

Romans 8.28-39 God Working Good, Sovereignty, Foreknowledge,
Predestination, Security, Assurance of Salvation 118-125
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[Romans 8.28 God Working for Good 118]

Paul writes to believers in Rome but everything he says is inspired and therefore applicable to us as well. We are in a section about Sanctification which deals with the Suffering of the believer which God is using to conform us to His image, and with that in the background he continues with these encouraging verses that contain the promise of the continual prayers of the Holy Spirit and even Christ to the Father on our behalf—while we have the indwelling Holy Spirit within us.

And a second promise is that God works all things for the good of the believer, using everything that happens to further our sanctification, making us more like Christ in the process.

Principles for the Christian life - chapter 8

17. Power of HS in us fulfills God's Will
18. Walking in Spirit is means of Sanctification
19. Indwelling presence of HS gives power
20. Believers participate in sanctification
21. Suffering is God's main tool for sanctification
22. Glorification is end product of sanctification

This theme runs throughout the passage as well.

8.28 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.

Terms

Know - οἶδα (o-ée-da) know by revelation not experience, intuitive, in this context, by revelation.

The other word, γινώσκω (gui-nós-ko), is for something learned, such as a lesson, or by some experience.

Things that don't need to be emphasized because we know them, and are perhaps simply common sense, are expressed in the verb οἶδα, οίδα. But I think in this context he is going to explain that all things work for our good. That is not evident to us, so it is by revelation rather than experience.

Paul has used οἶδα before in chapter 6 with the same emphasis there. And this is the interesting thing that I have been stressing throughout the section about the Christian walk: rather than a lot of commands, 'Do this, Don't do that', 'Obey this', he starts with 'Do you not know? Then later: 'Knowing this',... And in all of chapter

6 there are only 4 exhortations or commands and they are all clustered together in the middle to the end of chapter 6.

Here, again, there is another emphasis on *knowing* certain things, ie, the *heart* of sanctification is *grasping* what God is doing through it, what is true about the experience where it begins—the union with Jesus Christ, the indwelling presence of the HS, the idea that justification brings not only total forgiveness but declares us righteous—all of the principles that we have been looking at in chapters 6,7 and 8.

So in chapter 8 he begins with the idea of *knowing something* and now he is going to reveal what we should know. And apparently this is quite common to teach the body of Christ in the 1st Century. This is something that we *know*—by revelation. So it's knowledge by revelation, not experiential because we don't sense it or experience it; we *can* experience it once we appropriate it and trust that God is going to use this illness or tragedy or hardship that I am going through now ultimately for my good and even possibly temporally for my good.

8.28 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.

So we know that 'God causes all things'. The word 'cause' is part of the translators' attempt to make sense of the Greek. Here is the verse in English and Greek.

There is a 'textual problem'. We get the text by comparing all the available manuscripts. And the KJV depends on a body called the Majority Text—a body of *all* these manuscripts, some older than others, some of higher quality than others, some more widely distributed than others in terms of their family. And there is a science called Textual Criticism that attempts to bring together all of these manuscripts and come up with different levels of confidence that a given part is what was original.

Textual Criticism, in the secular world, puts together all of the classics. We have no originals of the classical Greek philosophers, eg, Plato, Aristotle. In their case, they are dependent on about 5 copies, eg, that have survived thousands of years. And every university department of classics today studies these few manuscripts that still exist. I say all this because of the NT we have over 6,000 manuscripts. And from that we have more in the NT than what would be the original writings. It is a matter of choosing, 'Is this probably more likely what Paul wrote or is that more likely.' Nothing has been lost. In fact we have additional data that has been set aside because the scholars believe that it is not so valuable.

My point: we have far more, by magnitudes, confidence that what we have is what Paul wrote. But in some cases we have a little controversy. The King James Version and some other versions translate it ‘And we know that all things—all things being the subject—work together for good.’ There are a couple of manuscripts that include *God* as the subject and it’s in the text. Now I don’t think there is enough manuscript evidence to support that, but still, the ‘all things’, πάντα (páhn-tah), could be accusative or, it also could be nominative, the subject, and the KJV takes it that way. Another view makes *God* the subject and takes πάντα as the object of the verb.

8.28 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.

οἶδαμεν δὲ ὅτι τοῖς ἀγαπῶσιν τὸν θεὸν πάντα συνεργεῖ ὁ θεὸς εἰς ἀγαθόν τοῖς κατὰ πρόθεσιν κλητοῖς οὖσιν.

In Greek, the subject is included in the verb ending. You could say ‘He (God) works all things together’ I think this is the best way to take the passage.

The word order of the Greek puts the thing emphasized at the beginning. So ‘we know that to those who love God...’ is emphasized.

In the spiritual world, ‘God works all things together’ for good... The word in English is ‘synergy’, like sodium and chlorine together are good. (Separate they can be dangerous.) God can take an evil thing (like Christ being crucified) and make it work for good (salvation). Only He can transform it that way. Selling Joseph was evil, but, as Joseph said, God used it for good.

8.28 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.

Terms

1. Know - οἶδα (o-ée-da) know by revelation not experience, The other word, γινώσκω (gui-nós-ko)
2. Work together - συνεργέω (soon-er-gué-o) all circumstances working together.

God is going to do it in the Millennial Kingdom and then in eternity, but He is doing it in our individual lives, no matter how painful, dreadful or tragic; He is working these things for good—but then he qualifies: Who are the recipients of this good? To those

who love God. I think that if you do a word study on this phrase, you will find that he is talking about all believers, anyone that is related to Jesus Christ, except for some that lose their first love or have wandered.

8.28 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.

There are 148 occurrences of ‘called’ in the New Testament. Of course there are different forms. In 8.28 we have the adjective form ‘to those who are *called*’, who have this experience.

Then in 8.30 we have a verb form of καλέω, (kah-léh-o), used 130 time of the 140. ‘He also called’ is the aorist active indicative. Again, every theological term in the Bible has a common, everyday usage. The writers give them the theological significance. This one has a lot of everyday usages. What do you call your son? Matthew 1.21.

Also it is used to ‘invited’ someone to an occasion, as in John 2.2.

In Acts 4.18, they were summoned to a certain place.

In Matthew 22:14 ‘Many are called but few are chosen.’ This is a very broad use. But it can be specific as well. ‘Called *to*’...something, eg, salvation, but not limited to that because many times it is their being called to other things that are associated with those that have salvation. Ephesians 4.4 has 2 uses of it, as past calling to at least salvation but other things as well, but also it has a forward looking to it, a future aspect, ‘hope’, of the broad calling of the believer.

2Thessalonians 2.14 is specific to the gospel, and every time you share the gospel completely with someone, you are making an *invitation* and it is the means that God uses to bring people into a saving relationship.

Calling

1. Terms - 8.28 (adj/past participle) - κλητός, klay-tós
8.30 (verbo) - καλέω, kah-léh-o
2. Use - Identify by name - Matthew 1.21 “*She will bear a Son; and you shall call His name Jesus,*
Invite to occasion - John 2.2 *and both Jesus and His disciples were invited to the wedding.*
Summons to place - Acts 4.18 *And when they had summoned them, they commanded them not to speak or teach at all in the name of Jesus.*
Divine calling - Ephesians 4.4 *There is one body and one Spirit, just as also you were called in one hope of your calling* [noun κλήσις (kláy-sees)];

2Thessalonians 2.14 *It was for this He called you through our gospel, that you may gain the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ*

I think 8.28 is broad, includes a lot of things, but I think it begins with that initial calling and receiving of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Terms

1. Know - οἶδα (o-ée-dah) know by revelation not experience
2. Work together - συνεργέω (soon-er-gué-o) all circumstances working together
3. Called - κλησις (kláy-sees) (noun) effectual call, not just invitation

The ‘effectual call’ that some people use to describe is that which results in salvation, not just the broad invitation that some reject, but it’s a chain of things that God does and we will study that in other verses.

8.28 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.

The idea of a *purpose* is in the overall plan of God.

We can rejoice in TWO of the greatest promises in all Scripture: the concept that God Himself is involved intimately in our prayers, the HS praying inwardly and Jesus Christ at the right hand of the Father—and this is the promise that God is transforming all of the circumstances in the life of the believer working them for good.

[Romans 8.28 God’s Sovereign Plan 119]

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8.28 And we know that God causes all things to work together [συνεργέω (soon-er-gué-o)] for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose.

The disobedience of Adam and Eve brought consequences that thrust the entire universe into the condition that we have today. God created a universe that was ‘very good’ (Genesis 1.31). But in Genesis 3 we see that God, because of the 1st sin of Adam and Eve, imposed a course (death in a comprehensive sense and beginning the decline of the human body), not only upon them, but upon the whole universe. Then, in Genesis 3.15, we see that God is going to turn all of that around, and we have the first promise that God is going to deal with sin.

Working Good

1. 1st sin—> Genesis 3.15 *And I will put enmity Between you and the woman, And between your seed and her seed; He shall bruise you on the head, And you shall bruise him on the heel.* From the seed of the woman, a line of descendants from her, through Noah, to Jesus Christ who would deal in an ultimate way with sin and death, but even then we have all the prophecies that speak of resurrection. So God is going to transform evil and use it for good.
2. Joseph —> Genesis 50.19 *But Joseph said to them, “Do not be afraid, for am I in God’s place? 20 “As for you, you meant evil against me, but God meant it for good in order to bring about this present result, to preserve many people alive.*

Joseph is a dramatic example in Genesis also: Youngest son that God gave visions/dreams. Older brothers plotted to sell him and get money. In Egypt, he is a foreigner, persecuted, jailed but eventually, because of his wisdom, the Pharaoh makes him second in command over the world empire of that day—Egypt. Through this, God bringing a famine in Canaan, the family, on the verge of ripping itself apart, goes to Egypt and Joseph says: God used their evil, and the circumstances over many, many years and turned it around, transformed it and saved the family—because God had made promises regarding them.

3. Wilderness —> Deuteronomy 8.15 *“He led you through the great and terrible wilderness, with its fiery serpents and scorpions and thirsty ground where there was no water; He brought water for you out of the rock of flint. 16 “In the wilderness He fed you manna which your fathers did not know, that He might humble you and that He might test you, to do good for you in the end.*

After their captivity in Egypt, wandering in the the desert, God does miraculous things for them again, and, in spite of their sinfulness and evil, he preserves that 2nd generation which eventually enter the promised land.

4. Cross —> Acts 2.23 *this Man, delivered over by the predetermined plan and foreknowledge of God, you nailed to a cross by the hands of godless men and put Him to death.*

The greatest evil in all of world history: the crucifixion.

The One with no sin was nailed to a cross with a *predetermined plan*. That crucifixion was transformed by God to make available salvation.

5. Believers —> 2Corinthians 4.16 *Therefore we do not lose heart, but though our outer man is decaying, yet our inner man is being renewed day by day. 17 *For momentary, light affliction is producing for us an eternal weight of glory far beyond all comparison,**

How God can use this on an individual basis for the believer: We experience suffering—it's a part of life—but He is promising an '*eterno peso de gloria*'.

We know, because of what God has revealed, that (only) believers will receive glory. There is a kind of 'overflow' or 'residue' that results in some benefit for non-believers since we are the salt of the earth, but ultimately not all things are going to work for good for them. They will end up in the lake of fire because they have rejected the Lord Jesus Christ.

8.28 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.

We did a word study on the word 'called'.

