

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 within a large family.

(Romans 8:29)

INTRODUCTION

In verses 1-17, Paul provided a survey of virtually the entire landscape of Christian _____ from our right standing before God, or _____, to right living under God, or _____, to being rightly related to God in our _____.

Front and centre in all of this, is the person and work of the _____, who is active in every facet of our redemption.

And then, beginning in verse 18 and running through the end of the chapter, Paul takes this survey of Christian salvation and places it in the context of what he calls, “our present _____.”

In verses 26 and 27, he reminds us of the Holy Spirit’s help in all the weaknesses we endure, especially the weakness we feel when it comes to _____.

And in verse 28, Paul draws back the curtain, so to speak, and shows us what’s going on unseen in the background, in the sovereign _____ of Almighty God.

This isn’t just a theological argument; it’s not just conjecture, hypothesis, or even a vague hope. “We know.” We can be _____.

Everything must work for our good for those who are in Christ because God has _____ in eternity to make us like Jesus. And nothing can _____ that plan.

Romans 8:29 is a key verse in one of the most divisive debates in the history of the Church, centring around two opposing doctrines of _____ known as Calvinism and Arminianism.

3 KEY ELEMENTS OF THE DEBATE

- God’s _____ - refers to God’s right to exercise His ruling _____ over His creation. Calvinists believe God is _____ sovereign and knows everything that will happen because He planned it. Arminians believe God is sovereign, but chooses to _____ His control in relation to man’s _____ response.
- _____ - which is the concept of how people are _____ for salvation. Calvinists believe that God elected some people to be saved and it has nothing to do with their future _____ to Him. Arminians believe that election is based on God’s _____ of those who would believe in Him through faith, which means God chooses those who _____ Him of their own free will, based on their response to His offer of salvation.
- The _____ of the saints. Calvinism believe “once saved, _____ saved,” and argue that believers will persevere in salvation because God will finish the work He began in them; and if a believer rejects God, they were never saved in the first place. Arminianism says that because of free will, believers can _____ from grace and potentially lose their salvation, which depends more on them and their actions than on God.

3 QUALITIES OF GOD’S PERFECT PAN & 3 KEY WORDS

#1. God’s perfect plan is directed by _____.

We often think about God like this, as a sort of cosmic chess grandmaster who can see all the _____ on the board ahead of time.

God is _____ –all knowing–He knows all the future in advance and all possible outcomes from any supposed condition. However, that’s not actually what Paul is teaching in verse 29 at all. Rather, he’s teaching us, first and foremost, that the plan of God is directed by God’s love for us, and not by anticipated _____ in us.

Key Word #1: _____

When we read in Scripture that God knows people, it means so much more than that He simply knows _____ about them. And when God foreknows His people it means so much more than that He simply knows those facts in _____.

“The Lord knows the way of the righteous but the way of the wicked will perish.” (Psalm 1:6)

“The Lord watches over the way of the righteous...” (Psalm 1:6 NIV)

watching over =

When we read here that God foreknew us, it means that God has _____
–He’s set His affection on us from before the foundation of the world.

It doesn’t say that God merely knew in advance the future acts or _____
_____ into which I’d enter freely in due course. It says God knew **me** in advance and you in advance. It’s _____!

He knew us with the _____ fullness contained in the Greek word ‘ginosko,’ “to know,” as its used in the Bible. It’s not just foreseen behaviour, but fore-loved persons that occupy the _____ of God in verse 29.

This is what _____ every detail of God’s sovereign plan and His every act in accomplishing that plan. Despite what some people think we’re not _____ in some eternal chess game. God is always _____ whose agenda is always _____.

“We love because God first loved us.” (1 John 4:19)

God didn’t love us because we were _____. Nor was his love called into being by some quality that He saw or anticipated in us. The _____ is actually true.

We can know that all things will work together for our eternal and everlasting good because the God of the universe has fixed His all-knowing, omnipotent _____ on us as believers in Jesus Christ long before the creation of the universe. And there’s no force, no suffering, no sin that can stop that love from _____ its great design.

The whole of our salvation—the whole of our Christian lives—is a _____ and a fruit of the prior love of God set upon us before the dawning of the ages.

#2. God’s perfect plan _____ us.

As we’ve just seen, the word “foreknow” speaks to us about God’s loving _____ toward us from eternity. The second key word in this verse speaks not about God’s disposition toward us, but about His intended _____ for us.

Key Word #2 = _____

God has in mind where He wants to go with us and then He _____ the route with every twist and turn in the road, every hill and valley along the way,

included in the plan. Love directs the plan of God, but the _____ destination determines the _____.

The final destination that God has in view for each one of His eternally fore-loved people is to be _____ to the image of His Son.

Before the universe was born, God had His Son, the exalted Christ, in mind as the great _____ according to which He is going to remake your life and mine. _____ is our final destination and we’ll be made like Him one day.

When at last we stand before our Saviour, shining with the _____ of His glory, we’ll see that every detour and bump in the road, every dead end and wrong turn, will have _____ their part.

Even though we may sometimes _____ along the way; even though we may turn down a dark alley or hit a dead end, we must _____ and do all we can to make progress toward holiness and Christlikeness, whatever our path looks like, confident that those twists and turns, setbacks and delays will not in any way threaten our safe _____ at God’s intended destination.

#3. God’s perfect plan _____.

God has a goal for us in the mind that’s even _____ than our salvation or glorification.

The point isn’t just that we will one day be _____ Jesus, share His glory and reflect His beauty, but that our glory, our Christlikeness, our reflecting and mirroring Jesus’ majesty will serve to bring Him more _____, glory, and praise.

Key Word #3 = _____

This word doesn’t mean _____ priority as we tend to think of it, the firstborn in order of time and sequence. “Firstborn” in the Scriptures, more often than not, means “_____ born.” It’s a word that speaks about preeminence, _____, and the place of highest dignity.

God’s agenda in our salvation—in that Christ may have the preeminence, the supremacy—is that He might be highest born and given a _____ above all others.

The thing that will make heaven, heaven, isn’t that we’ve finally arrived there, but that when we arrive, we’ll see Jesus as He is, and seeing Him, we’ll forget _____ and be overcome with _____ for Him.