



World Christian Fellowship

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Romans 85 Progress of Salvation Romans 8:29

Romans 8:28-30, *And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose. ²⁹For whom He foreknew, He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren. ³⁰Moreover whom He predestined, these He also called; whom He called, these He also justified; and whom He justified, these He also glorified.*

Calvinists and Armenians has been a major fracture in the midst of Christian history.

The five principles of Calvinism as formulated by the Synod of Dort (1618-1619) are summarized in "TULIP," a popular acronym for

Total depravity,
Unconditional election,
Limited atonement,
Irresistibility of grace and

Perseverance of the saints.

Armenians also insist that God's election and predestination are based on his foreknowledge of our choice to believe in Christ.

Arminians believe God is sovereign but has limited control in relation to man's freedom and their response to it.

The concept of Election, how people are chosen for salvation.

Calvinists believe that God elected some people to be saved and it has nothing to do with man's future response.

Arminians believe that election is based on God's foreknowledge of those who would believe in him through faith, which means God chooses those who chose him on their own free will, based on man's response to God's offer of salvation.

V 28 the word "good" refers to final glory.

Good being that eternal glory which has been the subject of his discussion since all the way back in verse 18.

Ultimate glory is predetermined by God and God works out its fulfilment.

V 28 in the phrase "according to His purpose."

God causes all things to work together for our eternal glory because that is what He has determined to be His purpose.

His purpose was to save us to the uttermost.

We are forever secure because that is the way God planned it.

The Son, by His high priestly intercession, assures it and the Spirit, by His intercession, assures it.

V 29-30, "according to His purpose."

Everything in your life is working toward your eternal glory if you are a believer.

V 26-27, The Holy Spirit is interceding for you.

V 34, The Lord Jesus is interceding for you at the right hand of God.

The Spirit is interceding for us that we might be brought to glory and the Son is interceding for us that we might be brought to glory, because that is God's purpose.

So, every member of the Trinity is involved in fulfilling the divine purpose that we who believe might be brought to glory.

Foreknowledge, and Predestination, these are very profound, very deep truths and as we try to understand them with our limited minds, as we try to grasp the purpose of God.

We must recognize at the beginning that we are going to get in deep and we are going to get in way over our head.

We are going to be beyond our capability to comprehend. We are going to journey into the divine infinity of eternal purpose and no higher pursuit than that exists. We have limits as to how far we can really go.

Any limitation upon understanding this doctrine is not God's limitation but ours. This is not at all unclear to God. He is not at all confused by it. He understands it perfectly.

The limitation is not God's, not in His understanding and not in His revelation. The limitation is ours.

So, any attempt to somehow accuse God of being unclear or unfair is a temptation to be irreverent. It's a temptation to be blasphemous.

To question the wisdom of God is sinful.

To question the justice of God is sinful.

To question the love of God is sinful.

The only thing that we need to question is the feebleness of our own minds.

Any questioning of God's wisdom or justice of love is ridiculous. He is perfectly wise, perfectly just, perfectly loving and His plan is in accord with all those perfections.

We want to believe exactly what the Bible says, no less, no more and no differently. You just come humbly to the sacred infinite mind of God and realize that you can only understand as much as He has revealed to you.

Human reason is not the court in which the doctrine of predestination will be judged.

Human logic is not the judge sitting on the bench.

Human understanding is not an adequate jury to decide in regard to the doctrine of predestination.

Ultimately this doctrine cannot be reconciled with human reason, it cannot be reconciled with human logic in all its fullness, and it certainly cannot be reconciled with fallen biases. The only time you are ever going to find peace in grasping this doctrine is when you accept it by faith, understanding your limitations.

The general truth given by the Holy Spirit through the inspired writer Paul is that God causes all things to bring us to eternal glory because that's the way He planned it.

V 31, *"If God is for us, who is against us?"*

In other words, if God, who is the supreme power of the universe, is working out this plan, who could ever prevent it from being fulfilled?

No one.

We are secure eternally in the purpose of God.

Ephesians 1:4, *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,*

Ephesians 1:9, *having made known to us the mystery of His will, according to His good pleasure which He purposed in Himself,*

Ephesians 1:11, *in Him also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestined according to the purpose of Him who works all things according to the counsel of His will,*

It is His purpose.

It is the fact that God is sovereign, God is on the throne.