Calling

- Terms - 8.28 (adj/past participle) - κλητός (klay-tós)
8.30 (verb) - καλέω (kah-léh-o)
- Use - Identify by name - Matthew 1.21
Invite to occasion - John 2.2
Summons to place - Acts 4.18
Divine calling - Ephesians 4.4; 2Thessalonians 2.14

We have looked at these examples of the use of the word 'to call' or the noun form 'calling'. And these words used commonly in the culture were taken for theological purposes in the Bible—as were all the other terms in the Bible.

Terms

- Know - οἶδα (o-ée-dah) know by revelation not experience
- Work together - συνεργέω (soo-ner-guéh-o) all circumstances working together

3. Called - κλήσις (kláy-sees) (noun) effectual call, not just invitation

συνεργέω (soon-er-guéh-o), things working together, is the Plan that God has.

κλήσις (kláy-sees) is a call that results in a response, like in Matthew 22 where he says, 'Many are called but few are chosen'. In this context all of the called are also those that respond.

8.28 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.

This is why I see this calling as more than just an invitation. Here is your opportunity to trust in Jesus Christ because He has done everything for you on the cross: you can take it or leave it. If you leave it there are eternal consequences. If you take it, God will come and indwell in you, transform you, give you His forgiveness of sin, give you His salvation. That is what I think he is talking about here. 'According to His purpose', in this context, is for those who have trusted in Him.

I think he is specifying who are those that receive this working of God where He is 'working all things'. It is not the unbeliever who could care less about God, has no sense of God; he just goes about his own business day by day, not thinking of Him as prominent. He is talking about the *believer*, those who love God. Yes, there are some believers who live like an *unbeliever* and you don't see any love, but the next phrase is 'those who are called according to His purpose', So he is very specific.

Let's look at this concept *in the context of suffering*. God has a plan, and not only in suffering, but in every area God has a purpose. This passage is one of the central passages that talks about the purposes of God. There is a revelation of this plan: There are many terms used, but this concept is Old Testament, and is also New Testament, so you would expect some Hebrew terms and some Greek ones.

Purposes of God

- Revelation of Plan

Terms

- OT יָעַץ - tsar, purpose, plan
יָצַח - consejo, aconsejar

This has a kind of Trinitarian idea ie, God the Father, the Son and the HS counsel together to bring about certain things. When God created the universe He had a plan for it; that plan is

revealed to us in Scripture and sometimes He uses these terms to describe it. The wonderful thing is that those who have trusted in Christ fit in with that plan.

Then in the NT:

2. NT προορίζω (pro-obéed-zo) - purpose, predestine

This is used in verse 29. History is just a record of what God revealed early on, in fact Bible prophecy is the study of how God has revealed things that have taken place. Many things in the life of Christ were predicted hundreds of years before, and in the case of Genesis 3.15, thousands of years before. Jesus is the seed of the woman that is predicted in Genesis 3.15. There is still, in the future from our time, things that have not yet been fulfilled. So, this is one of the words to describe this plan and then:

προτάσσω (pro-táh-so) - fix, determine

To fix or determine something, sometimes it is used to describe this plan of God: it is *fixed*, predestined.

πρόθεσις (pró-theh-sees) purpose, predetermination

This is the noun: 'according to His purpose' in 8.28.

3. Examples: where God acts sovereignly, totally in control, over the natural realm as well.

Sovereignty

1. General Psalm 33.10 *The LORD nullifies the counsel of the nations; He frustrates the plans of the peoples. 11 The counsel of the LORD stands forever, The plans of His heart from generation to generation.*

God overrides what happens on a broad basis—even the nations. Some believers think that God worked to nullify the plan of Hilary Clinton. He gives a lot of latitude, and permitting, but ultimately anything that goes against what He is going to accomplish, He can frustrate it. The 'counsel', what God has determined, will stand 'forever'. Not even *nations* can thwart what God has planned. And His plans are from generation to generation—long periods of time—all the way into the Millennial Kingdom. God is going to accomplish what He has determined.

2. Individual Psalm 139.16 *Your eyes have seen my unformed substance; And in Your book were all written The days that were ordained for me, When as yet there was not one of them.*

This is for pro-life people: God is at work in the womb and most believers believe that. God, Your eyes have seen my 'unformed substance'. And in Your Book—God has a record;

remember, He sees all things, knows all things, nothing is secret to Him. He knows our thoughts, our hearts, every individual. In His Book, the days that were *ordained* for me. Another idea of a Plan; God has ordained or determined certain things.

'When as yet there was not one of them'. In this context, he is talking about being formed in the womb, so before day 1, God already has a plan for individuals.

3. Israel Care We read one passage in Deuteronomy and Jeremiah 29.11 is another: God is going to restore Israel to prominence after he deals with the church age. He has *preserved* them in spite of the Hitlers of the world, the Spanish Empire that tried to exterminate them, and even earlier, with Esther, in the Persian Empire that tried to destroy them. And, in spite of anti-Semitism today God continues to preserve them because they have 'a future and a hope'.
4. Israel Discipline Isaiah 5.19 anticipates God dealing with Israel; even in Isaiah's day there was great apostasy and decline.
5. Israel Rebuilding Most of the passages dealing with this plan are referring to after the exile.
6. Nations We just looked at the Psalm 33 passage about the nations.
7. Jesus In His life you see examples of God working sovereignly.
8. Crucifixion Acts 2.23 *this Man, delivered over by the predetermined plan and foreknowledge of God, you nailed to a cross by the hands of godless men and put Him to death.*

Jesus was delivered over by the 'predetermined plan' from Genesis 3.15 'you will bruise his heel'; this is cryptic but if you put together all the Scripture and revelation, most theologians believe it is a reference to the Messiah or Jesus Christ. And this plan was from before the foundation of the world and according to the 'foreknowledge of God'. And 'you': they are responsible for the evil, the Roman empire in the 1st Century and the Jews that were a part of the crucifixion. They chose. 'You nailed to a cross by the hands of godless men and put Him to death'. And we deserved to die—the penalty of sin is death. He put that on Christ on the cross. Predetermined plan.

Acts 4.27 *"For truly in this city there were gathered together against Your holy servant Jesus, whom You anointed, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, along with the Gentiles and the peoples of Israel, 28 to do whatever Your hand and Your purpose predestined to occur.*

Here is the plan: Herod, Pilate, the Gentiles and the peoples of Israel carried out with God's hand and purpose His purpose that he had predestined. Again, God transforms the evil and uses it for good.

Acts 20.27 “*For I did not shrink from declaring to you the whole purpose of God*”

If you want to know more of the purpose of God, His plan, read the letters of Paul.

9. Salvation is one of those plans which he is bringing together in Romans 8.28.
10. Works For the believer, Ephesians 2.10, pertains to how we live today. *For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand so that we would walk in them.*
11. Consummation Ephesians 1.9 *He made known to us the mystery of His will, according to His kind intention which He purposed in Him 10 with a view to an administration suitable to the fullness of the times, that is, the summing up of all things in Christ, things in the heavens and things on the earth. In Him 11 also we have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to His purpose who works all things after the counsel of His will.*

There will be a future age when all of these things will be summed up: all things will work together, for good, in heaven—the spiritual realm—and on earth. ...predestined... purpose...counsel of His will. It is best to align our lives today in Him to be ready for the future.

12. Future Events

13. Prophecy There are many prophecies yet to be fulfilled.

Terms

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|--------------------|--|
| 1. Know - | οἶδα, οἶδα know by revelation not experience |
| 2. Work together - | συνεργέω (soo-ner-guéh-o) all circumstances working together for us as believers |
| 3. Called - | κλησις (klá-ysees) (noun) effectual call, not just invitation |
| 4. Purpose - | πρόθεσις (pró-theh-sees) Divine purpose of an eternal plan |

‘Purpose’ is πρόθεσις, with an eternal ending or eternal aspect to it. Not only does God have a broad purpose and a plan, but He has given each one of us a purpose for life and we can only find it in Christ, and the question is ‘Are you fulfilling what He has called you to do?’

[Romans 8.28-30 God’s Sovereign Plan - Foreknowledge 120]

We have seen kind of a big picture in terms of the whole universe, from 8.18-23. And the entire universe anticipates what God is doing and what God is doing in us in particular. Now in this passage, 8.28-30,

Paul is going to expand upon what God did in the Past, starting in eternity—if you can say ‘starting’ in relation to ‘eternity’—and what He will complete in eternity future. So He has been pleased to give us a sovereign plan and some detail concerning it, so I want to focus on that. We remember that Paul, and the other Biblical writers, wrote to real people in the 1st Century, but, since it is inspired and inerrant it is just as applicable in our century as well.

First we always want to keep in mind the context of every passage that we look at. If we fail to understand the context, oftentimes we will be misled concerning the understanding of that passage. Romans 6.23, eg, is a verse commonly used for salvation: *For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.* There is an *application* you can draw in relationship to salvation and eternal life, but, I stressed the *context* of that passage: it’s not in the area where he deals with justification or salvation, but in the section on *sanctification*.

And chapter 8 is still a part of that context on sanctification. And more specifically, the context is still part of this broader paragraph that begins in verse 17, *and if children, heirs also, heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him so that we may also be glorified with Him.* What is more prominent is the glory and the future that God has for the believer, but it is in the context of suffering.

Then in verse 18, *For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that is to be revealed to us.* Then he expounds about how the entire creation is anticipating that future glory. So this is in the context of a very practical area, that everyone experiences, some more severe than others, the context of suffering. And it is for the purpose of giving us a *perspective*, ie, an eternal viewpoint, a view from God’s perspective; and the reason that this suffering, no matter how severe it may be in this present time, cannot be compared to the glory is because that glory is so magnificent.

And he is concluding that little portion in the passage we are looking at now. So, the context from a *practical* perspective deals with everyday occurrences. As you get older you have more and more suffering, more and more pain sometimes. So it’s in the section dealing with suffering and sanctification. Suffering is one of the main instruments that God uses to sanctify us—which means conforming us to the image of Christ, and he will remind us of that in verse 29.

Context

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| 1. Practical - | suffering and sanctification |
| 2. Textual - | greatest support and promises |

Textually, ie, within the near surrounding verses in the Biblical text, it is in the midst of these great promises and concepts that God has

provided, not only to give us perspective but also to give us support in the midst of suffering. So we have the greatest support: the indwelling presence and even the prayers of the HS Himself, the power that is available to live differently from the rest of the world, in spite of suffering. And now we have this eternal perspective in the form of at least a major promise and would include many other sub-promises as well.

That is a little bit of the textual and practical context. We are in chapter 8 dealing with the power available for sanctification, verses 1-11, we have power over the sinful flesh. 8.12-17, sonship is one of those concepts of support; we are part of a family that God looks after and deals with, sons of the living God, ‘fellow-sons’ of Jesus Christ. Then the end of the passage, 18-30, the suffering I just described, in sanctification. In that we see the future hope in suffering, 18-25; present support of the HS, 26-27, and now this sovereign plan of sanctification, 28-30.

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a. Power over Sinful Flesh	8.1-11
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1) Future Hope in Suffering	8.18-27
2) Present Support of HS	8.26-27
3) Sovereign Plan of Sanctification	8.28-30
a) Promise of Plan	8.28
b) Progress of Plan	8.29

We have already looked at verse 28 in detail. The essence is that *we know*, through the OT and the NT teaching of the 1st Century, *that God causes all things to work together for good* for a particular group—*those who love God*, and more specifically to make it even clearer, *to those who are called according to His purpose*. God has a far-reaching plan that He initiated in eternity past before even creating the universe.

This brings us to verse 29 where we have the Progress of His Plan and it is related primarily to us as believers. And this brings us to a *theological* context.

