

The Purpose of God

Romans, Part XLI

Romans 8:28-30

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- I. Introduction (1:1-17)
- II. Credenda: "The Righteous by Faith" Shall Live (1:18-11:36)
 - A. No justification by our own righteousness (1:18-3:20)
 - B. Justification by Faith Alone in Christ Alone (3:21-4:25)
 - C. All those God justifies, He shall also glorify (5-8)
 - 5:1-11 Having been *justified*, we rejoice in hope of *God's glory*
 - 5:12-19 Adam failed to lead to glory; Christ shall succeed
 - 5:20-7:25 The law failed to lead to glory; Christ shall succeed
 - 8:1-39 All those whom God justifies, these He also glorifies
 - D. The Universality of God's Righteousness (9-11)
- III. Agenda: The Righteous "Shall Live by Faith" (12-15:13)
- IV. Conclusion (15:14-16:27)

I. Worldview and God's Purpose

The Christian worldview tells a story. And the One whose purpose governs this story is the Triune God. *God's purpose is to take the people of His love and conform them into Jesus' likeness.*

Romans 8:28-30

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

II. The Purpose of God

A. All things work together for good (28 cf. Gen 50:20; Rom 1:1,5-6; 5:5)

While not all things *are good*, the Sovereign God works them *for good*. Joseph declared to his brothers, "*you meant evil against me; but God meant it for good...*" (Gen 50:20). God's purposes prevail and God's purposes are *for good* – for the moral and bodily transformation into the likeness of Jesus of all those:

- *who love God* –
- *who are the called according to His purpose* –
 - ¹Paul, a bondservant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle, separated to the gospel of God...
⁵Through Him we have received grace and apostleship for obedience to the faith among all nations for His name, ⁶among whom you also are the called of Jesus Christ... (Rom 1:1, 5-6)

B. God's Eternal Purpose (29-30)

1. Foreknowledge (cf. Rom 11:2; 1 Pet 1:2)

This text has been used to justify the idea that God, who is omniscient, looked through the corridors of time and *knew* who would believe in Him and so chose them for salvation. But this is problematic. First, the whole emphasis of this passage is on *God's gracious purpose*. But if God's purpose is dependent upon man's faith, then what hope does this passage offer? Second, this idea reads into the text. Paul does not say "*For whom God foreknew would believe in Him, He also predestined*" but "*For whom God foreknew, He...*" In other words, "*foreknew*" here isn't so much associated with God's *omniscience* as with God's _____ (cf. Rom 11:2).

2. Predestination (cf. 2 Thes 2:13-14)

So those whom God loved before the foundation of the world, He also predestines for glorification, *to be conformed to the image of His Son* (cf. Heb 2:10). Foreknowledge and predestination describe God's *attitude* toward His people and His *actions* toward His people before the foundation of the world.

3. Calling (cf. Mt 11:25-30)

Those whom God chose for salvation before the foundation of the world, He *calls* to Himself in history. “*Calling*” can refer either to God’s *external call* or His *effectual call*. The _____ *call* refers to the preaching of the Gospel – the vocal summons to turn from sin and believe in Jesus (e.g., Mt 11:28-29). God extends this call to all and sundry. This is not the “call” referenced in our text. Rather, the “*call*” in our text is the *internal* or _____ *call* of God’s Spirit (cf. Mt 11:25-26):

31. Q. What is effectual calling? A. Effectual calling is the work of God’s Spirit, whereby, convincing us of our sin and misery, enlightening our minds in the knowledge of Christ, and renewing our wills, He doth persuade and enable us to embrace Jesus Christ, freely offered to us in the Gospel.

4. Justification (cf. Rom 3:21-25, 28; 5:1)

So when He calls them, what will they do? They will believe! When God calls us to faith, He then *justifies* us, forgives our sin and declares us righteous in His sight only for the righteousness of Christ imputed to us and received by faith alone.

5. Glorification

Glorification is the completion of God’s work which He purposed before time began – He predestined us “*to be conformed to the image of His Son*” (29). “*Sanctification is _____ begun; glorification is sanctification completed*” (Bruce).

III. Detailing God’s Purpose

A. The People of God’s Purpose (8:28 cf. 2:5; Jn 6:38-40; Dt 10:12-15)

B. The Fount of God’s Purpose (8:29 cf. Eph 1:3-6)

Note Paul’s order: *Foreknowledge* > *Predestination* > *Calling* > *Justification* > *Glorification*

The fount of God’s purpose is His love. “*For God so loved the world that He sent His only begotten Son...*” (Jn 3:16). Paul writes to the Ephesians:

³*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, ⁴just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love, ⁵having predestined us to adoption as sons by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will, ⁶to the praise of the glory of His grace, by which He made us accepted in the Beloved.*

C. The Goal of God’s Purpose (8:30 cf. 5:3-5; Eph 1:7-12; James 1:2-4)

The goal of God’s purpose is our glorification, and this is for our good. Our *good* and our *glorification*, in other words, work in harmony. The more *glorious* we become, the more this is for our _____. Hence, we “*glory in tribulations, knowing that tribulation produces perseverance; and perseverance, character; and character, hope*” (5:3-4).

IV. Conclusion