

1. **Introduction:** We begin today with a repeat of verse 28 followed by verses 8:29-30. In verses 8:29-30, Paul will describe the progressive nature of God's plan of salvation beginning in eternity past as God foreknew and predestined those whom He would transform into a likeness of His Son, holy and righteous like God. Then came Creation and eventually human history began with Adam.
  - All through human history, those God predestined, He calls one by one. Those He calls, He regenerates, gives faith, and justifies.
  - All salvation, past, present, and future, is based on the saving work of Jesus, either "looking forward" to His work or "looking back" to His saving work.
  - Everyone saved is saved "in Christ."
  - In verse 28, Paul declared that for believers (those called according to God's purpose) "***all things work together for good.***" In verses 29-30 he elaborates showing what he means by verse 28.
  - He means that since events of a believer's life will include the events of salvation, including the "ultimate good" of being made holy and righteous like Christ, anything else in a believer's life, whether good or bad, is overwhelmed by glorification.
  - Because of salvation, the sum total of events in a believer's life is good. That is as true for one who dies from persecution as it is for one who is blessed with a quiet gentle life and death. The crucial event is glorification.
  - Being holy and righteous like Christ is necessary if believers are to live eternity in the presence of God (Hebrews 12:14).
  - In verses 29-30. Paul will show that nothing happening to a believer can stop a justified believer from receiving the ultimate good of glorification.
  
2. **Romans 8:28-30:** "***And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose. For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the firstborn among many brothers. <sup>30</sup> And those whom he predestined he also called, and those whom he called he also justified, and those whom he justified he also glorified.***"

- Paul traces God’s saving purpose from its beginning in His mind to its consummation in glory.
- He names five stages of God’s saving purpose: (1.) Foreknowledge. (2.) Predestination to be conformed to an image of His Son. (3.) Effectual Calling. (4.) Justification. (5.) Glorification.
- Because in English, “foreknowledge” means knowledge of events before their occurrence, many have believed Paul means God predestines those whom He foreknows will believe. For many reasons this conclusion cannot be true.
- God’s foreknowledge is real, if God predestined a person to salvation based on advance knowledge the person would believe, their salvation is grounded in their decision to believe, not in God’s enabling grace and mercy.
- That is totally against Paul’s teaching. He says salvation is always grounded in God’s free initiative of grace.
- God predestines for His own reasons which are not shared with us.
- The mystery associated with predestination remains with God (Deuteronomy 29:29). Those predestined will ultimately be transformed into an image of Christ, holy and righteous like God. Nothing can stop that from happening.
- In Hebrew, the verb “to know” expresses much more than mere intellectual knowledge. It denotes a personal relationship of care and affection.
- John Murray in his commentary on Romans says Paul draws on the Hebrew meaning to use “know” in a sense practically synonymous with “love.”
- **“Those whom he foreknew”** means essentially “those whom he foreloved.” God’s foreknowledge and His sovereign, distinguishing love are inseparable.
- The second point is that those whom God foreknew (or foreloved) ***“He also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the firstborn among many brothers.”***
- Predestined means decided or settled beforehand. The decision involved in someone becoming a believer is God’s, not the believer’s.
- It is God’s decision to regenerate that enables a person to choose to have faith in Christ. Before regeneration, they are spiritually dead.

- Believers, after being regenerated and receiving the gift of faith, choose to believe in Christ, something they could not do without God’s intervention.
- Transformation from being a sinner to being holy begins with regeneration and is brought to completion at glorification.
- Paul does not list sanctification by name in verse 29, but it is implicitly included in being “conformed to an image of Christ” and in being “glorified” which is the completion of being conformed to an image of Christ.
- The third point is that ***“those whom he predestined he also called.”***
- This “call” is the effectual call of God which changes a spiritually dead person into one spiritually alive. Thus, effectual call includes regeneration.
- We hear the call and act on it because we have been made spiritually alive.
- Being made spiritually alive, we hear the gospel and in faith believe.
- Those who are regenerated are described as being called according to God’s purpose in verse 28.
- The fourth point is that ***“those whom he called he also justified.”***
- Justification means declared legally righteous. Based on the salvation work of Jesus satisfying the Law, God declares those righteous who in faith believe.
- Jesus took our sins upon Himself, thereby providing the ground for justification so that we might receive the righteousness He earned by living a life of perfect obedience under the Law.
- The fifth point is that ***“those whom he justified he also glorified.”***
- In verse 3:23 Paul said all have fallen short of the glory of God, that is fallen short of the manifestation of God’s splendor.
- In verse 5:2 we see that justified believers rejoice in hope of the glory of God, which seems to mean being glorified so that like Adam and Eve’s original position, they are holy and righteous.
- Paul says that if we share in Christ’s sufferings we will share His glory (8:17).
- Further, he says the creation itself will one day be brought into the freedom of the glory of God’s children (8:21).
- In verse 30, Paul omits the steps between justification and glorification saying those whom God justified, He also glorified.