Context

1. Practical - suffering and sanctification
2. Textual - greatest support and promises
3. Theological - total depravity

There is a lot of debate, and a lot has been written by commentators and theologians on 8.28-30. I am going to present what I think is the most Biblical, and I think it will help you sort through some of the problems that not only theologians, but even average Christians, have with some of the concepts here, particularly the one dealing with predestination. If God has predestined things, why even share the gospel, why evangelize, why be concerned if everything is predestined. The idea is not *fatalism*; the Bible doesn't teach fatalism, but it does teach the concept that God is in control of all things. That is a difficult area that people struggle with.

But I think if you start with a concept that is in the first few chapters of the book of Romans, that man is totally incapable of reaching God—that is the essence of total depravity. Depravity is that man has no ability to please God in any way, and therefore has no ability to gain salvation or merit before God and no capacity to reach heaven or eternal life.

Death is a description of who we were. Ephesians 2.1 says *And you were dead in your trespasses and sins*. That doesn't mean we aren't breathing, that we are not living out *some* existence. It means we are spiritually dead—what I call comprehensive death. This touches every aspect of who we are. And because we are dead spiritually, the Bible uses the word *depraved*. This is a list of our characteristics.

Death or total Depravity: in Genesis 3 and many NT passages

1. Spiritual (3.7-9) - separation
2. Intellectual (3.7) - darkened
3. Moral (3.7) - shame
4. Emotional (3.10) - fear
5. Social (3.11-12) - blame
6. Purpose (3.17-18) - damaged
7. Physical (3.19) - pain & death

You could even include our volition, our will. In Romans: *There is none that seeks after God*. Not even one person has a desire for God.

When Adam sinned he began to die, his individual cells started dying. Ephesians 2.1 *And you were dead in your trespasses and sins...*

8.30 ...whom He predestined, He also called; and these whom He called, He also justified;

He is giving a chain here or how God has worked and will work.

8.30 ... and these whom He justified, He also glorified.

Remember this is the end product of sanctification. We call that glorification. This is like a chain of what He has done, what He is in the process of doing, and what He will in fact do. This is part of the plan with regard to the *believer*, those called of God according to His purpose.

This passage doesn't stress the concept of *election* and this is one of the areas that people have a very hard time with. Basically the idea is that God made choices with respect to His human creatures—maybe even His angelic creatures.

As an analogy: when you make a plan to take a trip, you have made some choices. You have eliminated maybe London or HongKong or others. You have one point in mind: you are going to take a trip to Israel. In your plan, you make other, sub-plans or sub-parts. And you make choices all along the way. The doctrine of election simply tells us that in eternity past God made choices. He made a creation, He has a purpose for it, He has a plan for it. He can do with it whatever He wishes.

The issue: there are some that never believed, what about them? And you have the whole spectrum of ideas to explain that, from an extreme view that God chose some for eternal punishment. There is no verse that says that. And then on the other end of the spectrum, in terms of the next part: *foreknowledge* which is that God foresaw all the future events, which is true, but Arminians and some others would say that He looked forward in time and planned to choose those that would believe in Him, ie, He chooses on the basis of what His creatures decide.

Personally I have no problem with God making a selection and passing over others because of the doctrine of depravity. God had every right, you might say, to exclude all of humanity after Adam and Eve first sinned. He would be perfectly just and totally good if He condemned Adam and Eve without mentioning a plan of salvation; He didn't say, 'That's OK, we can cover that.' He could have given them eternal death—done, finished with all of humanity. God remains just, good, wise, sovereign, everything that God is, but He also chose, in that plan to provide a means where He would save some. And, because of depravity, left to ourselves, according to Romans, none of us would choose God.

So God takes the initiative, and we have the example in Genesis 3: Adam and Eve flee, but God takes the initiative to draw them back to Him; He probes their thinking, asks them questions in order to elicit a response so that they could partake of the salvation that He was granting. He had no obligation to Adam and Eve; He could have left them in their deadness. But because He also has a plan He begins to implement it with the first man and woman, and in Scripture He

expands upon that plan that would ultimately require the death of His only begotten Son. So I have no problem with God selecting some.

Now in this chart I have the word 'Election' in a different color because it is not in *this* Biblical text. But I mention it because you find it in, eg, Ephesians 1.4, where God chose—in the context of *before the foundation of the world*, ie, in eternity past God made some selections.

The key is that both are true: *volition* is part of the plan, the way God has set things up and He never violates man's volition. But God's plan is sovereign at the same time. We have to keep the balance. God has no *obligation* to any *unbeliever* because of the depravity of man.



In the text we have the word *foreknowledge*, and *calling* which we have already looked at. But I think that the first 3 (election, foreknowledge and predestination) are in eternity past. He predestinates or works out, verse 28, and then we see how He is dealing with us in the current century: that involves *calling*. There are other texts saying that God is going to *convict* and I think He convicts all, and in varying degrees, particularly those that He chose. He *convicts* of sin, but that doesn't mean that they respond. Also He *illuminates* them and shows them that they are in a desperate, lost, dead condition, but that there is a solution which is Jesus Christ, and He is the *only* solution.

And when those that He has chosen are convicted of their sin and repent, and they realize that Jesus is the only answer, and they are convinced of that, the only thing that God requires of mankind is to trust in what He has accomplished. Now 'faith' is not in this passage. The emphasis is what God is *doing*, eg, the death of Christ on the cross for us. If we trusted in Jesus Christ, He declared us righteous—that is called *justification*. All of this took place in time.

In this passage, the last chain is glorification—which is future and won't happen until we go to be with the Lord. He already alluded to

that when he talked about the whole creation anticipating the redemption of the body and receiving glorified bodies. All the universe is anticipating that. When we go to be with the Lord, we will be glorified.

8.29 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;

‘For those whom He foreknew, He also predestined to become conformed to the image of His Son’. The focus of the passage is actually the outworking of salvation, sanctification. So this plan includes a lot of details concerning our Christian life. ‘to become conformed to the image of His Son’ is sanctification.

Again the Bible doesn’t create spiritual, mystical words. God uses the language that we grow up with, pulls out words, gives them spiritual meaning, but they have a base, everyday sense.

Foreknowledge

1. Terms - προγινώσκω (pro-guee-nós-ko) verb ‘pro’ = ahead, prior. γινώσκω (guee-nós-ko) is one of the common words for ‘to know’

So the basic idea is ‘to know beforehand’ or ‘ahead of time’.

πρόγινωσις (próg-no-sees) noun

These are not common words in Scripture. The verb 5x, the noun only 2 times—only 7 times altogether.

2. Usage - 5x

To know beforehand - Acts 26.5 *since they have known about me for a long time, if they are willing to testify, that I lived as a Pharisee according to the strictest sect of our religion.*

This is one of the few times used—simply they had known him from the beginning.

Foreknowledge of God - He is omniscient...sees everything in the future as though it has already happened. He is not ‘in time’ as we are, so our ‘foreknowledge’ is not like His.

Christ - 1Peter 1.20 *For He was foreknown before the foundation of the world, but has appeared in these last times for the sake of you.*

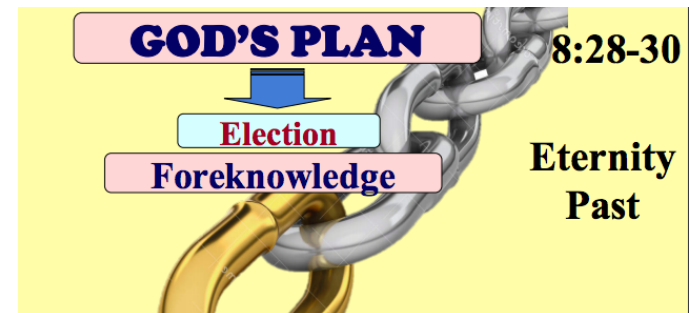
Acts 2.23 *this Man, delivered over by the predetermined plan and foreknowledge of God, you nailed to a cross by the hands of godless men and put Him to death.*

They are responsible for the death of Christ even though it was predetermined. We *all* put Him on the cross.

Israel - Romans 11.2 *God has not rejected His people whom He foreknew. Or do you not know what the Scripture says in the passage about Elijah, how he pleads with God against Israel?*

believers- 1Peter 1.1...chosen 2 *according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, by the sanctifying work of the Spirit, to obey Jesus Christ and be sprinkled with His blood: May grace and peace be yours in the fullest measure.* here, 8.29

[Romans 8.28-30 God’s Sovereign Plan - Predestination 121]



God’s Work

1. Depravity - all condemned
2. Election - God choosing some, passing over others, not intervening in depravity

The ones that do believe they believe because they *are* the chosen. And without God’s working and without God’s initiative depravity would be the outcome. He lets the outcome of depravity work its work in those that are not the chosen. This is how I am trying to put it together to make sense in my mind.

We do not have the ability even to understand predestination and the foreknowledge of God. Both are true. We can make a case for either with Scripture—which suggests that both are true.

Isaiah 55.8 *God, For He will abundantly pardon. 8 “For My thoughts are not your thoughts, Nor are your ways My ways,” declares the LORD. 9 “For as the heavens are higher than the earth, So are My ways higher than your ways And My thoughts than your thoughts.*

We simple do not have the ability to understand God completely.

8.29 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;

It is an unbreakable chain: those whom he foreknew, He also predestined.

Unbreakable Chain

1. 'those whom' - 4x in this chain, linking them.
those whom He called: none lost, none added on the way.
2. 'He also' - 4x predestined these

Predestination

1. Term - προορίζω (pro-or-éed-zo) 6x not very frequent, so we sometimes have a hard time nailing the meaning. But if you break it down: 'pro' is before or ahead of something...
ορίζω (hor-éed-zo) 8x ...hor-éed-zo, sounds like 'horizon'. The meaning has the idea of 'boundaries', has 'limits'.
πρόθεσις (pró-thay-sees) 12x This word, though not here, sometimes is translated as 'predestination'.

1. Use - of God - to determine beforehand. God made determinations. He saw outcomes (omniscience), but He determined outcomes, how things would turn out. That's what makes Bible prophecy work. That's why we have assurance that there is this future plan that God has told us about, because He is working it out.

of unbelievers- Acts 4.27 ... *Jesus, whom You anointed, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, along with the Gentiles and the peoples of Israel, 28 to do whatever Your hand and Your purpose predestined to occur.*

It even includes unbelievers. God used historical figures, Jewish and Gentiles, to do whatever He had predestined to occur. The word 'pro oridzo' is used here. He orchestrated it; and keep in mind God is also *totally holy* and not responsible for the evil, yet He can use all things for good, 8.28. He can use the evil of Herod, Pontius Pilate, all of the gentiles, all of the Jews, He can use all of their evil for good. In fact, He predetermined to do that, which is what Acts 4.28 is telling us. It goes beyond our capability to put it together.

So God works to overcome depravity, choosing some; and we know not everyone believes—most reject—and He passes over some, not intervening in their depravity and letting it run its course. The nature of depravity is such that if God just

passes over, He is not responsible for it. Man's volition chooses to reject God.

of believers - Ephesians 1.5 *He predestined us to adoption as sons through Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the kind intention of His will, ... 11 also we have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to His purpose who works all things after the counsel of His will,*

1 Corinthians 2.7 *but we speak God's wisdom in a mystery, the hidden wisdom which God predestined before the ages to our glory;*

Acts 20.27 *"For I did not shrink from declaring to you the whole purpose of God."*

Romans 8.29-30



God's Work

1. Depravity - all condemned
2. Election - God choosing some, passing over others, not intervening in depravity
3. Predestination - orchestrating outcomes for elect
Predestination, in this context, is the orchestrating of events so that the chosen hear the gospel—in a Christian family, through a tract, a missionary, a radio program, a book or whatever. He orchestrates the outcome so that the elect will hear the gospel.