2 Thessalonians 2:13, *But we are bound to give thanks to God always for you, brethren beloved by the Lord, because God from the beginning chose you for salvation through sanctification by the Spirit and belief in the truth,*

2 Timothy 1:9, *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,*

This is all bound up in the eternal counsel of God which He Himself determined before the world began.

John 1:12-13, *But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name: ¹³ who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.*

Salvation does not occur because of what you decide.

Salvation occurs because of what God has already decided.

It's all bound up in His eternal purpose.

An unregenerate man is dead in trespasses and sin and utterly unable to respond to the gospel. The god of this world has blinded his mind.

He is ignorant.

He is the captive to sin.

1 Corinthians 2:14, *"A natural man does not accept the things of the Spirit of God. They are foolishness to him. He cannot understand them."*

He can't. On his own he can't make that decision. It's impossible.

John 8:43-44, *Why do you not understand My speech? Because you are not able to listen to My word. ⁴⁴ You are of your father the devil, and the desires of your father you want to do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own resources, for he is a liar and the father of it.*

You can't, you belong to Satan, your minds are blinded, your dead in sin, you're a slave to iniquity, you're a natural man who cannot understand the things of God. You can't make that decision on your own. It's impossible.

This must be initiated by God.

John 6:44, *No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him; and I will raise him up at the last day.*

You can't be saved, you can't decide for Christ unless the Father draws you and whoever the Father draws, Christ will raise to

eternal glory. Nobody gets lost in the middle. This is the plan and the purpose of God unfolding in redemptive history.

Romans 8:7, *Because the carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, nor indeed can be.*

Those who are in the flesh cannot please God.

Human depravity, sinful depravity, does not mean everybody is as wretched as they could be. Some people are basically, humanly better than others. They are more moral, more loving, more kind, more goodness in their lives and things like that. Not everybody is as bad as they could be.

But the doctrine of total depravity, human depravity, fallenness, is not to say that everybody is as wretched as they could possibly be, but that everyone is utterly unable to do anything to change their sinful condition.

Nobody is going to decide for Christ unless God draws them. That's essential.

Man can't make a move toward Christ until God moves him that direction, in line with His eternal purpose.

What God decided long ago in the past before the world began. Since salvation is His plan and His purpose ultimately for the love of His Son that He might give a bride to His Son.

Since God chose to save some out of humans to be a bride to His Son, He is the one who purposed it and He is the one who pledges to bring it to pass.

It is His plan.

It is His purpose.

It will be brought about by His will and His power.

We respond by faith to the prompting of the Spirit of God that is true. But it is His purpose.

We might become conformed to the image of His Son. That is the purpose of salvation from God's initial planning.

We are saved in hope and someday we will be conformed to the image of Christ.

The plan of God from eternity past was not to get us started, but to get us finished.

Jesus, the Son, might be the firstborn, the chief one, the ***protokos*** among many who are like Him.

He wanted to create a fellowship.

He wanted to create a brotherhood.

He wanted to create a redeemed humanity who would be made like Jesus Christ so that He would be the chief one among man who would reflect His glory.

V 29, *"For whom He foreknew He also predestined."*

V 30, *"And whom He predestined these He also called, and whom He called these He also justified, and whom He justified these He also glorified."*

The progress of salvation.

Paul outlines the unfolding eternal purpose of God in five steps:

1. Foreknowledge,
2. Predestination,
3. Calling,
4. Justification and
5. Glorification.

Those are very important to understand because now you will be able to grasp the progress of God's unfolding, saving purpose.

1. Foreknowledge.

It is the most foundational and essential.

The purpose of salvation, the purpose of bringing men and women to eternal glory that they might manifest the image of Christ is determined initially in foreknowledge.

When you hear the word "foreknowledge," what do you think of?

Some people think it means foresight.

God, because He is God and knows everything, past, present, and future, can look down through history that hasn't happened yet and see who was going to believe and He could see who was going to decide for Christ and who was not.

God can see history before it happens. He can write it before it happens, and He does. He knows everything.

The problem with that doctrine is a very serious problem. Man, wicked, ignorant, blind, unable to understand the truth, unable to understand the gospel, unable to comprehend God, unable to get past his iniquity, who hates God, is God's enemy, loves his wickedness, is dead in trespasses and sins, can't make the decision for Christ.

That's the first thing that we must recognize.

Secondly, even if you agree that God just saw what people were going to do, you really don't save God from some imagined injustice because you still must ask the question if he knew that, and He knew people were going to choose against Him and go to hell forever, why did He create them?