- Paul emphasizes that God will complete the good work which begins with justification. God will not stop short of completing His goal of making sinners holy and righteous like Christ.
- The destiny of all believers is to receive new bodies in a new world. Both their new body and the new world are transfigured with the glory of God.
- God’s plan of salvation moves in steps from an eternal foreknowledge and predestination to a historical call and justification to a final glorification.
- The last step of glorification is as certain to Paul as the first four stages of salvation. He uses the same aorist tense for all five stages implying the same certainty. He is as certain as if all steps were already completed.
- The aorist tense is often referred to as the “prophetic past tense.”
- Glorified believers are like Christ having freedom from sin, being holy and righteous. Paul seems to wonder if anything else needs to be said.
- He reacts by asking a few more questions in verses 31-37, questions that lead him to the conclusion that it is God’s love which sustains believers.
- In verses 38-39 Paul gives the conclusion he has steadily been moving toward. That is that he has utmost confidence that nothing can separate believers from the love of God in Christ Jesus.

3. **Romans 8:31-34**: *“What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us? <sup>32</sup> He who did not spare his own Son but gave him up for us all, how will he not also with him graciously give us all things? <sup>33</sup> Who shall bring any charge against God's elect? It is God who justifies. <sup>34</sup> Who is to condemn? Christ Jesus is the one who died—more than that, who was raised—who is at the right hand of God, who indeed is interceding for us.”*

- The first question Paul raises is, *“If God is for us, who can be against us?”*
- Notice the astuteness of the question. If Paul asked, “who can be against us,” there would be thousands of possible legitimate answers.
- By using the qualifying phrase “if God is for us,” he changes the nature of the question to a form that asks, “who can successfully oppose God?”
- As believers, our purpose in life is to please God.

- If God is for us who, is it possible that anyone by being against us, could possibly succeed in keeping us from pleasing God?
- The second question deals with God’s generosity. ***“He who did not spare his own Son but gave him up for us all, how will he not also with him graciously give us all things?”***
- Again, if Paul simply asked, “will God not graciously give to believers all things.” There are many possible answers.
- Believers are complex people with many needs and wants, and they cannot always distinguish between the two.
- Believers are convinced God will always supply their true needs which He knows. A believer’s view of their needs is likely different from God’s.
- To set the right perspective on this issue, Paul points to the “cross” and God’s incredible overwhelming gift of His Son for the benefit of believers.
- Knowing that God has already given each believer salvation, the greatest possible gift, the gift satisfying their greatest need, why should anyone doubt that God would deny any lesser thing a believer needs?
- The third question has two related topics. Believers are imagined to be in a court of law facing a judge and a prosecutor.
- First, “is it possible that a prosecutor can successfully bring a charge against God’s elect?” Next, “can a prosecutor convince the Judge of a charge against God’s elect and so be successful in prosecuting and condemning them?”
- If the question was merely who would bring a charge against believer, there would be many possible answers. Many people oppose believers.
- Satan never stops “accusing the brothers.” Scripture provides examples of successful accusation, and condemnation by human authorities.
- Jesus was successfully accused by the Jews, condemned and executed by the Romans. Paul and Peter were also accused, condemned, and executed.
- From Hebrews 11, we know many believers were accused and condemned and suffered horrible deaths.
- But being accused and condemned in human courts is clearly not what Paul is talking about.

- He is concerned about that Court above all human courts, and that judge above all human judges.
  - Is it possible that a believer can be successfully accused, prosecuted, and condemned before God? The answer plainly is no!
  - God, our judge, has already pardoned each believer (justified them which means declared them righteous before Him).
  - Christ, our savior and advocate, took our sins upon Himself. Our sins were condemned and punished in Jesus' human nature. He redeemed believers from the curse or condemnation of the Law "by becoming a curse for us."
  - He suffered both the death penalty and God's wrath due our sins, rose from the dead, and is now seated at the right hand of the Father where He constantly intercedes on our behalf.
  - Who then can come before God and successfully condemn a believer who has been pardoned by God? Paul's answer in 8:1 is, "***There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.***"
  - The last question in this series is the most critical one. Paul says it is God's love that underlies all the benefits a believer enjoys.
  - The critical question is, can a believer be separated from the love of Christ?
  - From a human perspective, there may seem to be things that could drive a believer away from Christ and His love.
  - But Paul's conclusion is there is "no way" a believer can be separated from the love on Christ! The love of Christ, which each believer enjoys and benefits from, is Christ's eternal gift given in His omnipotent power.
4. **Romans 8:35-39**: "***Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or danger, or sword? <sup>36</sup> As it is written, "For your sake we are being killed all the day long; we are regarded as sheep to be slaughtered." <sup>37</sup> No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. "For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, <sup>39</sup> nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord. (8:38-39).***"