And, by the way, God begins with general revelation such that *everyone* has a revelation of God, Romans 1. Therefore, Paul says, they are without excuse. There is no one that will be able to stand up before God and say, 'Well, you didn't reveal yourself to me.'

Romans 1 says, 'you had a revelation; you rejected it.' No one can stand before God and say, 'I wasn't one of the chosen'. God is going to say, 'I gave you the choice. I gave you the

general calling; you rejected that as well.’ You rejected my general revelation, you rejected the general calling and your volition said, ‘No, I am going to raise my fist against God.’ God is going to be perfectly holy, perfectly righteous, perfectly just in orchestrating the outcome for the elect.

But there is a *purpose* for this:

8.29 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;

Notice that he is not talking about salvation; he presupposes it and he can’t go beyond it without it. But there is more to it: He predestined us to become conformed to the image of His son. What is the context? That is sanctification—to become more and more like Christ in our character as we grow. We are not there instantaneously; it is a process. In fact we fall way short; that’s why we need God to ultimately intervene to complete the process. But He has predestined us to become conformed to the image of His Son. So in the sanctifying process God is working circumstances, giving you opportunity to learn from His word, to study it, to be able to have experiences, even suffering to bring you to conformity to His Son.

Purpose

1. For believers - conformed to image of Son

8.29 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 not only that (being conformed to the image of His Son), ‘so that He would be the firstborn among many brethren’. There is a purpose that goes beyond you and me, and it is focussed on the Son, Jesus Christ. The word for ‘firstborn’ is *πρωτοτόκος* (pro-to-tó-kos). It refers to Jesus being the *priority*. That is the meaning of that word. Not only priority, but the *preeminence*. Jesus will have others that will be like Him in eternity. That is the broad, big picture of the purpose of predestination. Obviously it presupposes that we come into a saving relationship.

Purpose

1. For believers - conformed to image of Son
2. For Son - ultimate purpose to glorify Son

So there is a purpose for believers and a purpose for the Son. The ultimate purpose is to glorify the Son.

God calls individuals through the gospel message, and He has done that beginning with Adam and Eve. Who took the initiative with them? Who called them back into a relationship? They were in hiding, in shame; God took the initiative to call them to Himself and He calls others that are unbelievers today to come into a relationship with Him that their sin might be forgiven. So not only is our Salvation secure, but, in this context, also our glorification! It is as if it were done and finished; it is in the past tense.

[Romans 8.28-32 God’s Sovereign Plan & Security 122]

There is a huge debate in some circles about this big issue of whether or not you can lose all of this salvation that God has provided. In fact, in a lot of other places—for example in Brazil, when I was there I was surprised at how many people believe that you can lose your salvation. (And in some cases, re-gain it as well.) In Ukraine it is a big issue and a large part of the population believe that you can lose your salvation.

If there were a major place in Scripture that you would expect Paul, for example, to teach that concept, it would be at this point in the book of Romans. After he has laid out the doctrine of salvation or justification, which is the way he describes it, then he talks about sanctification which is the process in which we live, where God is conforming us to His image; it is where we are going in righteousness. We are *declared* righteous, not *made* righteous. We never reach that ultimate sanctification, and in the passage we are studying he talks about *glorification*, that next phase that we don’t experience until we go to be with the Lord.

But if there were a point at which Paul would say, ‘But if you don’t live righteously, don’t continue to walk in the Lord, don’t continue in faith, if in fact you have abandoned Christianity, if this...or that..., you would lose everything that God has provided.’ If that were true, if that were the teaching, this is where you would find it. Instead, the conclusion of the book of Romans is, almost running it into the ground, the idea ‘if God is for us, who can be against us’?

And if that is not enough, the passage we are looking at, verses 28-30, give us this unbreakable package that ends in glorification. It’s like a chain that God has effected. This is from God’s perspective, His plan or His work, beginning in eternity past, and He will carry it to its completion—which we call glorification in eternity future.

It’s like a chain that we can’t break—only God Himself could. It’s all grace—what God has done. Paul doesn’t talk about faith, or about man’s part in it. He already talked about that in detail and told us that justification is by faith and faith alone. If we try to live the Christian

life on our own we end up saying ‘Wretched man that I am! I can’t do it’. So *living* the Christian life is by faith as well.

C. Sanctification	6-8
1. Principles	6
2. Problems	7
3. Power	8
a. Power over Sinful Flesh	8.1-11
b. Sonship of Sanctification	8.12-17
c. Suffering in Sanctification	8.18-30
1) Future Hope in Suffering	8.18-27
2) Present Support of HS	8.26-27
3) Sovereign Plan of Sanctification	8.28-30
a) Promise of Plan	8.28
b) Progress of Plan	8.29
c) Performance of Plan	8.30

8.29 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; 30 and these whom He predestined, He also called; and these whom He called, He also justified; and these whom He justified, He also glorified.



The next word after Predestination is Calling.

God's Work

1. Depravity - all condemned
2. Election - God choosing some, passing over others, not intervening in depravity
3. Foreknowledge - omniscience
4. Predestination - orchestrating outcomes for elect
5. Calling - intervening in time, general revelation, conviction of sin, illumination of cross.

God's work is intervening *in time*. Before that it was all in the plan started in eternity past. Then now, in the experience of each individual, including OT believers, NT believers and believers in our time, God calls. This is individual and personal. You don't see this, unless you are a believer and you can discern and see God working in an individual. But you probably were not aware; God had already begun this process. As I reflect back on my life I can see where God used lots of circumstances to bring me to an understanding and to bring me to a point of realizing I needed Jesus Christ.

That's *calling*. God uses many things; He begins with *general revelation*, Romans 1. God has designed the entire universe to reveal Himself and there is none that has an excuse. God has revealed Himself to every human being that has ever lived. Looking at creation, you have to come to the conclusion that it just cannot come about by natural means—there has to be a God behind it. Those that respond *positively*—that is part of the call; they have a sense that the God of creation is greater than anything that they have been taught or have believed.

Conviction of sin is part of the calling process—where God's makes a person aware that they are depraved, they are lost, they are separated, their own way doesn't work, their own efforts to please God do not work. God is not pleased. And, once a person is convicted, there is only one hope: only Jesus Christ, Acts 4.12, "*And there is salvation in no one else; for there is no other name under heaven that has been given among men by which we must be saved.*" It is only through what Christ has done.

Now one is in a position to make a decision. And God does all of this without violating human volition. That's the hard part, where it's hard to put the two together. I believe God has a plan, and He effects this plan without violating human volition. And it is at this point that the person is convinced, through all God's work ahead of time—the electing and calling. The next stage is belief and receiving justification.

8.29 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; 30 and these whom He predestined, He also called; and these whom He called, He also justified; and these whom He justified, He also glorified.

This is the next step in the chain. It is an unbreakable chain. To 'those whom' (4x, in each of the stages, they are the 'links'). Not only that, but 'He also'. Those that are foreknown, He also predestined... 100% of those in the first group are in the next...also called, and now, in this stage, justified. Then we will see in the next stage that they are also glorified.

Unbreakable Chain

1. 'those whom' - 4x in this chain, linking them.
those whom He called: none lost, none added on the way.
2. 'He also' - 4x predestined these
3. None in class lost in chain
4. Each linked to previous
5. Sovereign works of God

So, none in any class is lost in the chain: you cannot lose your salvation is basically what he is saying. Each is linked to the previous. And this is *all* the sovereign work of God. This is what is mentioned in 8.28, this plan that God effected in eternity past.



So, *calling* includes *conviction and illumination*, and that leads to *justification*. We studied justification. It includes two elements: 1- a removal of sin, forgiveness of sin: past, present and future. 2- a legal declaration of 'not guilty', because the penalty was paid, 'acquitted'. You are treated as if you were Jesus Christ who is innocent. And we stand declared righteous, justified.

God's Work

1. Depravity - all condemned
2. Election - God choosing some, passing over others, not intervening in depravity
3. Foreknowledge - omniscience
4. Predestination - orchestrating outcomes for elect
5. Calling - intervening time, general revelation, conviction of sin, illumination of cross.
6. Justification - declaring righteous 3.21-5.21

8.29 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; 30 and *these whom He predestined, He also called; and these whom He called, He also justified; and these whom He justified, He also glorified.*

Now the *glorification* is future.

Unbreakable Chain

1. 'those whom' - 4x in this chain, linking them.
those whom He called: none lost, none added on the way.
2. 'He also' - 4x predestined these
3. None in class lost in chain
4. Each linked to previous
5. Sovereign works of God
6. All aorist tense - completed action
7. From eternity to eternity

All four of these verbs are in the aorist tense which describes a completed action. In contrast to another past tense, the imperfect which can be extended past time or on-going past time, not definite, the aorist is a definite past time and most often has the idea that it is something that is completed. Even though it is in the future, *glorified* is in the aorist tense. What I think Paul is giving us here is *as sure as if has already been done and completed*. In other words, it is *secure*. Every single stage, including this one that we have not experienced yet, from our perspective of time is still future, but Paul puts it in the past tense.

Some theologians describe this kind of an aorist as 'proleptic' or 'futuristic'. Also, some of the Bible prophecies that have not been fulfilled are placed in the past tense as well, even in the OT. This unbreakable chain, from eternity to eternity, is the work of God. He is not talking about our part—he already covered that when he talked about justification which is by faith and faith alone, apart from anything we can do. So in this context he is looking at the end product of sanctification. And things that God has done are sure. There is no ambiguity, no contingency, no Plan-B.



Here are a few verses that refer to our future:

God's Work

1. Depravity - all condemned
2. Election - God choosing some, passing over others, not intervening in depravity
3. Foreknowledge - omniscience
4. Predestination - orchestrating outcomes for elect
5. Calling - intervening time, general revelation, conviction of sin, illumination of cross.
6. Justification - declaring righteous 3.21-5.21
7. Glorification - completion 2 Corinthians 3.18 *But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as from the Lord, the Spirit.*

We show little glimpses of being transformed when we reflect Jesus Christ and His nature and people see a little bit of that glory. It's a transforming process that won't be completed until glorification.

Colossians 3.10 *and have put on the new self who is being renewed to a true knowledge according to the image of the One who created him—*

More of the process...

1 John 3.2 *Beloved, now we are children of God, and it has not appeared as yet what we will be. We know that when He appears, we will be like Him, because we will see Him just as He is.*

The end of the process. Right now we can't see the end product—until He is revealed—but when Christ returns 'every eye shall see Him'. He will be fully revealed in all of His resurrection glory, and when He is revealed that's the point at which we will be revealed and also a completion of the

transformation—the end product: we shall be like Him, in resurrection bodies as well. That's glorification.

Philippians 1.6 *For I am confident of this very thing, that He who began a good work in you will perfect it until the day of Christ Jesus.*

As I said, if there were any place in Scripture that you would expect Paul to say, 'This is all true, *but* you can sin enough now, you can fall away, you can lose your salvation.' If that were true, you could expect it to be right here in Romans 8.31. Everything we have seen thus far is giving assurance of God's plan where He will effect it and complete it. But there might be some that have questions, 'What about this circumstance, what if I am not faithful in suffering, what if Satan interferes...?'

From verse 31 to the end of the chapter he is going to give security. Remember, the context is *sanctification*, but you can apply it in the broader scope; he is talking about the broad scope of salvation or justification as well. If you can't lose your *sanctification*, then obviously you are not losing your *salvation* either. So verses 31-39 of the chapter are on the Security of Sanctification.