If you say He didn't have any power over whether they were created or not, you really have a problem because now you have a God that's less than sovereign, you have a God that's not the King of the universe and He's not in control, and that's not the God of the Bible.

If God looks down the road and sees some people believe and some people not believe, you must ask the question: **Where did their faith come from?**

Is it natural for an unregenerate, wicked, blind, hopeless, helpless sinner to suddenly exercise saving faith in Jesus Christ? No, it's not natural and it's impossible.

Dead in trespasses and sins cannot understand the things of God, blinded, ignorant, hopeless, helpless, desperately wicked, no knowledge of God is in them. They love darkness. There is no way that this could mean foresight.

God does have foresight and He does see who faith will have, but it is the faith that He Himself grants that He foresees.

John 3:3, *Jesus answered and said to him, "Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God."*

How are you going to be born again?

"Can the leopard change his spots?"

It can't be done.

You can't do it.

"No man comes unto the Father unless the Father draws him."

Philippians 1:29, *For to you it has been granted on behalf of Christ, not only to believe in Him, but also to suffer for His sake,*

God granted you the privilege of believing for Christ's sake, for the glory of Christ, for the eternal honour of Christ He allowed you to believe. You can't believe apart from that, you who are dead in trespasses and sins.

1 Peter 1:2, *elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, in sanctification of the Spirit, for obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ:*

Some people think that just means He just foreordained.

1 Peter 1:20, *He indeed was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you*

That certainly doesn't mean foresight, it doesn't mean before the foundation of the world Jesus looked down in history and saw what Christ was going to do. He planned it.

Acts 2:23, *Him, being delivered by the determined purpose and foreknowledge of God, you have taken by lawless hands, have crucified, and put to death;*

This is a decision for a pre-decided course of action. The determinate counsel of God means God determined the course of action.

It speaks of a completed action with continuing results. God pre-decided a course of action and marked off the boundaries of that action. This is determinate counsel and foreknowledge.

Foreknowledge means determinate counsel. Foreknowledge doesn't just mean God knows what's going to happen. It is predeterminate counsel. It is a pre-decided course of action with the boundaries and limits marked out,

It is true that in predestination God in His omniscience can see down all the eons of history.

God in His foreknowledge has predetermined and preordained the flow of what is going to happen.

The concept of foreknowledge embraces the idea of a predetermination not just to take a course of action, but to take a course of action motivated by love.

Motivated by love. It is to predetermine an expression of love. God was predetermining even in foreknowing Christ, an expression of love toward Christ which would bring Christ great glory forever through redemption. It is a predetermined, foreordained, foreseen love relationship born in the eternal purpose of God.

Throughout Scripture the concept of knowing is more than information.

Amos 3:2, *“You only have I known of all the families of the earth; Therefore I will punish you for all your iniquities.”*

So, there is that foreordaining aspect. But behind that idea of knowing is a very intimate truth.

Genesis 4:1, *Now Adam knew Eve his wife, and she conceived and bore Cain, and said, “I have acquired a man from the Lord.”*

The word "know" is used in Scripture to express the most intimate expressions of love.

Joseph, in the New Testament was shocked when Mary was pregnant because "He had never known her."

The concept of knowing then carries that beautiful, intimate love that brings two together. It has the idea of caring for someone.

Hosea 13:5, *I knew you in the wilderness, In the land of great drought.*

There's a wonderful intimate expression in the word know. This is true in the New Testament.

1 Corinthians 8:3, *But if anyone loves God, this one is known by Him.*

God knows everybody on the face of the earth. But here's knowing in an intimate sense. An intimate love relationship.

Matthew 7:21-23, *"Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven. ²² Many will say to Me in that day, 'Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name?' ²³ And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!'*

Galatians 4:9, *But now after you have known God, or rather are known by God, how is it that you turn again to the weak and beggarly elements, to which you desire again to be in bondage?*

When you become a Christian, you become known to God, not as information, but in intimacy.

John 10:14, *I am the good shepherd; and I know My sheep, and am known by My own.*

2 Timothy 2:19, *Nevertheless the solid foundation of God stands, having this seal: "The Lord knows those who are His," and, "Let everyone who names the name of Christ depart from iniquity."*

When you see the word "foreknowledge" there, of course there is a foreordaining element to it, and of course there is a foresight element to it as God can see down the path. But there is also a fore love in it.