- God’s plan for each believer is unstoppable and will be carried out.
- God’s forelove led to each believer being predestined and transformed into a likeness of Christ our Lord.
- The Father’s love delivered Jesus to the cross, placed our sins on Him, and caused Him to suffer the penalty and wrath due those sins.
- It is the love of Father and the Son that sent the Holy Spirit to regenerate and indwell us. It is the love of the Holy Spirit that will ultimately complete the work of making us holy as Christ is holy.
- Paul asks, “is there anything in all creation that can separate believers from God’s love?” He considers several possible candidates.
- Can pain, misery, danger, or loss of life? Can human or spiritual powers? Can things now present or things yet to come?
- His conclusion is that none of these are sufficient to separate believers from the love of Christ, nor is anything else in all creation.
- Indeed, to the contrary, he says, that in all such things believers are more than conquerors through Him who loved us.
- He means that even when called upon to endure all kinds of terrible things, we not only are enabled to bear them with fortitude (perseverance), but we triumph over them winning a glorious victory in and through Christ who loves us and will bring us into His presence in heaven.
- Christ suffered the events of the cross because of His love for believers.
- Our sufferings cannot possibly separate us from His omnipotent love which sacrificially provided for our salvation.
- In 8:28 Paul began by saying “we know,” but in 8:38 he says, “I am sure!”
- Nothing can separate us from Christ’s love and nothing will.
- The reason Paul is so confident is simple. He is convinced that all of creation is controlled by God the Creator and Jesus Christ the Lord.
- He who loved us from all eternity will preserve us in His love no matter what the circumstances.

5. **Introduction to Chapter 9-11:** Is Paul’s conclusion on the steadfastness of God’s love consistent with the widespread unbelief among the Jews?

- Paul began chapter 3 by asking and answering the question “*Then what advantage has the Jew?*”
- He says the Jews were adopted by God as sons (Exodus 4:22, Jeremiah 31:9) and God revealed to them the visible splendor of His Shekinah glory.
- The Shekinah glory, indicative of God’s presence, filled the tabernacle (Exodus 29: 42ff; 40:34ff), later filled the temple (1 Kings 8:10ff). The shekinah glory settled permanently in the Temple’s Holy of Holies. Yahweh was described as “enthroned on the cherubim” (Hebrews 9:5) as He had been on the ark (2 Samuel 6:2).
- The oracles of God and the covenants were given to the Jews – not only the foundational covenant with Abraham but also its multiple renewals and elaborations to Isaac, Jacob, Moses, and David.
- They were the recipients of God’s Law as well as the God-prescribed regulations governing the priesthood and sacrifices.
- God made many promises to the Jews about their future including ones related to the coming of Messiah as God’s prophet, priest, and king.
- As His chosen people, God sent them patriarchs, including not only Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, but also the fathers of the 12 tribes.
- He sent other great men as well, Moses, Joshua, Samuel, David, and others.
- Overarching all this, Christ came into the world as a Jew.
- Matthew traces Jesus ancestry to Abraham. Luke traces it to Adam.
- In terms of the significance of Christ’s Jewish ancestry, John Calvin said, “*If he (Christ) honored the whole human race when he connected himself with it by sharing our nature, much more did he honor the Jews, with whom he desired to have a close bond of affinity.*”
- Why did so many Jews fail to believe? Was God’s love for them temporary?
- From their God-given Scripture, the Jews expected Messiah would bring about a universal kingdom with Jews in leadership and Messiah as king.
- The Law would apply everywhere. But here is Paul preaching righteousness before God apart from the Law, righteousness given to those who have faith.



- Paul's emphasis on salvation by faith runs counter to the Jews' expectation from their special relationship with God. Their nation, race, and obedience to the Law to obtain salvation seem to be made immaterial.
- In salvation by faith the only one relationship counts, that between God and individuals.
- The dominant, but not exclusive theme of chapters 9-11, is Jewish unbelief and the difficulties it raises in understanding God's Covenant with the Jews, His Promises to them, and the unchanging nature of His love.
- How is it possible that God's special people, chosen and prepared for the coming of Messiah, could largely miss Him when He appeared?
- As Paul pointed out in 1:2 and 3:21, the Gospel could not have been a surprise to the Jews. It had been repeatedly promised beforehand in Scripture.
- How could so many of these privileged people of God not only fail to recognize Messiah when He came, but reject Him? Why didn't the Jews immediately embrace Messiah?
- Paul states emphatically that the good news of the Gospel is salvation to all who believe, first to the Jew and then to the Gentile (1:16).
- The Gospel indeed came first to the Jews, but many refused to believe? Why?
- How can rejection of the Gospel be reconciled with God's unchanging love, His Covenant and Promises?
- How does conversion of the Gentiles, and Paul's mission as Apostle to the Gentiles, fit in with God's revealed plan for His people?
- What is God's future purpose for Jews and Gentiles?
- These are some of the things Paul speaks of in chapters 9-11.

6. **What is Next:** Romans chapter 9.