C. Sanctification	6-8
1. Principles	6
2. Problems	7
3. Power	8
a. Power over Sinful Flesh	8.1-11
b. Sonship of Sanctification	8.12-17
c. Suffering in Sanctification	8.18-30
d. Security of Sanctification	8.31-39
1) Questions on Security	8.31-35
a) Questions on Opposition	8.31-32

He is going to give us a series of questions. Most are rhetorical, i.e., not asking for an answer, but give an implied answer. Most of the answers are 'No' in 31-35, and then some extended answers in 36-39, even though he will answer the questions as he goes along as well.

Questions: 8.31-35
&
Answers: 8.36-39

8.31 What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who is against us?

Paul is probably referring to all that he has said already in Romans, but at least the last theme of sanctification. He is going to ask if you can lose your salvation and his answer: Absolutely not. **Glorification is sure, you will get there, even if you die in a backslidden condition.** This goes against those who say that you would lose your salvation/justification.

Q & A

#1 General - 8.28-30, all of 8, 6-8 concerning all before, can you lose salvation?

This is a rather general question: What then shall we say to these things? And he asks as second question that actually answers it.

8.31 What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who is against us?

If God is for us, who is against us? You can come up with any scenario in your thinking and you can answer it, 'Well, is God greater than that'? Yes! If He is *for* us then obviously there is nothing that is going to intervene that will cause us to be insecure in our sanctification and/or glorification.

What kind of conditional clause is this? 'If God is for us...' 1st class conditional. Remember there are at least 4 different kinds of conditional clauses in Greek language. The 1st conditional assumes the premise to be true. And you can even translate the 'if' in a more positive way, 'Since God is for us...' Ie, the question or condition assumes the truth of the statement. So we are assuming God is for us and if that is the case who can be against us? You can bring up any possible scenario that could in any way disrupt the goal, but he is going through a series of things as he presents all these questions and basically the answer is 'None of these things.'

What about Satan? He is more powerful than any human being. Is there anything he can do? He will answer that as well. This 'If God is for us, who is against us?' trumps all else. There is nothing that can take that away from us.

Q & A

#1 General - 8.28-30, all of 8, 6-8 concerning all before, can you lose salvation?

#2 Question as Answer: God is for us.
unbelievers? demons? Satan?

The answer to the first question: God is for us...you can't think of any unbeliever that can 'trip you up', nor any demon that might put

an obstacle and tempts you so that you do some horrendous thing, or even Satan himself...Greater is He than he who is in the world (Satan). God is for us. Who can derail us? No one.

8.32 He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him over for us all, how will He not also with Him freely give us all things?

He is going review some of what he has already talked about: Christ dying. That probably goes back to Genesis 22 where it speaks of Abraham who did not spare his only son and God provided a substitute. Well, God didn't spare *His* Son but *made* His Son the substitute.

[Romans 8.31-34; Genesis 22.9-12 Questions on Eternal Security123]

In NT times there were very few other NT books even by the time Romans was written, there were only a few letters, at least one gospel. But the text that the 1st Century believer used in the time of Paul and the writing of Romans would have been the Old Testament. If you were grounded in God's word, this passage would remind you of a very important passage in the OT. It would take you back to Genesis 22 where it refers to Abraham not sparing his son.

The context: God gives tremendous promises to Abraham who leaves his home town and enters the land of Canaan...The promise involves a son, a nation, a land, but everything is focused on a descendant. Sarah had never had a child and now she is passed the age of child-bearing. Abraham himself is very, very old at this point. (He was 75 when he entered Canaan.)

God puts Abraham through a series of tests to grow his faith, but he also stumbles, and one of his failures of faith was that he reasoned in his mind that perhaps God would give him a son by Hagar. But God works to bring a son directly from Abraham and Sarah. Isaac is finally born and the text emphasizes that it was a supernatural birth because of the age of the parents.

So the son of promise is here, and probably is a teenager by the time we get to Genesis 22, the occasion of this test. 22.9 *Then they came to the place of which God had told him;*

Probably temple mount—where eventually Solomon would build the temple.

...and Abraham built the altar there and arranged the wood, and bound his son Isaac and laid him on the altar, on top of the wood. 10 Abraham stretched out his hand and took the knife to slay his son. But the angel of the LORD called to him from heaven and said, "Abraham, Abraham!" And he said, "Here I am." 12 He said, "Do not stretch out your hand against the lad, and do nothing to him; for now I know that you fear God, since you have not withheld your son, your only son, from Me."

‘**Withheld**’ in the Greek translation is the exact same word that we have in Romans 8.32 so could read ‘...did not **spare** φείδομαι (fi-do-mah-ee) your only son’. And this passage would have reminded the Jews of Genesis 22.12. But notice also: ‘your only son’. Was the angel of the Lord unaware that there was Ishmael? No. The word we have here is the same one in the NT that designates ‘only son’, not in the sense that there are no other sons, but in the sense of the **son of priority**, and in this case, the **son of promise**, the son through whom God was going to work. So the Romans passage reminds us of that.

There is another passage that helps us understand it, Hebrews 11.17, which is a commentary on Genesis 22, *By faith Abraham, when he was tested, offered up Isaac, and he who had received the promises was offering up his only begotten son;*

Was the writer of Hebrews unaware that there was an Ishmael in the story? No. We have that same special word μονογενής (mo-no-gueh-neis) the son of priority, the son through which God has done a work, the promise. 11.18 *it was he to whom it was said, “IN ISAAC YOUR DESCENDANTS SHALL BE CALLED.”*

In other words, ‘he is the son of promise’, the son of priority. Then notice 11.19, *He considered that God is able to raise people even from the dead, from which he also received him back as a type.*

So Abraham received Isaac back, believing that God could raise him from the dead, ie, Abraham believed God that He would fulfill everything that He said about this son. This is the major and ultimate test of Abraham’s faith.

So this passage in Romans...

8.32 He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him over for us all, how will He not also with Him freely give us all things?

...is a reference to God who did not spare the Lord Jesus Christ, using wording that reminds one of, and is an allusion to, Genesis 22. The Greek word, being the same as in Genesis 22.12, φείδομαι, feídomai.

And then another interesting phrase,

8.32 He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him over for us all, how will He not also with Him freely give us all things?

I think that Paul’s choice of word for ‘delivered’ is to remind us of another incident, particularly the sacrifice of the Son, the arrest of Jesus and His being delivered over. παρέδοκεν (pah-réh-do-ken) is used several times in the gospels, of Judas Iscariot who delivered Jesus over to be the sacrificial son. Notice that Judas is the human agency. We

have been mentioning that God can transform the evil of men to use it for good. We used the crucifixion as the prime example of God transforming the evil of men and using it for the ultimate salvation of all of men.

Here Judas delivered Him, but behind that and ultimately in the sovereignty of God, it is *God* that delivered Jesus Christ over in order that He might die for us. The ‘for us’ is the substitutionary aspect. In fact the word is used in some contexts for the substitutionary atonement of the Lord Jesus Christ. But God is ultimately the one who delivered Christ for crucifixion; it is for our benefit and in our place.

For Abraham there was a substitute provided. Actually one of the teachings of Genesis 22 is substitutionary atonement. The lamb that was caught in the bush was the substitute for Isaac, but in the case of the Jesus Christ, He was *our* substitute, so He had to be delivered over as the sacrificial lamb. So 8.32 is very insightful in terms of what God has done in not sparing His Son, but delivering Him over for crucifixion. And that leads us to the last part of the verse:

8.32 He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him over for us all, how will He not also with Him freely give us all things?

The word for ‘freely give’ in the Greek text is a ‘grace’ word, one related to grace word group. (χαρίζομαι (khah-réed-zo-mah-ee) It is an argument from the greater to the lesser. If God gave the *greatest* of gifts, His only Son, you can only imagine the emotions and the thoughts that went through Abraham—this was the most valuable thing that he had, he had waited years, everything hinged on it, all of the future of the descendants, And he had to give that up. God gave it back, as Hebrews indicates, in response to Abraham’s faith.

And in the case of Jesus Christ this was the greatest that God gave. Now how will He not also give us the lesser? In this context, is He going to complete the sanctifying process? Is He going to glorify? Yes. And *more*, all things.

So we can summarize these first three questions: The first is a general one, and I think it gets us into the others and transitions from everything else that Paul has been talking about concerning all that he has said before: How do we respond or conclude from that?

Then question #2 answers that: God is for us and since He *is* for us, then there is *nothing* that can oppose us. We may have opposition in the meantime, but ultimately there is nothing that will completely oppose us.

Q & A

#1 General - 8.28-30, all of 8, 6-8 concerning all before, can you lose salvation?

#2 Question as Answer: God is for us
unbelievers? demons? Satan?

#3 Spare Son - Genesis 22.12
delivered - of Judas
of Father

God gave greatest - lesser?

And, if He has given His only Son, the *ultimate*, is He going to withhold Justification? Can you sin enough that God is now going to withhold it? Can you lose it? God's going to give you even the lesser. He didn't spare His own Son. If God is for us, nothing else matters! So Paul used a series of question and answers to make even stronger his point that we cannot lose our salvation.

Q & A summary

#1 General - concerning all before

#2 God is for us - nothing can oppose

#3 God gave greatest - will give lesser

C. Sanctification	6-8
1. Principles	6
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3. Power	8
a. Power over Sinful Flesh	8.1-11
b. Sonship of Sanctification	8.12-17
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d. Security of Sanctification	8.31-39
1) Questions on Security	8.31-35
a) Questions on Opposition	8.31-32
b) Questions on Accusations	8.33-34

This brings us to verses 33 and 34 where we have a second set of questions—these relating to accusations that could be brought to the believer.

8.33 Who will bring a charge against God's elect? God is the one who justifies;

‘Who will bring a charge against God's elect?’ Keep in mind the not only the context of Romans but remember Paul's terminology in the book. He uses terminology that is related to the courtroom. Who, in the ultimate courtroom of God will bring a charge—ie, point out a sin or bring an accusation of some sort against God's elect.

There are two words to look at. ‘To bring a charge’ = ‘enkaléo’, a legal charge. Then ‘elect’ which we find often in Scripture relating to this whole concept of the doctrine of election. We talked about that

chain of things that God has accomplished or are in His plan for the believer.

The doctrine of election is not stated or mentioned, but here we have a word related to it. I believe that it is part of the chain but Paul just doesn't include it in his discussion in verses 29 and 30. Now here we see the noun form of God's choosing or election. Again, a theological word taken from common usage of the day meaning ‘choosing’ something. In Luke 10.42, *but only one thing is necessary, for Mary has chosen the good part*, Also Luke 14.7 in reference to choosing a place of honor, *He noticed how they had been picking out the places of honor at the table...*

Q & A

#4 Legal charge ἐγκαλέω (en-kah-léh-o) in court

Elect ἐκλογή (ek-lo-gáy) noun = God's chosen

ἐκλεκτός (ek-lek-tós) adjective = chosen

ἐκλεγομαι (ek-léh-go-mah-ee) = choose

In the NT the verb occurs 22 times, the noun also about 22 times, but when it comes to God, He made choices in eternity past. In fact, if you do a word study, you will find lots of different categories of choices that God made. One is that Christ is God's chosen; eg, in 1Peter 2.4, *And coming to Him as to a living stone which has been rejected by men, but is choice and precious in the sight of God*, ie, special, referring to Christ Jesus Himself. The same in 1Peter 2.6.

It is not used in the sense of salvation, is not related to salvation in that context because it refers to Jesus Christ—because He is *choice*, looking more at the *quality* of Christ Jesus.

