

CERTAINTY IN CHRIST - PART 2

SCRIPTURE Romans 8:29-30

²⁹ For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the firstborn among many brothers. ³⁰ And those whom he predestined he also called, and those whom he called he also justified, and those whom he justified he also glorified.

SYNOPSIS Certainty marks the purposes and promises of God. And all the promises of God find their “Yes” in Christ (2 Corinthians 1:20). The Christian’s hope for glory is exclusively anchored here—in Christ. Here, Paul grounds and explains the golden guarantee (8:28) as a certainty in and for Christ (8:29-30). While these verses have been rightly recognized as the golden chain of salvation, they point to much more. Christ occupies the central position in this unbreakable sequence of divine links. The guaranteed certainty of glory is emphatically in and for Christ, which is purposed to induce and fortify both hope and holiness in us.

APPLICATION QUESTIONS

In Romans 8:28-30 is often referred to as “The Golden Chain of Salvation” because it describes the progression of God’s gracious and sovereign work in salvation – the redeemed are chosen by Him, called by Him, justified by Him, and ultimately glorified by Him.

As we approach Romans 8:29-30, it may be useful to review Romans 8:28 to follow Paul’s flow of thought. Romans 8:28 reads,

²⁸ And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose.

This verse is often misapplied. It was not written to give comfort to those who may question or doubt **God’s goodness** due to difficult circumstances or suffering. Rather, it was written to comfort those who, through suffering, may question **God’s grace** and the certainty of their salvation.

The “Golden Guarantee” of salvation described in Romans 8:28 is further explained by Paul in Romans 8:29-30 as he outlines God’s sovereignty over the golden chain of salvation for believers. This gives believers assurance of their salvation and their “Certainty in Christ”. This discussion guide will explore the first of three reflections regarding a believer’s “Certainty in Christ”:

1. Chosen in Christ
 - A. Foreknew
 - B. Predestined
 - C. Called
 - D. Justified
 - E. Glorified

Material from this passage yet to be covered includes:

2. Conformed to Christ
3. Completed for Christ

1. CHOSEN IN CHRIST

²⁹ **For those whom he foreknew** he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the firstborn among many brothers. ³⁰ And those whom he predestined he also called, and those whom he called he also justified, and those whom he justified he also glorified.

Paul writes of the certainty of the “golden chain” because it is secured by an unbreakable sequence of divine links. God is the subject of each part of the chain, and the chain describes God’s actions, not ours. God’s elect, those whom God loves, are the objects of each and every action in the unbreakable chain. Believers have certainty in Christ because God’s purposes and promises cannot and will not be broken.

A. FOREKNEW

Many hold a “prescience” view, suggesting that the “foreknew” of 8:29 is God’s foresight of man’s faith. According to this view, God, who knows all, foresees into the future those who would believe, and chooses them for salvation.

- How does the “prescience” view limit God? How does it restrict God’s freedom to choose who He wills to love?
- How does the “prescience” view turn *predestination* into a *prediction*?
- Does God ever look into the future to *learn*? How does the “prescience” view presume that God looks into the future to learn? What order does this view assume regarding the relationship between God’s appointment unto salvation and man’s faith? What does Scripture say in Acts 13:48?

...whom he foreknew...

Romans 8:29 speaks not of *what* God foreknew, but *whom* He foreknew.

- Is this type of *knowing* simply cognitive awareness? (Amos 3:2; Matthew 7:23)
- In your own words, how would you characterize this type of *knowing*? (Genesis 4:1; Luke 1:34)
- Why might we be able to equate “whom he foreknew” with “whom he foreloved”? (1 Corinthians 8:3; Galatians 4:9)
- What, then, is God’s first sovereign act in salvation? (1 John 4:19)

DISCUSSION GUIDE

B. PREDESTINED

²⁹ For those whom he foreknew **he also predestined** to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the firstborn among many brothers. ³⁰ And those whom he predestined he also called, and those whom he called he also justified, and those whom he justified he also glorified.

We note that all those who are foreknown are also predestined. Predestination means that “the destination is determined before the journey begins”.

- The following list includes every instance where the Greek word for “predestined” is used in the New Testament: Acts 4:28, Romans 8:29-30, 1 Corinthians 2:7, Ephesians 1:4-5, and 1:11. When concerning people as opposed to events, to what is predestination always and only connected?
- Some say that predestination makes God “unfair” or “unjust”. Why can no one make this charge against God? (Romans 3:23)
 - Some receive God’s mercy and some receive God’s justice. Do any receive injustice from God?
- In salvation, God chooses believers and believers choose God. Who chooses first, God or man? (2 Thessalonians 2:13; Romans 9:11)
 - Why must God choose first? (Romans 3:10-12, Ephesians 2:1-3)
 - What enables man to choose God? (John 3:3; Galatians 4:4-6)

C. CALLED

²⁹ For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the firstborn among many brothers. ³⁰ And those whom he predestined **he also called**, and those whom he called he also justified, and those whom he justified he also glorified.

- Explain the difference between the “effectual internal call” of God and the “general external call” of God? (John 6:44, 7:37)
- What is the certain result of the “effectual internal call” of God? (2 Thessalonians 2:13-14; Hebrews 9:15; 1 Peter 2:9)
 - Explain how the divine “call” relates to human “conversion”. (John 1:12-13)
- What has God decreed to be the means of His “effectual internal call”? (Romans 10:17; 1 Corinthians 1:21-26)
- Does this “effectual internal call” coerce sinners against their will? What analogy was given to illustrate an effectual call (John 11:43)?
 - Does the effectual call depend on the ability of the one called to respond? Finish the phrase: “It grants what it _____”

DISCUSSION GUIDE

D. JUSTIFIED

²⁹ For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the firstborn among many brothers. ³⁰ And those whom he predestined he also called, and those whom he called **he also justified**, and those whom he justified he also glorified.

Calling and justifying are actions of God alone. The instrumental means for these correspond respectively to the *gospel* and *faith*. This passage is not denying justification by faith, but is rather emphasizing God's sovereign hand in our justification.

- What is the opposite of justification? (Romans 8:1)
- How is our justification a sovereign work of God? (Romans 3:23-26)
- How is our justification *by faith* a further work of God? (Romans 5:1-2; Ephesians 2:8-9; Philippians 1:29; Acts 11:18; 2 Timothy 2:25)
- How does speaking of justification this way emphasize the all-encompassing sovereignty of God without denying the instrumental means appointed? What does it teach us about God's view of salvation?

E. GLORIFIED

²⁹ For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the firstborn among many brothers. ³⁰ And those whom he predestined he also called, and those whom he called he also justified, and those whom he justified **he also glorified**.

We note that the first two actions in the golden chain (foreknew, predestined) were determined from eternity past. The second two actions (called, justified) are realized in this present life. The fifth and last action (glorified) will be realized in the future.

- Why do we have certainty in our future glorification? (Philippians 1:6)
- How will we be glorified both spiritually and physically? (Ephesians 5:25-27; Romans 8:23)
- Since Christ is already glorified, why do only those who are "in Christ" have hope of future glory?
- How does the "golden chain" demonstrate that God alone is the author of salvation from start to finish (architected, accomplished, and applied)?
- How does this assure you and give you "certainty in Christ"?

DISCUSSION GUIDE

WHAT WILL YOU PERSONALLY APPLY FROM THIS PASSAGE?

HOW DOES THIS WEEK'S PASSAGE HELP US TO MAKE MUCH OF CHRIST?
