

V 28 – 31 The believer’s security through the golden chain of redemption.

1. Does “we know” in v28 refer back to any particular prior statement?

Ans. It is very likely that it refers back to the “we know not” in v26.

There are many things that Christians do not know such as the reason for problems and evils that befall us. We don’t know the reason for them, nor, according to the teaching of v26, do we know how to pray through them, nor at times how to console ourselves in them. We need the Holy Spirit to help us in such times for He is the comforter of the saints. The name “Comforter”, is one of His official titles.

As the Christian experiences the things we don’t know he or she does know the one thing that is necessary— God will save our souls and bring us to heaven. The things we don’t know matter little in comparison to the assurance of our salvation because they are fleeting. The great thing to know is that God has our eternal good in mind. Even our crosses in life work for us. They sanctify us. They work experience of grace and the ministry of the Spirit works hope in us (Romans ch. 5:5).

2. Why does the apostle say that the “all things [which] work together for good” in Romans 8:28 apply to “them that love God”: not to them that believe on God?

Ans. Although faith is the instrument of justification it is our love to God, however, that is the ultimate mark of our conversion. The man who professes faith in Christ will have it tested. His love to God will keep him while in the fire of affliction. Peter stated that love is behind the believer’s perseverance during the fiery trials of our faith (1Peter 1:7-8).

It is the man who loves God even in adversity, as did Job, who is born again. Job said: “Though he slay me” (Job 13:15).

Conversion changes the heart to love God, as opposed to merely changing the mind to give assent to God. The devil believes God exists, but he does not love God. His heart has never been renewed.

3. In what sense is it true that “all things” work together for good to them that love God?

Ans. They do so in the sense of the Christian reaching his final destiny in heaven. In this world there are many things that seem to work contrary to us. In a fallen world with the curse upon everything there is suffering, disease and death along with reverses of many kinds. Yet, as within a watch where the watch maker designs wheels to turn in opposite directions so God is working all things – the good and the seeming bad – for the one goal: that He be glorified in His people as He glorifies them.

4. How do these verses constitute a golden chain?

Ans. The security of the believer rests on the determination of God and not the will of man. In the golden chain of our redemption God set His love upon us in eternity past and He will most certainly glorify us in eternity future. Note the several links in the chain and how it stretches from eternity to eternity. Note that God is active in each of them. He acts upon man: man reacts to God’s work in him.

Note how these terms are hooked together by repetition so that whom God foreknows are guaranteed they will be glorified.

“Foreknow” x 1 - to set His love upon. To know before hand. It also can mean to make His own.

“Predestinate” x 2 – to pre-set man’s destiny. See Acts 4:28, 1Cor. 2:7, Eph. 1:5,11. (Same Greek word in each text).

“Called” x 2 – Effectually called or regenerated. It is an irresistible call from spiritual death to life.

“Justified” x 2 – To declare to be righteous in God’s sight.

“Glorified” x 1 – To change from our temporal earthly state into our eternal state.

5. Is this the kind of program we should expect of a God of wisdom and power?

Ans. Yes, we would not expect God to begin to redeem and then leave things unfinished, or in the balance for man, Satan or the world to undo. It is in keeping with the God of wisdom and power to complete what He commences. This is the wisdom that the Lord requires of disciples (Luke 14:30-33). The program of redemption is spoken of as the wisdom of God and the power of God (1Cor. 1:24 & 29).

6. Does the word “foreknow” mean fore-knowledge or fore-love?

Ans. It does not mean that God looked into the future to observe what sinners would do with the gospel. Nor does it mean that God determined whom he would set his love upon on the basis of the will or determination of man. Did God look for faith and repentance in men who don’t have the power to believe, nor the will repent within themselves?

God can only know an event, or an action, beforehand if the outcome is made certain, and it can only be made certain if it is decreed or fore-planned, with its execution carried out through perfect wisdom and power to perform it.. What is left to man to determine cannot be made certain for he is not in control of his own destiny, nor can he provide the means to reach his destiny? Out of necessity, therefore, God’s foreordination or foreknowing, requires His predestination.

If God chose His people on the basis of what He knew of them in advance, then it would not be logical that God would choose us with the purpose to be conformed to the image of Christ. Such a conclusion would require that man could produce faith in Christ, produce love for Christ within himself and conform himself to the likeness of Christ out of his own will. The Bible consistently teaches that we are saved unto good works; not because of good works (Ephesians 2:8-10). Otherwise our salvation would not be by grace.

It makes perfect sense that whom God fore-loved, in the sense of setting his love upon men, He also set their destiny by predestinating them to life in heaven.

Our authorized version of the Bible uses the term “know” for intimate relations as in Adam “knew” his wife Eve. One commentator stated that when God loved Israel he owned them as His own people who are known by His name. In bestowing His love an unbreakable covenant is established between God and his people.

*“Whom he justified those he also glorified. The power of corruption being broken in effectual calling, and the guilt of sin removed in justification, all that which hinders is taken out of the way, and nothing can come between that soul and glory. Observe, It is spoken of as a thing done: *He glorified*, because of the certainty of it; he *hath* saved us, and called us with a holy calling. In the eternal glorification of all the elect, God’s design of love has its full accomplishment. This was what he aimed at all along - to bring them to heaven. Nothing less than that glory would make up the fulness of his covenant relation to them as God; and therefore, in all he does for them, and in them, he has this in his eye. Are they chosen? It is to salvation. Called? It is to his kingdom and glory. Begotten again? It is to an inheritance incorruptible. Afflicted: It is to work for them this exceeding and eternal weight of glory. Observe, The author of all these is the same. It is God himself that predestinated, calleth, justifieth, glorifieth.” Matthew Henry*

So we conclude that this section lays down the doctrine of the believer’s security in Christ. “What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us who can be against us” (v33)?