It is even used of angels—the good angels—in 1Timothy 5.21, *I solemnly charge you in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus and of His chosen angels...* This also is not related to salvation. It is God simply making a choice to preserve some of the angelic realm to keep them from falling.

It is used in other categories as well. In fact it is used very often in the OT of several individuals such as Abraham, Nehemiah 9.7, *“You are the LORD God, Who chose Abram And brought him out from Ur of the Chaldees, And gave him the name Abraham.* So God made a selection there out of all the peoples and that culture, out of all the people in the city of Ur, He chose *one*.

There are verses that refer to Moses as chosen, Aaron chosen to be head of the priesthood, even Saul who later was rejected by God, and obviously David and Solomon. And God chooses persons for different tasks.

In the NT what is the nature of this choice concerning the believer? There are some in our camp that look at all these passages that refer to the believer corporately and they have a hard time seeing it as an individual choice. To them it seems to go against other principles like the concept of volition, but I have no problem with God choosing on an individual basis. And on an individual basis certainly we are a choice in terms of the overall body of Christ, but I think that how you get into the body of Christ is partly God making choices in eternity past.

The majority of believers generally believe that God in His foreknowledge, knowing ahead of time who is going to be responsive and who is not, chooses those who in fact would believe in Him. But that puts the concept really in the hands of man rather than in the hands of God.

I prefer to look at it from the perspective of God making the choice and because He has made the choice He also does all the other aspects of links in the chain that we saw in verses 29-30 to even call, convict and illuminate so that the person recognizes that His only hope is in Jesus Christ and he exercised that volition to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ. But God is the one that chose him and I believe that God passes over others and lets their depravity run its course as we have talked about in the last few lessons.

So I would describe this doctrine as a work of God alone, based on His character and for His glory without regard to anything in man, where He chose some sinners in eternity past to be saved and glorified and others apparently He passed over.

8.33 Who will bring a charge against God's elect? God is the one who justifies;

He answers: 'God is the one who justifies.' The judgment of the judge has been made and He has made a *declaration*. He has acquitted us, not based on anything we have done or who we are, but simply based on what Jesus Christ has done, as we will see in the next verse.

Q & A

- #4 Legal charge (ἐγκαλέω, egkaléo) in court
Elect ἐλογή, eklogáy, noun = God's chosen
ἐκλεκτός, eklektós, adjective = chosen
ἐκλεγομαι, eklegomai, = choose
Declaration of righteousness
Every sin justified by ultimate Judge

He has forgiven sin and declared us righteous. That's justification. And if the supreme and ultimate Judge has made this

declaration, who will bring a charge that is going to stand up in court? And the obvious answer is that no one can bring such a charge.

The NAS puts a semi-colon at the end of the verse 33. Some versions put a question mark. I remind you that in the original manuscripts there is no punctuation; in fact sentences and words run together, but context is usually clear enough to decide but some translators would make it a question in line with the others in the passage. I prefer to view it as answer and with a semi-colon which then leads into verse 34 where he is going to give the *basis* for this justification which is that God has declared us righteous.

So in summary here we have a legal charge in a courtroom that is against God's elect, His chosen ones, and the decision in court has been made. We are declared righteous which means that every sin has been covered by God's justification. And a summary of the first four questions:

Q & A summary

- #1 General - concerning all before
#2 God is for us - nothing can oppose
#3 God gave greatest - will give lesser
#4 Every sin justified by ultimate Judge

We can illustrate this using the highest court in our country, the Supreme Court, all legal decisions can be taken through a series of different courts, if they are taken by the Supreme Court, *that* decision is final. It ends there.

The analogy is that there is an ultimate court that is even greater than the Supreme Court—that's God's Supreme Court. And God, when He makes a decision in His court, that decision is ultimately final. And, incidentally, even Supreme Court decisions can be reviewed later and be overturned. One of the issues of today is whether Roe vs Wade could be overturned. But there is a court that, when it makes its decision, it is ultimately and totally final; that is God's final decision. His decision is that we are justified. So no one can bring a charge against us, God's elect, because we have been justified.

Final legal decisions at Supreme court
God's final decision = Justification

8.33 Who will bring a charge against God's elect? God is the one who justifies; 34 who is the one who condemns? Christ Jesus is He who died, yes, rather who was raised, who is at the right hand of God, who also intercedes for us.

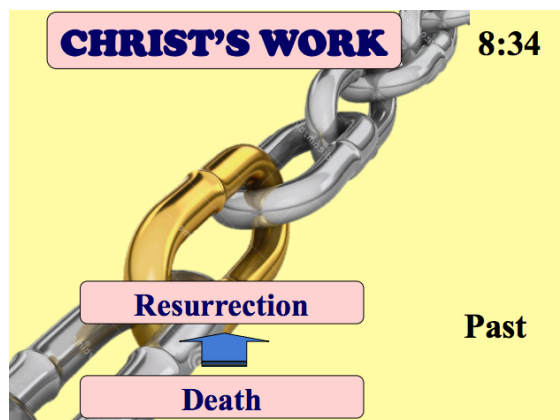
Verse 34 actually supports what God has done in justifying. But he asks another related, courtroom, question, similar to the one ‘Who can bring an accusation or a charge? He asks: ‘Who is the one who condemns?’ Who condemns? Who can say that this person is guilty? Now he answers:

8.33 Who will bring a charge against God’s elect? God is the one who justifies; 34 who is the one who condemns? Christ Jesus is He who died, yes, rather who was raised, who is at the right hand of God, who also intercedes for us.

Jesus Christ is the one who died. He’s the one that provided the basis for justification. God can declare us righteous because Christ paid the penalty that we deserve to pay. Christ died; He paid the penalty. And not only that, but:

8.33 Who will bring a charge against God’s elect? God is the one who justifies; 34 who is the one who condemns? Christ Jesus is He who died, yes, rather who was raised, who is at the right hand of God, who also intercedes for us.

‘Yes, rather who was *raised*’. To confirm that God accepted that sacrifice, the one atonement that Jesus Christ offered in payment for sin was validated by the resurrection of Christ and showed that Christ was victorious over death. You can use the same illustration that I used—I’m not saying they are necessarily parallel—but what we do have, I think, is another unbreakable chain relating to the work of Christ. I use this illustration to show the unbreakable chain of that plan that God started in eternity past and ends in even yet in the future with regard to our glorification. But I am going to use the same imagery.



There are two parts: first the death, then resurrection and both of these took place historically in the past in the 1st Century. And that is not all: we also have in verse 34:

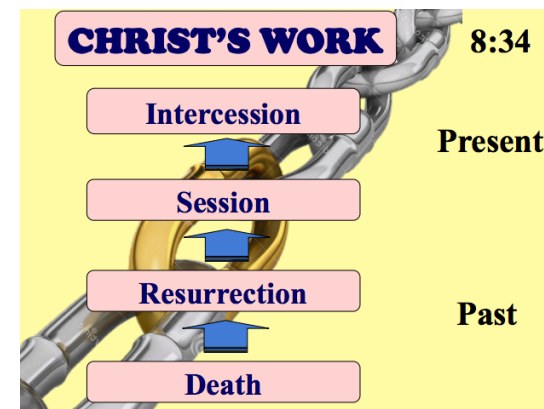
8.33 Who will bring a charge against God’s elect? God is the one who justifies; 34 who is the one who condemns? Christ Jesus is He who died, yes, rather who was raised, who is at the right hand of God, who also intercedes for us.

‘who (referring back to Christ Jesus) is at the right hand of God’. This is one of many verses that say this. He is acting as High Priest, not so much as king, because of the next part of the verse:

8.33 Who will bring a charge against God’s elect? God is the one who justifies; 34 who is the one who condemns? Christ Jesus is He who died, yes, rather who was raised, who is at the right hand of God, who also intercedes for us.

‘who also intercedes for us.’ He is mediating, interceding. If anyone would bring a charge or attempts to condemn us, Christ is there, saying, I paid the penalty, I died, I covered that sin; that sin has been dealt with once and for all. Hebrews says: He died once and covered all of the sins. And now He is interceding for us, that we may, in fact experience more and more of the righteousness or growth since being declared righteous.

Theologians say that Christ is ‘in session’ and one of the functions he performs, by the way, is giving spiritual gifts. Also other things He does from the right hand: He is head over the church, but specifically for us as individuals He is praying or interceding—so I put them in present time.



Q & A summary

- #1 General - concerning all before
- #2 God is for us - nothing can oppose
- #3 God gave greatest - will give lesser
- #4 Every sin justified by ultimate Judge
- #5 Every sin covered by work of Christ

So we can summarize:

- #1 We have that general question concerning everything He has talked about.
- #2 Most importantly, the main theme of everything that follows, God is for us. And, since God is for us, then nothing else can oppose us.
- #3 If God has given us the greatest in Christ and delivered Him up for crucifixion, then He will give us the lesser, the inheritance. The full package in terms of our salvation that is yet future is not at risk.
- #4 Every sin has been justified by the Father, the ultimate Judge.
- #5 Who can condemn? Based on what Jesus has done, every sin is covered.

There are two more questions.

[Romans 8.34-39; 2Corinthians 11.23-28 Security & Overwhelming Conquest 124]

- | | |
|--------------------------------|---------|
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| c) Question on Separation | 8.35 |

The first us on Separation:

8.35 Who will separate us from the love of Christ? Will tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?

No one can accuse us in court. Now, can anything separate us? He will give us 2 categories, one that deals with persons—can any person, human or angelic—and then he also gives us circumstances.

He begins with ‘Who..’ making it personal. Then he gives us a long list.

Q & A summary

- #1 General - concerning all before
- #2 God is for us - nothing can oppose
- #3 God gave greatest - will give lesser
- #4 Every sin justified by ultimate Judge
- #5 Every sin covered by work of Christ
- #6 No one can separate from Christ’s love

But question #6 tells us that ‘*No one*’ can separate us from Christ’s love. No personage.

8.35 Who will separate us from the love of Christ? Will tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?

And will circumstances separate us? He ‘brainstorms’ mentioning various, possible things that might separate us. All of these, in our mind when we are in the midst of tribulation, for example, can cloud our minds and our thinking and we may sense that we are being separated, even though we know that we can’t lose our salvation.

Keep in mind that he is writing the book of Romans when persecution had already begun in Rome. It would become more and more intense during the reign of Nero, and during that reign Paul would be beheaded, according to the tradition. He was martyred. In 2Timothy 4 he is awaiting imminent death essentially. He actually experienced all of the things in this list. So he speaks from experience.

Tribulation has the sense of being under pressure. I think it is a general term. And it is the word used for the Great Tribulation, the 7-year period of time that is the most severe time of trouble for believers in all of world history. Most believers here during the tribulation will not even survive. Most will be martyred.

Separation?

- | | |
|------------------|-------------------|
| 1. Tribulation - | under pressure |
| 2. Distress - | hemmed in |
| 3. Persecution - | for Christ’s sake |
| 4. Famine - | poverty |
| 5. Nakedness - | destitution |
| 6. Peril - | physical hazards |
| 7. Sword- | martyrdom |

Distress: when you are boxed in, can't move, can't change anything, backed into a corner with nowhere to go. That is the idea of this word. And I think the rest of the list are sort of specifics of these two more general terms. If you do word studies on them you will see they are used in a variety of contexts.

Persecution: specifically, opposition for your faith, or suffering if you name the name of Christ, so it's persecution for Christ's sake. And a specific aspect of tribulation or distress is famine or overall poverty without even enough to put a meal on a table. Similarly destitution with out enough clothing. Peril, a specific hazard. And the sword in this context that was often used in martyrdom when people were beheaded or stabbed to death.

