

Romans Chapter 8

Romans 8:28-30 And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to *His* purpose. For those whom He foreknew, He also predestined *to become* conformed to the image of His Son, so that He would be the firstborn among many brethren; and these whom He predestined, He also called; and these whom He called, He also justified; and these whom He justified, He also glorified.

Remembering the literal translation of verse 28: “But/And we know that/because He works with all things unto good to the ones loving God to the ones who are called according to the plan that has been laid out.”

And we know – The question, if you recall, is “what do we know?” The answer based on context is we fully understand verses 26-27 — that God has a Helper in place to help us in our weakness. Why do we know that God has sent the Holy Spirit to intercede on our behalf? Because God works with all things for good, then we can be sure that God helps those who are His.

The promise of God working all things together for good stands on its own. This is true regardless of who we are, but to us who are known as those who love God, this promise is not only true but relied upon. Paul uses the idea of God working together for good to move toward another point. There are two indirect objective clauses in this verse.

To those who are called according to purpose - to the ones who are called according to the plan that has been laid out. The phrase, just like the previous dative clause, describes a state of being or identification. There is an article that matches both the adjective “called” and the participle “are,” although it is difficult to translate the thought to English. The article would work having both as a substantive. The called, i.e. the ones being according to purpose. The typical translation of “being ones called according to purpose” indicates called is a verb but here it is an adjective, a substantive, the prepositional phrase would follow the participle, not the adjective. This is best translated “to the called; to the ones who are according to purpose.

Verse 29 continues with the reasons for knowing that God supplies us with assistance. Paul does this by providing a list of actions God performed. These are not who we are in verses 29-30 (except what we are predestined to) rather this is who God is and what action He has taken toward us.

The first word in verse 29 is the conjunction “*hoti*” which to save time is understood as because. Then Paul begins with an action that is not explained. “*προγινώσκω proginōskō*” is translated foreknew. It is an uncommon word. The verb is used five times, the noun (*πρόγνωσις prognōsis*) only twice. The word literally means to know beforehand, pre-knowledge. The noun is used in Acts 2:23 and 1 Peter 1:2. The verb is used in

Acts 26:5, Romans 11:2, 1 Peter 1:20, and 2 Pet 3:17. The word, in Biblical usage, means to have knowledge before happening, or to know of a person before meeting them. There is another view of “**προγινώσκω** *proginōskō*” that has gained popularity. The argument is as follows:

1. God knows of everybody, so this must mean something more
2. “*ginōskō*” is also used to indicate intimate knowledge
3. Therefore, the foreknowledge of God is an intimate knowledge before you existed

Two main issues with this theory — the word is not used in that manner and the logical conclusion is a human viewpoint theology. The foreknowledge of God is a misnomer. God is outside of time and therefore knows all things at all times without having to look ahead. At this point I am comfortable saying that this is an anthropomorphism giving to God an attribute to explain His character or function in our linear timeline.

Now what did He foreknow? Based upon the verses, Jesus was foreknown, National Israel is foreknown, the plan of God for the sacrifice of Jesus was foreknown, and believers are foreknown. In our text the subject is believers; the verb is in the aorist active indicative. All the verbs are in this grammatical form.

Because whom He foreknew, He also predestined. “**προορίζω** *proorizō* (*prah-ah-reed'-zoh*)” is a cognate of “**ὀρίζω** *horizō*” which means to determine, declare, establish. The root was used in Romans 1:4 for Jesus being established as the Son of God with power by the resurrection. With the prefix, it is easy to see that the word means to set beforehand, to establish beforehand, to determine prior to the event.

Once again, we have an infrequently used word being brought into the limelight. Let's review the four other verses that use this word. Acts 4:28 – People were gathered to oppose Jesus and carry out the predetermined plan in accordance with Psalm 2. 1st Corinthians 2:6-7 – It is the predetermined hidden wisdom of God that is contrary to human wisdom. Ephesians 1:5 – We are predetermined unto adoption. Ephesians 1:11 – Adverbial participle modifying “we received an inheritance.” This should read “In Him also pre-establishing that we would receive an inheritance, according to the plan that has been laid out.”

Now back to Romans 8, we can then ask “what is it that is predetermined?” In the NASB it states “to become conformed to.” This is translated from one word “**σύμμορφος** *summorphos* (*soom-mahr-pfahs'*)” which is an adjective. The compound word means formed with, to capture the adjective use “conformity.” The idea is represented well in the NASB except for that fact that becoming conformed to indicates process. The adjective with the aorist verbs indicates something that has happened. Everything else that is “pre-established” is not a process but what has happened. There is a future conformity, but this isn't referring to that. This is how God sees us, we are in His image now (Philippians 3:5). The last phrase is not a purpose clause but rather a conclusion clause, “unto Him being the firstborn of many brothers.”

