus, who died – more than that, who was raised to life –

is at the right hand of God and is also interceding for us. Paul asked “Who” could condemn anyone who God has made righteous (“justifies”) ^{Romans 5:19}. Paul continued by explaining that only Jesus Christ ^{Proverbs 12:2} has the ability to condemn the wicked, and the power behind that ability was revealed and proven by His death and resurrection ^{Romans 1:1-4, Philippians 3:10-11}.

Satan (“the accuser” ^{Zechariah 3:1-2, Revelation 12:10-11}) constantly attempts to be the answer to the fourth (‘Who will accuse?’ ^{v.33}) and fifth (‘Who will condemn?’ ^{v.34}) questions ^{Isaiah 50:8-9}.

However, the efforts of Satan are worthless, because Jesus ^{Isaiah 53:12b, Hebrews 7:23-25} and the Holy Spirit ^{Romans 8:26-27} continually intercede before the Father on behalf of all believers.

8:35-36 Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall trouble or hardship or

persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword? As it is written: “For your sake we

face death all day long; we are considered as sheep to be slaughtered.” All believers at times

briefly lose sight of the love and blessings of God, because of problems in life ^{1 Corinthians 4:11};
however, a genuine Christian will never be permanently separated from the infinite love of
Jesus Christ, because His love never wavers ("His love endures forever" ^{Psalm 136:1-26}).

Paul's answer to the to the sixth and seventh questions ('Who can separate us from God?'
'Can trials do it?' ^{v.35}): "**Nothing!**", is gloriously pronounced in the next three verses ^{v.37-39}.

Paul mentioned seven trials ^{v.35} that he, himself had previously endured ^{2 Corinthians 11:23-28}.
And, his quote ^{v.36, Psalm 44:22} indicates saints have always faced suffering/death ^{1 Corinthians 15:31}.

The upcoming verses ^{v.37-39} describe circumstances and beings that are allowed by many
believers to temporarily diminish and detract from their trust in and personal relationship
with the Lord, who fervently wants to provide all the power, strength and blessings necessary
to counteract these temptations/trials, because they are all in "submission to him" ^{1 Peter 3:22}.

8:37-39 No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us.

**For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present
nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation,
will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.** Christians are
"more than conquerors" (complete conquerors), because the finished work of Jesus on the
cross provided the ultimate victory ^{1 Corinthians 15:54-57}. Jesus Christ is not only the Creator and
sustainer of everything: "things in heaven and on earth, [even] thrones or powers...and in him
all things hold together" ^{Colossians 1:16-17}, but He also has complete power over everything:
"All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to [Jesus]." ^{Daniel 7:13-14, Matthew 28:18}.

While the verse/chapter breaks are not God inspired, the beginning and end of Romans 8
create a beautiful symmetry. The opening and closing verses are a set of incredibly
encouraging bookends to one of the most reassuring, inspiring chapters in the Bible.

The first two verses (**Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ
Jesus, because through Christ Jesus the law of the Spirit of life set me free from the law of sin
and death.** ^{v.1-2}) is an awesome declaration that there is no possibility of "condemnation" for
anyone who is "in Christ" ("born again" ^{John 3:1-8, 1 Peter 1:23}, "saved" ^{Luke 7:50, Acts 2:21}). The final
three verses (**In all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us.**

**For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present
nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will
be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.** ^{v.37-39}) convey the
remarkable testimony that there is no possibility of "anything...in all creation" separating a
Christian from the "love of God that is in Christ Jesus" ^{Deuteronomy 31:6,8, Joshua 1:5, John 14:15-17}.