Will any of these thing separate us from the love of Christ? Maybe in our thinking when God seems distant and we ask 'Why am I going through this? When is this going to end? But in reality the implied answer is 'None of these things can separate us, not only ultimately but it is possible, even in the midst of the worst persecution, God can be the closest to us.

This passage of Paul's is from the letter when he is defending his apostleship, just explaining the extent to which he has paid a price in his apostleship. You can imagine Paul going through all these experiences—and more. But they did not separate him from Christ; in fact probably drew him closer.

2Corinthians 11.23 *Are they servants of Christ?--I speak as if insane--I more so; in far more labors, in far more imprisonments, beaten times without number, often in danger of death. 24 Five times I received from the Jews thirty-nine lashes. 25 Three times I was beaten with rods, once I was stoned, three times I was shipwrecked, a night and a day I have spent in the deep. 26 I have been on frequent journeys, in dangers from rivers, dangers from robbers, dangers from my countrymen, dangers from the Gentiles, dangers in the city, dangers in the wilderness, dangers on the sea, dangers among false brethren; 27 I have been in labor and hardship, through many sleepless nights, in hunger and thirst, often without food, in cold and exposure. 28 Apart from such external things, there is the daily pressure on me of concern for all the churches.*

Our emotions lie to us often. We have to have the Biblical perspective. So answer #6: No one can separate us from the love of Christ. And then question #7 answered with a list.

Q & A summary

- #1 General - concerning all before
- #2 God is for us - nothing can oppose
- #3 God gave greatest - will give lesser
- #4 Every sin justified by ultimate Judge

- #5 Every sin covered by work of Christ
- #6 No one can separate from Christ's love
- #7 No circumstance can separate from the love of Christ

Questions: 8.31-35

&

Answers: 8.36-39

We had questions in verses 31-35 and then there is expansion on the answers in 36-39.

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1) Questions on Security	8.31-35
2) Answers on Security	8.36-39
a) Consideration of OT	8.36

Now he continues answering things even though in a way he has already answered the questions.

8.36 Just as it is written, "FOR YOUR SAKE WE ARE BEING PUT TO DEATH ALL DAY LONG; WE WERE CONSIDERED AS SHEEP TO BE SLAUGHTERED."

He begins with a consideration from the OT. How were the believers in the OT considered? 'Just as it was written' refers to the Bible in the 1st Century. Romans was being written.

8.36 Just as it is written, "FOR YOUR SAKE WE ARE BEING PUT TO DEATH ALL DAY LONG; WE WERE CONSIDERED AS SHEEP TO BE SLAUGHTERED."

'being put to death all day' is the idea of 'I'm dying, moment by moment all day long, going through death over and over and over.' It's a continual death experience. Psalm 44.20-21 *He feeds on ashes; a deceived heart has turned him aside. And he cannot deliver himself, nor say, "Is there not a lie in my right hand?"*

21 “Remember these things, O Jacob, And Israel, for you are My servant; I have formed you, you are My servant, O Israel, you will not be forgotten by Me.

This is actually a lament psalm. It is a record of his suffering, but we see in verses 20 and 21 that it is not for sin or his own stupidity. It’s persecution. This is nothing new. It’s what OT saints experienced, ‘dying over and over.’ Any suffering we experience—people have experienced *worse* in the past. So from the 1st Century perspective the OT saints experienced the same thing.

Images - Psalm 44.22 *But for Your sake we are killed all day long; We are considered as sheep to be slaughtered.*

The imagery is of a lamb being slaughtered for sacrifice—a common scene, as gross as it is, blood spread, the animal in agony and pain until its last breath, offered on an altar, sacrificed.
> Dying over and over

8.36 Just as it is written, “FOR YOUR SAKE WE ARE BEING PUT TO DEATH ALL DAY LONG; WE WERE CONSIDERED AS SHEEP TO BE SLAUGHTERED.”

That is what we are like: like sheep being slaughtered, suffering for Christ’s sake.

Images - Psalm 44.22 *But for Your sake we are killed all day long; We are considered as sheep to be slaughtered.*

> Dying over and over
> Sacrifice
> Hebrews 11.36-38 talking about the faith of OT saints, identified specific ones—Abraham, Noah, etc.
...and others experienced mockings and scourgings, yes, also chains and imprisonment. 37 They were stoned, they were sawn in two, they were tempted, they were put to death with the sword; they went about in sheepskins, in goatskins, being destitute, afflicted, ill-treated 38 (men of whom the world was not worthy), wandering in deserts and mountains and caves and holes in the ground.

This is what OT saints experienced and there a lot of examples. That’s the normal, the typical. America is the exception. We are probably the only culture where Christians did not suffer. 2Timothy 3.12 *Indeed, all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will be persecuted.*

C. Sanctification	6-8
1. Principles	6
2. Problems	7
3. Power	8
a. Power over Sinful Flesh	8.1-11
b. Sonship of Sanctification	8.12-17
c. Suffering in Sanctification	8.18-30
d. Security of Sanctification	8.31-39
1) Questions on Security	8.31-35
2) Answers on Security	8.36-39
a) Consideration of OT	8.36
b) Conquerors Described	8.37

Conquerors. Victory in the midst of suffering.

8.37 But in all these things we overwhelmingly conquer through Him who loved us

‘In all these things’ = persecution, distress, famine, sword—suffering in general.

Conquerors

> In these things - not ‘away from’
Notice it is ‘*in*’ these things, not an escape, *not away from* them.
It is in the midst of the suffering that we can be victorious.

8.37 But in all these things we overwhelmingly conquer through Him who loved us

‘We overwhelmingly conquer.’ Remember he is talking about sanctification in this context. I can be set apart and God can use this to make me more holy.

Conquerors

> In these things - not ‘away from’
> υπερνικάω (hu-per-vee-káh-o) = to over-conquer, hyper-conquer

ὑπερ (hu-per) = for, over

νικάω (vi-ká-o) = be a victor

Composite words do not always have the same meaning as their parts. An example in English is ‘pineapple’; it has nothing to do with a ‘pine’ nor an ‘apple’. But in this case it does. Note that Nike took the name for their products from this word, νικάω (ni-ká-o) = to be a victor.

> ‘overwhelmingly conquer’

Conquerors

- > In these things - not 'away from'
- > Overwhelmingly conquer - to over-conquer, hyper-conquer
- > Present tense - ongoing

Notice that it is in the present tense 'we overwhelmingly conquer'. This is ongoing. You may face a problem today and you can overwhelmingly conquer today. Then you may experience something different tomorrow and be a conqueror again. It is a continuous, ongoing experience. As long as we are in these frail bodies, we need to appropriate this overwhelmingly conquering idea.

8.37 But in all these things we overwhelmingly conquer through Him who loved us.

But, here is the key; it is not just pushing on and saying 'I'm determined', you always have 'through Him who loved us'. That is the whole topic of chapter 6: union with Christ, baptized into Christ, united with Him, in that relationship with Him and it's *through* Him; it's not conquering on our own. *He* is the overwhelming conqueror. It's allowing Him to live through us that we can experience victory.

Conquerors

- > In these things - not 'away from'
- > Overwhelmingly conquer - to over-conquer, hyper-conquer
- > Present tense - ongoing
- > Means - through not only the intercessor but One who loves us

He is not *only* the intercessor; He is at the right hand interceding, not a detached defense lawyer that you see in court and pay a lot for and who is only interested in the money, but He is an intercessor who is looking after our best interests and has a real tie to us.

And here is the answer to "Can anyone separate us from the love of Christ?" No. He loved us and in His session He continues to love us. So believers are described in verse 37, and in verses 38 and 39 this conquest is *comprehensive*.

[Romans 8.37-39 Assurance of Sanctification and Salvation 125]

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8.38 For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers,

The idea is that Paul is definitely convinced, persuaded, ie, he is not going to be swayed away from this. As we noted, he has experienced it, knows it and therefore is convinced—and knows it also for us just as for the Roman believers since it is inspired.

Comprehensive

1. Stand convinced - perfect tense

It is in the perfect tense which is a past tense but it has ongoing effects or ramifications. Here it is certain; nothing is going to change that.

8.38 For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers,

Then he makes another list...Some Romans were being martyred. Death does not separate; in fact that brings people immediately into the presence of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Comprehensive

1. Stand convinced - perfect tense
2. Death/life - present experience

Even worse than death, for the Christians, *life*: the pain, suffering, the insecurity and all of the negative things that we could—and they in fact did experience.

8.38 For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers,

Now he deals with things outside of this life. We know that the Bible teaches that there is an unseen realm. In fact this room is filled with creatures that we can't even feel, sense or even know about. But there are angelic creatures that are unseen. 'Angels' may be positive or

good angels, not principalities. If you put together all the verses that deal with angelic creatures you find out there is a hierarchy; in fact it seems to be somewhat complex, more than what we can sort out just from the Biblical text.

Principalities appear to be creatures at a higher level. It could refer to government officials as well, but here it is probably the demonic realm since most of the other things are kind of contrasts. In fact they are like merisms: 'I worked day and night' does not necessarily mean that I worked 24 hours, but very intensely. From one extreme to another extreme is a merism. Death nor life: everything that happens in experience all the ways to the end of it.

Another one could be from the good angels to the opposite 'principalities', probably demonic; so attacks from the demon world cannot separate us from the love of Christ. That is one of their goals—to give you the *sense* that you are separated so that you *doubt* the goodness and security of God. And they try to make you think that you can lose what has been promised.

Another probable merism: God created the heavens and the earth. There is no word in Hebrew for *universe*, so these two entities far from each other serve to indicate the entire created realm.

Comprehensive

1. Stand convinced - perfect tense
2. Death/life - present experience
3. Angels/Principalities - celestial creatures

8.38 For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers,

'Nor things present, not things to come'—another merism. Not to worry about today and the money needed in the future or, if the government going to change, etc. Paul is listing things that we might come up with.

Comprehensive

1. Stand convinced - perfect tense
2. Death/life - present experience
3. Angels/Principalities - celestial
4. Present /future - time

8.38 For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers,

'Nor powers'. This is an interesting one because it is by itself, doesn't have a contrast with it. The use of the word 'powers' for

miraculous events doesn't fit the context. It is also associated with government, people in high office. It could be any, good or bad, power, or it could be Satan himself, or angelic creatures.

Comprehensive

1. Stand convinced - perfect tense
2. Death/life - present experience
3. Angels/Principalities - celestial
4. Present /future - time
5. Powers - Satan

8.38 For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor any other created thing, will be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Then, in verse 39, he is referring to things that related to space. Neither heights nor depths. Some of the commentators suggest that the words in the Greek text are sometimes used in reference to celestial stars, astronomical observations and astrology. Again, this is not clear; Paul may be just thinking of the different categories: spacial, time, etc. Barnhouse suggests that in that culture because of their association with astrology and such, any superstitions they had would affect the security they had with Christ Jesus.

This passage is an example of how translators make decisions in their work. Since there is no punctuation in the Greek text, they have to decide which words to group together. In most cases the punctuation they place is very clear and in some cases like this one it's not so clear, so the translators try to help you out with what they think is best here.

We have mentioned that the King James and New King James utilize a set of manuscripts that were available in 1600, called the Received Text. Remember we have no originals of the Bible and likewise in the classical writings which are also reconstructed. There is no comparison in the amount of material we have for the Bible compared to what they have for the classics in Greek. We are sure that we have not lost a single word of the Scriptures.

The later translations are made from manuscripts found much later—some of which were older, ie, closer to the time when they were written. The Dead Sea Scrolls were discovered in 1948 and gave us great assurance that what we have in terms of the Biblical text is very close to the original.