Verse 30 continues the list, whom He predestined these He also called (**κλητός** *klētos* – *khlay'-tahs*). In verse 28, “called” is an adjective. Now we have a verb in the aorist active indicative form. This obviously refers back to the adjective. What we have here is an answer to the question that some may ask, “who are the called?” The called are the ones whom He foreknew, the same ones that He also predestined to conformity.

The verb is used very often, but in regards to God calling, there are only four other verses where the verb is used in aorist indicative (Romans 9:24; 1st Corinthians 7:15-17; 1st Thessalonians 4:7; 2nd Thessalonians 2:14). In reviewing all these verses, some observations can be made. It never refers to being called unto salvation; the only thing that is mentioned as means for the calling is “the gospel.” Back to the adjective, the word is simply the one called; sometimes in the context it tells you to what (Romans 1:1,6-7; 1st Corinthians 1:1,2,24).

There is one more word that works with “the called” and that is “elect.” “ἐκλεκτός *eklektos*” simply means “called out of” but carries the same implications as the other words. None of these words indicate to be called, elect, or predestined by God to be saved. There is always a purpose indicated in the text or we are simply known as the called or as the called out ones (Romans 8:33).

Those that are called are also justified (**δικαιώω** *dikaioō* – *dih-kai-ah'-oh*). This is the same word we have seen in Romans 3:20-30; 4:1-5; 5:1,9 and means to be deemed right. This does not mean that one is deemed innocent, but they have been granted rightness from God; God does not excuse the sin, rather He declares to us the righteousness of God through Jesus Christ.

Finally, we have “He glorified.” The verb is “**δοξάζω** *doxazō* (*dahks-ahd-zoh*)” and means to ascribe glory. The typical view of this is the future glorification of the saints. This verb, however, is never used for the future glory. Most of the time this is used as in “giving glory to God.” Although the natural way to view the next step is the final outcome, especially after reviewing verses 18-25. But this word is different.

Let’s see this word in other usages to understand it better (Luke 23:46-47; Acts 3:13; Romans 1:21; 11:13; 15:6; 1st Corinthians 6:20). So glory means to ascribe honor, shine a light upon, bring proper attention to. What does it mean that God ascribes glory to those whom He foreknew? Remember that this is in the aorist indicative — it has already been accomplished. The normal Greek use of this word is to give a respect to, pay honor towards (1st Corinthians 12:26). The fact that this is God to men speaks only to the fact that He demonstrates an honor as being His. Remember in verse 17-19, we are children of God, co-heirs with Christ, we have been made lower than the angels for a little while, but our destiny is to rule and reign with Jesus, He as our Big Brother.

This is not an honor we deserve, but it has been made known that we are the children of God and God has already established a plan and a purpose for us. This is not what He is doing but what He has done.

**In these verses we looked at what it is not saying. The point of these verses is not to demonstrate predestination but that God functions for our behalf. These verse are reasons to understand why we know God intends to help our weakness through the mediation of the Holy Spirit.

**All these proofs are/should be known and thus we have proof that the Holy Spirit groans on our behalf.

**These passages are not sequential. There is nothing in the text that says that one thing happens after the other, or that one is requisite to the other. This list is just what is — all things happening at the same time.

**Another observation is that God has already done all these things for you, outside of time, knowing you would believe. The moment someone believes the pre-established plan of God takes place. He does not wait for someone to believe to act, He has acted. From our perspective this is a difficult concept. We must remember that He is outside of time; we are linear, He is eternal.

Romans 8:31-39 provide the response to this information, probably back to 8:1. Because of what God has done for us, and because of all the benefits we already have, because we are his adopted children, because we are destined to be the proprietors of all things created, because we set our minds to the future promises and not on this distress, because we have the Holy Spirit indwelling us and helping our weakness, because we know God is a worker of good and especially toward us, what can we say?

If God is for us who is against us?

There are many who believe that there are things that can separate a believer from Jesus.

1. Sin
2. Rebellion
3. Bad Choices
4. Satanic Influences
5. Death
6. Despair
7. Separation
8. Persecution

All of these and more will be covered in these verses. Understanding and reviewing Chapter 8 of Romans should leave us with one thought. God has done it all; there is nothing for me to worry about; there is nothing for me to fear; there is an eternity waiting for the Sons of God.

As Chapter 8 is winding down, I have reflected on the previous chapters as well (5-8). I am beginning to see that Paul is discussing who we are in Jesus Christ, the “what to do” does not come in till chapter 12. The information in 1-8 is to get our minds straight, understanding the plan of God and who we are. Paul knows that one cannot be expected to perform until they understand who they are.