

GOD'S GOLDEN CHAIN OF GRACE

ROMANS 8:28-30

Can you imagine a golden chain that has its beginnings in eternity, extends through time and space and reaches back into eternity? And both ends of this “golden chain” are anchored in solid bedrock of God’s sovereignty?



Let's examine **Romans 8:28-30**, where God's golden chain of grace is revealed.

And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose. (29) For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren. (30) Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified.

These well-known words contain a powerful expression of God's sovereignty over all the circumstances of our lives as believers. The 5 links represent the wonderful activity of God from start to end. God has forged this golden chain, which unites every believer with Him, out of His love, good pleasure and perfect will.

Verse 28 is the glorious declaration of hope and assurance of God's glorious intentions for His church. We love Him only because He first loved us. And His purpose for us, we will see, is ultimately our glorification.

Golden Link #1: Foreknowledge.

When verse 29 says, *"For whom he did foreknow,"* it is referring to a specific identifiable people. They are the identical same people who in verse 28 *"love God"* and have *"been called according to his purpose."*

Foreknowledge is composed of two separate words: **"fore,"** which means **beforehand,** and **"knowledge."** Page | 2

This has been taken to mean that, since God knows all things, God knows beforehand who will believe on Him and who will not. Their concept is this. God looks down through the corridor of time with His telescopic eyes of understanding and when He sees one respond to the gospel – He, God, subjects Himself to that belief and predestinates the person to glory. In other words, what he foreknows or foresees is their faith.

For one thing, the verse does not say that God foreknew what certain persons would do. It is not talking about human actions at all. The text says God foreknew us. It is not about what we would, on the contrary, it is speaking entirely of God and what He does.

The object of the divine foreknowledge is not the actions of certain people but the people themselves. In this sense it can only mean that God has fixed a special attention upon them or loved them with a saving love.

Genesis 4:1, *Adam "knew" his wife, Eve, and she conceived and had a son.* This was more than a mere friendship. It was an intimate relationship!

In **Amos 3:2,** God said of Israel *"You only have I known of all the families of the earth."* This doesn't mean that God didn't know about the other nations of the world. It means that Israel was the chosen nation; the only nation with which He had a covenantal relationship.

The NIV sharpens the meaning by translating: *"You only have I chosen...."*

In the New Testament, the word for **"know"** that is the root of **"foreknow"** as the same connotation as its Old Testament counterpart.

For example in **Matthew 1:25** (in a description of the virgin birth), Joseph is said to have *"known her not" (Mary) until she had the baby named Jesus.* This doesn't mean that Joseph did not know who she was, but that he had not had sexual relations with her.

This intimate knowledge, however, will be absent of those in **Matthew 7:23** who did many wonderful things in Lord's name, but He will confess to them, "*I never knew you.*" They were never saved. They knew not God. They had no relationship with Him, therefore the Lord says, "*I never knew you, depart from Me.*" Read Eph 1:4-6.

Simply by His own determination, God cherished us, and therefore predestined us. He chose you before you ever believed in Him. His saving love for you, the believer, began way before you believed way before Calvary, and way before all creation. It was there in eternity, in the heart of God, always.

Golden Link #2: Predestination.

Now, this second word is the one that most people argue about. Many Christians, confuse predestination with election. They are 2 distinct doctrines.

Election precedes predestination .God elects some for salvation (2 Thess 2:13), and then those same elect ones He predestinates.

Predestination is composed of two separate words: "**pre,**" meaning beforehand, and "**destiny**" or "**destination.**" It means to determine and mark a person's particular destiny beforehand.

What is that destiny?

The answer is in v29 of the text, "*to be conformed to the likeness of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brothers.*"

Golden Link #3: Calling.

All whom God foreknows and predestines, He also calls.

There are two different kinds of calls spoken of in Scripture. One kind of calling is external, general, and universal. It is an open summons to all persons to repent of sin, turn to the Lord Jesus Christ, and be saved. It is what Jesus was speaking of when he said, "*Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest*" (Matt. 11:28). Or again, when he said, "*If anyone is thirsty, let him come to me and drink*" (John 7:37).

The setback with this type of call is that, left to themselves, no men or women ever respond confidently (Romans 3:10-18). That is why Jesus also said, *"No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him."* (John 6:44).

The other kind of call is internal, specific, and effectual. That is, it not only issues the summons, it also provides the ability or willingness to respond positively. It is God's sovereignly drawing to Himself or bringing to spiritual life the one who without that call would remain spiritually dead and far from him.

"Many are called, but few are chosen" (Matthew 22:14).

One is external, the other internal. One is general, the other special. The call to the elect is always effectual. It consists of God's irresistible grace!

Golden Link #4: Justification.

This is the judicial act by which God as judge pardons and declares sinful men and women to be in a right standing before Him, not on the basis of their own merit, for they have none, but on the basis of what Jesus Christ has done for them by dying in their place on the cross.

The guilt of our sins was imputed or legally transferred to Him, so that He suffered the full penalty of what was due them; the merits of His obedience are imputed or legally transferred to us, so that we stand before God acquitted of all guilt. We are therefore declared righteous in God's holy sight.

Romans 5:1—*We have been justified by faith.*

Eph. 2:8 says that we are saved by grace, through faith. Faith is the medium. In that verse, the grace, the salvation and the faith are all the gift of God. God grants the faith (Phil. 1:29). He must create the faith in us before we can be justified.

Golden Link #5: Glorification.

Paul wrote, *"I always pray with joy ... being confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus"* (Phil. 1:4, 6).

God began the "good work" by foreknowledge, predestination, calling, and justification. And because He never goes back on anything He has said or changes His mind, we can know that He will carry it on until the day of our glorification, when we shall be completely made Christlike.

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The final stage of our salvation is glorification. This link reaches back up into eternity. This is God's predetermined goal for those whom He has foreknown from the start!

Paul was showing the certainty of our salvation by speaking of all stages of it as already having been accomplished. Even glorification, which is clearly in the future, is spoken of as already accomplished. In other words, it is as good as done!

This is the point of this chapter: to give us assurance of our future glorification. This is so that we can have hope in the midst of our struggles with the infirmities of this life.

The golden chain of grace is the unbreakable chain of salvation. It's forged in Heaven. It wonderfully reveals the eternal security of the believers in virtue of God's eternal love for them.

I stand here today, and I can tell you with all my heart, "that I am what I am, by the grace of God."

*Soli Deo
Gloria*