Comprehensive

1. Stand convinced - perfect tense
2. Death/life - present experience

3. Angels/Principalities - celestial
4. Present /future - time
5. Powers - Satan
6. Height/depth - space

8.38 For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, 39 nor height, nor depth, nor any other created thing, will be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

‘Can I decide on my own? God, I’m done with you’. Well, are you a ‘created thing’? I think this phrase is a ‘catch-all’. ‘Nor any other created thing.’ Even theologians cannot think of any other category. In fact this kind of goes against the Arminian theological system which says that you *can* lose your salvation—you can choose to reject God and fall away.

Comprehensive

1. Stand convinced - perfect tense
2. Death/life - present experience
3. Angels/Principalities - celestial
4. Present /future - time
5. Powers - Satan
6. Height/depth - space
7. Any thing else - comprehensive

8.38 For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, 39 nor height, nor depth, nor any other created thing, will be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Until now it was about the love of Christ and here it’s the love of God that is emphasized....

8.38 For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, 39 nor height, nor depth, nor any other created thing, will be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

...which is *in* Christ Jesus our Lord, ie, it is to those that have that relationship with Christ Jesus. It is through that relationship that we are secure in Him. Again, if there were any place that could mention that you could lose that salvation, it would right here. Instead we have the very opposite.

Overall, I think that the view we are taking is more of a minority viewpoint. The majority of Christendom would say that you could lose your salvation. And the main verses they will use are these:

Problems

1. John 15.1-6 - illustration

“I am the true vine, and My Father is the vinedresser. 2 “Every branch in Me that does not bear fruit, He takes away; and every branch that bears fruit, He prunes it so that it may bear more fruit. 3 “You are already clean because of the word which I have spoken to you. 4 “Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself unless it abides in the vine, so neither can you unless you abide in Me. 5 “I am the vine, you are the branches; he who abides in Me and I in him, he bears much fruit, for apart from Me you can do nothing. 6 “If anyone does not abide in Me, he is thrown away as a branch and dries up; and they gather them, and cast them into the fire and they are burned.

Jesus is talking about the vine and the branches, and if you don’t bear fruit or you are not connected to the vine...cast into the fire and burned. Is that hell? It’s a pretty strong statement. But there is a fundamental, hermeneutical principle: you don’t establish doctrine on the basis of an *illustration*. And we do not use every detail of an illustration because every illustration breaks down if you push to its extremes. And this is where this illustration breaks down. It doesn’t teach the doctrine that you go to hell as a result of not being joined.

What does it illustrate? It is an example of *uselessness*, ie, if you are not joined to the vine your life can be useless. You discard something that is useless. When you see an illustration, look for the primary thing that is being illustrated. The primary thing here is productivity. Fruitfulness. Being connected and the essential connectedness *produces* the fruit. And in that illustration a branch that is not connected withers away and it’s useless. In fact burning it is not necessarily a bad thing; it can heat your house.

This is one of the points of the Arminian theology--that you can lose your salvation.

2. Romans 11.18-21 illustration

18 do not be arrogant toward the branches; but if you are arrogant, remember that it is not you who supports the root, but the root supports you. 19 You will say then, “Branches were broken off so that I might be grafted in.” 20 Quite right, they were broken off for their unbelief, but you stand by your faith. Do not be conceited,

but fear; 21 for if God did not spare the natural branches, He will not spare you, either.

In Romans 11 there is a root and branches being grafted into the root. It is addressed to the church and believers. And if God plucked Israel out from the root, the warning is, can He pluck out the church as well? It is an illustration used to say that this is the potential of it. Why would he raise the potential if the possibility didn't exist? Yes, God *can*, in fact set a church or churches aside and he is talking about *usefulness* again, the same kind of illustration as the one with the vine and the branches. But the fundamental principle is: don't base doctrine on an illustration.

3. 1Corinthians 9.24-27 running

24 Do you not know that those who run in a race all run, but only one receives the prize? Run in such a way that you may win. 25 Everyone who competes in the games exercises self-control in all things. They then do it to receive a perishable wreath, but we an imperishable. 26 Therefore I run in such a way, as not without aim; I box in such a way, as not beating the air; 27 but I discipline my body and make it my slave, so that, after I have preached to others, I myself will not be disqualified.

Another illustration: running. Paul himself says he runs, with the idea of persisting, 'lest I be disqualified'. What does that mean? The Arminians would use this passage to say, 'Even the Apostle Paul could be disqualified, ie, he could lose his salvation'. But it is an illustration, and in the context, you can be eliminated from the race; you can be disqualified if you violate the rules.

Does that mean you are thrown off the team? It means there are some consequences, but it doesn't mean you are thrown off the team in terms of the illustration here. And I think Paul in Romans is making clear that neither height nor depth, neither time, nor any other created thing can separate us from the love of God Himself.

So this is an illustration and has an interpretation, like the others, and can be taken differently from how the Arminian interprets it.

4. Hebrews 6.4-6 repentance

For in the case of those who have once been enlightened and have tasted of the heavenly gift and have been made partakers of the Holy Spirit, 5 and have tasted the good word of God and the powers of the age to come, 6 and then have fallen away, it is impossible to renew them again to repentance, since they again crucify to themselves the Son of God and put Him to open shame.

This is in a doctrinal section, is not an illustration. The Arminian will interpret it as falling away from the faith, losing it because there is no way you can be brought back. And it seems like he is feeling with the believer—he gives a whole list of characteristics.

There are some that try to solve the problem; in fact the Lordship Salvation camp try to solve it by saying that there is a mixed group among the Hebrews, some are unbelievers and he is dealing with the *unbeliever* here, not the believer at all.

I believe that he is dealing with believers, so we have to face the problem head-on. I think there is enough data there to indicate that he is writing to believers, giving a list of things that are only true of believers.

Keep in mind that he is dealing with a Jewish audience, people that were, in fact, familiar with Scripture and familiar with things relating to salvation and the kingdom. We do know that when you put all the passages together that to not live the Christian life is actually damaging and you do lose something if you don't walk in fellowship consistently with the Lord. The whole concept of rewards, which have nothing to do with salvation, is above and beyond salvation. You do lose something.

It depends on how we take *where* you receive these rewards. Personally, I believe that at the Rapture we go to the βῆμα (báy-ma) Judgment Seat, where the judgment has nothing to do with salvation; it is evaluation of how you lived the Christian life *after* you trusted in Jesus Christ.

Read 1Corinthians 3.10-15 It is an illustration. Christ is the master builder. The foundation is salvation. Building on the foundation is the Christian life—per the construction analogy. Building with different materials. 'Test each one's work', ie, what do you produce in your Christian walk? And if you are constructing a building out of hay and stubble, it won't last. But if you make it with solid materials, walls and roof, in fact precious materials, you will receive a reward. If his work burns up, he will suffer loss. But he will be saved, yet as though through fire. Only the substantial, that which was produced through the Holy Spirit, is going to pass the βῆμα (báy-ma). Everything else will be burned away.

10 According to the grace of God which was given to me, like a wise master builder I laid a foundation, and another is building on it. But each man must be careful how he builds on it. 11 For no man can lay a foundation other than the one which is laid, which is Jesus Christ. 12 Now if any man builds on the foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw, 13 each man's work will become evident; for the day will show it because it is to be revealed with fire, and the fire itself will test the quality of each man's work.

14 If any man's work which he has built on it remains, he will receive a reward. 15 If any man's work is burned up, he will suffer loss; but he himself will be saved, yet so as through fire.

I believe that the suffering of loss and receiving rewards are during the Millennial Kingdom. We will have different positions; there are lots of passages that indicate that. We will rule with Him, we will serve Him. We'll be in His administration and to the extent that we are faithful to Him today, to that extent will we be elevated or, in some cases *lose* a position.

I take it that it is the specific time frame of the Millennial Kingdom that we either enjoy rewards or lose rewards. And Heaven is different. Eternal existence is different from the Millennial Kingdom which is part of time, part of creation, even though the creation will be transformed, Christ is going to be ruling for a thousand years. There will be an end to that time. Then you go into the eternal state, and it is hard to envision what that is like.

I think Hebrews 6 is dealing with the believer and the potential of losing something. Previously we saw passages that mention a 'sin unto death', in 1John and James, talking about the believer. If your life becomes so useless on this earth as a believer you are in danger of God taking you home to be with Him. A discipline. I think that is part of what is in view here; you can get to a point you can't be brought back into *fellowship*, not into salvation, to be useful as a believer. If you go back into Judaism, eg, there will be no sacrifices for you—Christ is the only sacrifice, and He is your savior.

5. Hebrews 10.26-31 discipline

26 For if we go on sinning willfully after receiving the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins, 27 but a terrifying expectation of judgment and THE FURY OF A FIRE WHICH WILL CONSUME THE ADVERSARIES. 28 Anyone who has set aside the Law of Moses dies without mercy on the testimony of two or three witnesses. 29 How much severer punishment do you think he will deserve who has trampled under foot the Son of God, and has regarded as unclean the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified, and has insulted the Spirit of grace? 30 For we know Him who said, "VENGEANCE IS MINE, I WILL REPAY." And again, "THE LORD WILL JUDGE HIS PEOPLE." 31 It is a terrifying thing to fall into the hands of the living God.

This, as Hebrews 6.4-6, is dealing with discipline. How we live now is the stress of 10.26-31 as well. He is talking about being in fellowship or out of fellowship which brings the danger of

discipline. The discipline is severe but it has nothing to do with losing one's salvation.

We want to close with some passages that give *assurance* of salvation. For example: How can your salvation be at risk when the HS is praying for you? How can we lose our salvation when we have assurance of glorification? We have a promise of resurrection. What about the certainty of God's plan? The chain cannot be broken. It is in the aorist (past) tense as if it has already taken place. God is for us. We have the ultimate court and we are declared justified. We also have the prayers of Jesus. Nothing can separate us from the love of God. And there is no hint of a warning that our salvation or sanctification is at risk.

Assurance

1. Prayers of Holy Spirit - 8.16-17
2. Assurance of glorification - 8.17,30
3. Promise of resurrection - 8.19-23
4. Certainty of God's plan - 8.28-30
5. God is for us - 8.31-32
6. Ultimate court has justified -8.33-34
7. Prayers of Jesus - 8.34
8. Nothing can separate us - 8.35-39
9. John 6.39 *"This is the will of Him who sent Me, that of all that He has given Me I lose nothing, but raise it up on the last day. 40 "For this is the will of My Father, that everyone who beholds the Son and believes in Him will have eternal life, and I Myself will raise him up on the last day."*

John 10.27 *"My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me; 28 and I give eternal life to them, and they will never perish; and no one will snatch them out of My hand. 29 "My Father, who has given them to Me, is greater than all; and no one is able to snatch them out of the Father's hand.*

Ephesians 1.13 *In Him, you also, after listening to the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation--having also believed, you were sealed in Him with the Holy Spirit of promise,*

Philippians 1.6 *For I am confident of this very thing, that He who began a good work in you will perfect it until the day of Christ Jesus.*

This brings us to the last Principle for the Christian life in chapter 8:

Principles for the Christian life - chapter 8

17. Power of HS in us fulfills God's Will
18. Walking in Spirit is means of Sanctification
19. Indwelling presence of HS gives power

20. Believers participate in sanctification
21. Suffering is God's main tool for sanctification
22. Glorification is end product of sanctification
23. Sanctification is absolutely secure

If sanctification is absolutely secure, then what about your salvation? That is absolutely secure as well—you can't lose it either.