God foreordains, predetermines to love a certain person, a predetermined, foreordained, foreseen love relationship born in the eternal purpose of God. That's whom He foreknew. He would come to know them. That's why "fore" is there. It hadn't happened yet, He foreknew.

He would come eventually to an intimate relationship with them down the way through redemptive history.

God has a purpose, and that purpose is to express His love to sinners. He predetermines based on the desire to express His love to sinners which sinners He foreordains unto salvation, who will be the recipients of His eternal intimacy, His eternal love, and that of His Son.

2. Predestination.

V 29, "*Whom He foreknew He also predestined,*"

V 30, "*And whom He predestined.*"

Those people whom He foreordained to a love relationship, to a relationship of loving intimacy He predestined to mark out.

He marked them out, wrote their names down. Those whom He predetermined to love, He predestined,

Ephesians 1:5, *having predestined us to adoption as sons by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will,*

God's love for the Son caused Him to choose us. God's wonderful love for us caused Him to choose us.

Revelation 13:8, *All who dwell on the earth will worship him, whose names have not been written in the Book of Life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world.*

Revelation 17:14, *These will make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb will overcome them, for He is Lord of lords and King of kings; and those who are with Him are called, chosen, and faithful."*

God marked us out by writing us in His book before the world began.

He started out with a predetermination to love us and based on that He marked us out.

Acts 4:28, *to do whatever Your hand and Your purpose determined before to be done.*

V 30, *"Whom He predestined these He also called."*

We move from eternity past into the present tense.

In eternity past He predetermined and foreordained to love and marked out the objects of that foreordaining love.

3. Calling.

Now we come into time, and in time He activates His foreordained, predestined plan by calling us.

There are five of these terms here.

Two precede calling and two follow it.

Now this is sort of the central truth.

V 28, And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose.

The called.

This is an inward call and not an outward call.

This doesn't mean all the people who heard some preacher or who heard some evangelist. This is an inward call.

This is the saving, redeeming call.

John 6:44, this is the Father drawing.

It is a saving, redeeming call done through the preaching of the gospel, but by the Spirit of God.

So, God predetermined and foreordained to set His love upon some men and women, marked out specifically who they would be and then in time He called us.

He called us to be His own.

He called us to be set apart, holy.

Romans 1:7, *To all who are in Rome, beloved of God, called to be saints: Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.*

Romans 9:11, *(for the children not yet being born, nor having done any good or evil, that the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works but of Him who calls),*

Before they were ever born God determined whom He would call.

2 Timothy 1:9, *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,*

Anytime you ever see a call in the epistles of the New Testament not the gospels necessarily, but the epistles, it always means an inward, saving call.

1 Peter 1:15, *but as He who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct,*

1 Peter 2:9, *But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvellous light;*

He began to move on your darkened heart.

He began to move on your blackened mind.

He began to move on your spiritual deadness and to begin to awaken and quicken and give understanding.

The Spirit of God began to move, and you began to feel the conviction of sin. When you heard the gospel, the truth of the gospel began to dawn on your mind and that is all the calling of God as He begins to move you from death to life and from ignorance to truth and from darkness to light.

Ephesians 4:1, *I, therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you to walk worthy of the calling with which you were called,*

We have been called to God.

How does this call come?

Galatians 1:6, *I marvel that you are turning away so soon from Him who called you in the grace of Christ, to a different gospel,*

Galatians 1:15, *But when it pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb and called me through His grace,*
It comes by grace.

2 Thessalonians 2:13-14, *But we are bound to give thanks to God always for you, brethren beloved by the Lord, because God from the beginning chose you for salvation through sanctification by the Spirit and belief in the truth, ¹⁴ to which He called you by our gospel, for the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ.*

The gospel came and by the gospel
He awakened your heart.
You heard,
You believed,
You repented in order that
Yu may gain the glory.

You are not going to fall through the cracks between then and eternal glory.

God comes, He awakens your dead life, lightens your darkness, moving as the Spirit of God comes, in John 16, and convicts the world of sin and righteousness and judgment.

You feel the weight of sin, the burden of sin, the pain of isolation and alienation from God and all of that is the quickening work. It comes upon hearing the gospel.

It is our job to present the truth of the gospel because faith comes by hearing the Word.

The call of God occurs in a context of an understanding of the gospel.

You might hear it from a preacher, teacher, book, the pages of Scripture, from the witness of a friend or family member, but the conviction of sin and the desire for righteousness and a comprehension of forgiveness and the understanding of the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, when the heart responds to all of that, that's the call of God.

