

Romans: Verse-by-Verse

Romans 8:29-30

Moving us from what God has done to the great consummation of our salvation. In the next two verses Paul tells us what he means by "God's purposes", which he is working out in our lives.

Five words: Foreknowledge, predestination, calling, justification and glorification.

1. "For Those God Foreknew..."

The common definition of "foreknew": Knowing something beforehand. The question: Is God's knowledge of us based on his foreknowledge – or does God know everything – and therefore He knows us?

God foreknows everything and everyone. Therefore, predestination is not the basis of God's foreknowledge.

A Better Understanding:

The Hebrew verb for "to know" expresses a deep relationship of love and care. It is far more than an intellectual acknowledgement:

- When God "knows" people, he watches over them: Psalm 1:6
- When God "knew" the children of Israel in the desert, he cared for them: Hosea 13:5
- When God "knew" the Israelites, it means he had chosen them especially as his own people and given them a covenant no other people possessed: Amos 3:2

If the greater definition in the Old Testament was to "know and to love", what would that mean in Paul's message here in Romans 8?

John Murray -- "Know" ... is used in a sense practically synonymous with "love". "Whom he foreknew" ... is therefore virtually equivalent to "whom he foreloved".

Instead of immediately tying "foreknowledge" to "predestination", we should keep Paul's words in the context of what he has been saying throughout this chapter.

“Foreknowledge is ‘sovereign, distinguishing love’. – See Deuteronomy 7:7:

2. “Those God Foreknew, (Or Foreloved), He Also Predestined...To Be Conformed To The Likeness Of His Son...”

The context in which Paul uses the word “Predestined” here, is not in the context of salvation or judgment. It is in the context of God making born again believers to be conformed to the image or character of His Son.

Paul is saying that because of God's great love we have been included in the New Covenant relationship to him. Once we are, He has determined to make us like His Son.

The Big Picture:

Israel was adopted by God as a group ... as a nation. It began with Abraham and extended to every person who was born into Abraham's family, but they were adopted as a nation.

Once you were born into Abraham's family, you were an Israelite by addition. You were included in the nation of Israel. Once you were part of that covenant, everything God intended applied to you.

Paul is not thinking of predestination as “person-by-person”. He's saying that once we are born again, everything God intends for his children applies to you.

What is the greatest thing God intends to do for you? Paul says it is to “conform” you to the image of His Son.

When did God make the decision that those who come to Christ would be made into his Son's image? It was in eternity past. Revelation 13:8:

“All inhabitants of the earth will worship the beast--all whose names have not been written in the Lamb's book of life, the Lamb who was slain from the creation of the world.”

Paul's use of “predestination” in Romans 8: Once we come into Christ, God has predestined us to be made like his Son – not just as individuals, but as a covenant body.

3. “Those He Predestined, He Also Called...”

The word “called” is rooted in the Greek word, “kaleo”. While it can be defined as a general “call”, in the context of Romans 8 it means much more. It can be

seen in four different aspects.

A. The “call” to salvation: 1 Corinthians 1:9; Galatians 1:6; 2 Thessalonians 2:13-14

B. The “calling” is to special service: Romans 1:1; Acts 13:2

C. The “call” to any occupation: 1 Corinthians 7:20-24:

D. The General calling to believers: 1 Corinthians 1:2; 2 Timothy 1:9

4. “Those He Called, He Also Justified.”

Throughout Romans, justification has been one of Paul’s main themes. Justification is more than being forgiven or even acquitted – it is God’s formal declaration that we are now right in God’s sight.

Theologians: Justification as a forensic act by God: God forgives our sins and imputes to us the righteousness of His Son. See: Galatians 2:16

Forensic justification: God’s righteousness has been imputed, not imparted. It is a positional justification that still must be worked out in our day-to-day lives. It is not an automatic lifestyle of justification.

Justification is also not regeneration or being “born again”. There is an important difference between the two.

Justification is one part of the entire scope of what God does for us when we come to faith. It is an integral part of his overall design for our conformity to the image of His Son and our transformation to be like his Son in both our character and our conduct.

What God said about His One and Only Son while Jesus was standing on the Mount of Transfiguration: “This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased.” – Matthew 17:5

“Do we believe God says the same thing about us?”

5. “Those He Justified, He Also Glorified.”

Throughout Romans, Paul has used the word “glory” many times. The essential use this word has been to describe the innate character of God versus the human condition. Let’s see where Paul has done this already:

- Romans 3:23: “For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God...”

- Romans 5:2: “We have gained access by faith into this grace in which we now stand. And we rejoice in the hope of the glory of God.”
- Romans 8:17: “If we are children, then we are heirs—heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ, if indeed we share in his sufferings in order that we may also share in his glory.”
- Romans 8:21: “The creation itself will be liberated from its bondage to decay and brought into the glorious freedom of the children of God.”

“Why didn’t Paul include the word “sanctification”? John Stott: “Sanctification is glory begun; glory is sanctification consummated”.

“Sanctification is glory begun, glory is sanctification consummated.” That’s what Paul has been pointing to in these verses:

“For those God foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the likeness of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brothers. And those he predestined, he also called; those he called, he also justified; those he justified, he also glorified.”

The “Prophetic Past”: Paul writes as if God had already completed our glorification. He says, “he also glorified” – using past tense.

We know that, presently, we have a long way to go to glorification. God, however, looks ahead and sees glorification’s completion. So, Paul says, “He, God, also glorified”.

We’ve seen a series of five undeniable affirmations: Foreknowledge, Predestination, A Call, Justification, and Final Glorification.