

THE 'WHY'  
OF  
SALVATION

THE 'WHAT'  
OF  
SALVATION

THE 'HOW'  
OF  
SALVATION

THE 'WHO'  
OF  
SALVATION

THE 'WHEN'  
OF  
SALVATION

THE 'WHERE'  
OF  
SALVATION

THE 'WONDER'  
OF  
SALVATION

# Salvation: God's Love Forever

Bethany Bible Church, Adult Sunday School Class, January 20, 2013

## God's Plan for Those He Loves

A good place to begin a study of "salvation" is Romans 8:28-30. That passage gives us an encouraging description of God's ultimate plan for us--a plan which even includes the trials that we may undergo.

### I. GOD HAS AN ULTIMATE PLAN FOR THOSE HE LOVES (v. 28).

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

- A. One of the first things to note is that God's good plan of salvation is comprehensive. It includes all things in its consideration. Because He is all-wise, all-powerful, everywhere-present, and we might say also *everywhen*-present, His providential control of all things truly allows Him to cause all things to work together for the purpose He decrees--even apparent evil (see Genesis 50:20).
- B. God's sovereign care most definitely applies to those who love Him--that is, those who are called according to His purpose. These two phrases are not describing two different groups. They are two descriptions of the same people--those who love Him, who show by that love that He has called them. As the Lord Jesus said in John 15:16, "You did not choose Me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit, and that your fruit should remain, that whatever you ask the Father in My name He may give you." 1 John 4:10 says, "In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins." And verse 19 says, "We love Him because He first loved us." We need never worry about whether or not we are "called". Anyone who desires to may come to Him in humble, repentant and believing love; and when they do, they show that they are in the group of the called.
- C. This care of God for those who love Him involves all things being worked together for their good. "Good" may not necessarily mean what we wish it would mean; because trials can seem very "ungood" at the time. But God's "good" for us is far greater than even our own wishes. He intends to conform us to the image of His Son; so that we would become sharers together with Him of His glory and inheritance.

### II. GOD'S PLAN IS WORKED OUT IN AN ORDERLY WAY (vv. 29-30).

*"For whom He foreknew, He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren. Moreover whom He predestined, these He also called; whom He called, these He also justified; and whom He justified, these He also glorified."*

- A. Notice first that this plan involves a resolve in the heart of God (v. 29).
  1. He first "foreknew" us. "Foreknowledge" (*proginōskō*; "to know in advance") in the broad sense, communicates the idea that God has knowledge of something in advance. Sometimes it is said that God, as it were, looked down the corridor of time and saw that someone would believe on Him; and in that sense "foreknew" them. But His "foreknowledge" must mean more than that; because, as this passage shows, when it comes to those He "foreknew", He also "predestined" them. This would even be true of those who, at times, proved disobedient. The nation of Israel was disobedient; and yet, as Paul says in Romans 11:2, "God has not cast away His people whom He foreknew." It's

best to see the word “foreknowledge” as communicating the idea that God graciously and unmeritoriously places His love on someone in advance of their being born--long before they could first love Him--and commits Himself to them; and in that sense, "knows" them in advance. It means that He chose us for Himself--even before we could choose Him.

2. He then “predestined” those He foreknew. "Predestination" (Greek: *proorizō*; "to decide upon beforehand") is the idea that God makes a decision about someone and "destines" them in advance to His sovereign purpose. He chose us for “a destiny in advance”. This is the “goal” for which He foreknew us. As Ephesians 1:3-6 puts it, “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ, just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love, having predestined us to adoption as sons by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will, to the praise of the glory of His grace, by which He made us accepted in the Beloved.”
- B. But also note that God completes what He starts. As it says in Philippians 1:6, “He who has begun a good work in you will complete it until the day of Jesus Christ.” His plan for our salvation means that what He has resolved will also be brought to full completion in our experience (v. 30).
  1. We’re told that whom He predestined, He also “called”. This “call” is often referred to as God’s “the effectual call”, because it definitely results in those He calls coming to Him. As our Lord Jesus said in John 10:27-28; “My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me. And I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; neither shall anyone snatch them out of My hand.”
  2. What’s more, whom He called, He also “justified”--that is, declared righteous in His sight. To be justified in God’s sight doesn’t mean that we are now perfect, or that we will never fail and at times sin. What it means, however, is that we are declared righteous in the sight of a holy God on the basis of Jesus’ righteousness and not our own. As Romans 5:1-2 says; “Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom also we have access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God.” As Romans 8:1 puts it, “There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus . . .”
  3. Finally, we’re told that whom God justified, He also “glorified”. It’s wonderful to notice that this is a promise of a future state that is put in the past tense. It’s as if we’re being told that, whom God foreknows, predestines, calls and justifies are also as sure for future glorification in Christ as if it had already happened. As far as God is concerned, we are already glorified--and have only to be brought into the fullness of that glory later. He describes something of this glory for us in verses 18-25; “For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us. For the earnest expectation of the creation eagerly waits for the revealing of the sons of God. For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of Him who subjected it in hope; because the creation itself also will be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God. For we know that the whole creation groans and labors with birth pangs together until now. Not only that, but we also who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, eagerly waiting for the adoption, the redemption of our body. For we were saved in this hope, but hope

that is seen is not hope; for why does one still hope for what he sees?  
But if we hope for what we do not see, we eagerly wait for it with per-  
severance.”

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This passage from Romans, of course, doesn't tell us everything there is to know about salvation. But what it tells us is wonderful. It shows us God's gracious work of foreknowledge and predestination--which we might say are the aspects of our salvation that are under "God's initiative"; and our calling, justification and glorification--which we might say are the aspects of our salvation that we can call "our experience". Foreknowledge and predestination are works God does before time; and calling, justification and glorification are works He does for us in time. Together, they show us how secure our salvation in Christ truly is.

May God bless us as we unwrap the wonderful gift of salvation--as He has described it for us in His word!