Whom He predetermined and foreordained to love eternally, He marked out as predestined to go all the way to glory and be conformed to the image of Jesus Christ.

That was the plan before time began.

Then in time He's been calling!

All whom He has ordained hear the call and believe.

4. Justification.

Justified means to declare someone righteous.

It's a legal term.

It's a term of standing before the bar of God.

We are not righteous on our own.

Like Paul, "*O wretched man that I am, chief of sinners.*"

I sin, I fail, I fall short, I don't love God perfectly with all my heart, soul, mind, and strength all the time, or my neighbour as myself.

I don't fulfil the law of God in perfection.

I fall.

I fail.

I stumble.

But nonetheless, I stand as justified.

God has declared me righteous. Righteous means right.

How did you ever get to be declared righteous?

Because God called us and believed as He prompted in our heart.

Philippians 3:9, *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;*

We believe in Christ and God gives you righteousness, just gives it to us.

2 Corinthians 5:21, *For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.*

- ✓ On the cross God treated Jesus as if He had committed all the sins of all the people who would ever believe.
- ✓ On the cross God treated Jesus as if He had committed all the sins ever committed by every person who would ever believe.

- God just punished Jesus for all the sins of all the people who would ever believe, so their sins were taken care of.
- God gave Jesus our sins and then turned around and gave us His righteousness.

On the cross God treated Jesus as if He had committed all those sins though He had committed none of them, so that He could treat us as if we lived the perfect life of Jesus, although we do not.

Since God's justice was satisfied by the sacrifice of Christ, sin needs no further punishment.

God, having been satisfied because Christ bore our sins in His own body on the cross, grants us His righteousness.

Christ couldn't just come into the world, die on a cross and leave again. He stayed here for 33 years and lived a perfect life.

Why?

Because there needed to be a perfect life.

He needed to fulfil all righteousness, live a perfect life so that perfect life could be credited to us.

The incredible truth of justification and it is by faith alone.

You don't earn it, you can't gain it, you can't win it.

God called you. He declares that your sins paid for in Christ and you bear His righteousness.

5. Glorification.

Nobody is going to be left behind.

Nobody gets off the bus anywhere along this track.

V 30, "*Whom He justified, these He also glorified*"

As if it had already happened.

It's the use of an aorist to express an already accomplished reality because it's totally secure. It's saying something as if it happened because it's so sure that it will.

- ✓ God who chose me because of His predetermined love,
- ✓ God who put the boundaries around my life and said, "This one belongs to Me."
- ✓ God who called me, drew me out of the darkness, out of the death, to put my trust in Jesus Christ with repentance.
- ✓ God who then took care of my sins in the sacrifice of Jesus Christ and imputed the righteousness of Christ to me is going to be the God that brings me to glory.

I didn't start this, and I don't have the capability to finish it.

It's not apart from my faith, but it's by the prompting of the Spirit of God that I can believe.

What about the people who don't believe, aren't they responsible?

Yes.

If you don't believe, you reject the gospel and you go to hell in your natural, blind, dead condition it's because you deserve it and you are going to bear the punishment for that because you are responsible for that.

You say, "I don't understand that. I don't understand that. I don't understand if you go to heaven because you are chosen, how you can hold people responsible who go to hell because they weren't chosen.

No, it doesn't work like that. They go to hell because they didn't believe.

I don't understand that.

Of course, you don't understand that. I don't understand that either because it's not understandable.

But I can cry to every sinner on the face of the earth, "Repent and believe the gospel of Jesus Christ. Repent and be saved!

Why will you die?

Choose you this day whom you will serve.
Come to Me all who are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.
Whosoever will let him come.

It seems like a contradiction because we are so puny in your comprehension.

Not a problem to God.

Sinners are told to believe and if they don't believe they will perish.

Jesus says, "*Where I go you are not going to be able to come because you don't believe on Me.*"

Jesus says, "*Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature.*"

If they don't believe that's their fault, they are guilty and they will perish.

I don't understand how that all works together.

Who wrote Romans?

Paul wrote Romans.

But it was inspired by the Holy Spirit.

Every word was Paul's, but every word was inspired by the Holy Spirit.

Galatians 2:20, *I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me.*

Deuteronomy 29:29, *"The secret things belong to the Lord our God, but those things which are revealed belong to us and to our children forever, that we may do all the words of this law.*