

SCRIPTURE LESSON TEXT

ROM. 8:28 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.

31 What shall we then say to these things? If God *be* for us, who *can be* against us?

32 He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?

33 Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? *It is* God that justifieth.

34 Who *is* he that condemneth? *It is* Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us.

35 Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? *shall* tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?

36 As it is written, For thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter.

37 Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us.

38 For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come,

39 Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

NOTES

More than Conquerors

Lesson Text: Romans 8:28-39

Related Scriptures: Jeremiah 29:10-14; John 3:18;
Psalms 56:9-11; 118:5-7

TIME: A.D. 56

PLACE: from Corinth

GOLDEN TEXT—"What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us?" (Romans 8:31).

Lesson Exposition

GOD'S PURPOSE—Rom. 8:28

At the end of last week's lesson text, we saw Paul reminding his readers that in spite of the fact that we do not always know what to pray for, God's Spirit intercedes for us. This He does "according to the will of God" (vs. 27), which is a great comfort.

Because of this, "all things work together for good to them that love God" (vs. 28). Note that this is not a blanket promise to all people regardless of their relationship with the Lord; rather, it is a promise made only to God's children.

Romans 8:28 could be more precisely rendered, "*God causes* all things to work together for the good of those who love Him." God is active, not passive, in how His plan is worked out.

Amid the persecutions and privations Paul experienced in preaching the gospel, he knew that the Lord is continually at work, even in circumstances that were not very pleasant.

GOD'S PLAN—Rom. 8:29-30

While some see foreknowledge and predestination as essentially the same, others make a clear distinc-

tion between the two. They see foreknowledge as *knowing* something in advance whereas predestination is *planning* something in advance. But perhaps the best way to understand Paul's intent is to grasp that "foreknowledge" has more in mind than mere factual knowledge but includes the scriptural conception that "knowledge" entails a determined love. By this understanding, we might translate the phrase, "Those whom God loved beforehand, He also predestinated."

Amid discussions that are both interesting and controversial, we may actually miss the thrust of what Paul is emphasizing, namely, that God's ultimate purpose is to make us like Christ. We will be glorified in heaven. Paul speaks of this as an accomplished fact, for in the mind of God it has already happened, and nothing can prevent the final outcome.

GOD'S PROVISION—Rom. 8:31-36

Gift of His own Son (Rom. 8:31-32). Clearly, God is on our side. Hence, "if God be for us, who can be against us?" To prove the above to be true,

Paul reminds the Roman saints that God “spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all” (vs. 32). Since that is true, we can be sure that God will also supply all our needs.

Justification of sinners (Rom. 8:33-34). Since we are “God’s elect,” who would dare bring an accusation against us? If they did, it would be baseless because Christ is righteous and bore our sins.

Since we have been justified in God’s sight, who can condemn us? Certainly the Lord Jesus will not, since He “was raised again for our justification” (4:25).

Besides what Christ has already done to provide redemption through His death and resurrection, His ongoing work in heaven is that of interceding on our behalf.

Impossibility of separation (Rom. 8:35-36). Since there is no condemnation in Christ, we now learn that there can be no separation from Him either.

When we suffer in various ways, it is easy to become discouraged and wrongly conclude that such things indicate God’s displeasure with us, or that He has abandoned us.

GOD’S POWER—Rom. 8:37-39

Christ’s victory (Rom. 8:37). Instead of being defeated by adversity, we are actually “more than conquerors” through Christ.

It is important to remember that any spiritual victory we enjoy is not achieved through our own power, strength, or ingenuity. Hence, we should not boast in our wisdom, strength, or wealth, but only in the Lord (Jer. 9:23-24).

Christ’s love (Rom. 8:38-39). Because we belong to the Lord, nothing that comes upon us in life, even death itself, can separate us from Him. Even if they wanted to, angels could not, because Christ’s power is greater.

“Principalities” and “powers” are

likely references to supernatural demonic forces that occupy an unseen realm around us. While they may seek to destroy our faith or otherwise hinder our spiritual progress, they are powerless to alienate us from God’s love.

Whatever we face in the present or whatever we might face in the future cannot deprive us of Christ’s love for us. Neither fears nor foes, currently faced or imminently anticipated, can separate us from God’s grace in Christ.

We cannot rise so high or stoop so low that we are beyond the reach of God’s love.

—John Alva Owston.

QUESTIONS

1. Who does the promise of Romans 8:28 specifically apply to?
2. What had Paul learned from being persecuted and afflicted?
3. What might be the best way to understand the difference between foreknowledge and predestination?
4. What is God’s ultimate goal in choosing us to be His children?
5. Why does Paul speak of our glorification as a past accomplishment?
6. How did God prove He was on the side of His chosen ones?
7. What is Christ doing right now on our behalf?
8. What false conclusions can suffering sometimes lead us to?
9. Why can we never boast about being “more than conquerors” (vs. 37)?
10. What do “principalities” and “powers” refer to (vs. 38)?

—John Alva Owston.

PRACTICAL POINTS

1. God controls everything. We can trust Him to work things out for our good and His glory (Rom. 8:28).
2. God is all-knowing, and He intimately knows every person He saves (vss. 29-30).
3. Through God's power, we cannot be defeated (vs. 31).
4. We cannot be condemned for our sins, because Jesus intercedes for us (vss. 32-34).
5. We can triumph over any circumstance through Christ (vss. 35-37).
6. The Lord will sustain us through every obstacle and trial (vss. 38-39).

—Valante M. Grant.

RESEARCH AND DISCUSSION

1. In a society where winning counts as everything, how do we effectively testify to the spiritual victory we have through Jesus Christ?
2. List some of the benefits of enjoying victory in Jesus.
3. God sacrificed His only Son for us. What does that tell us about the depth of God's love?
4. Discuss strategies to maintain a gracious and hopeful attitude, even in the face of persecution.
5. Discuss personal experiences of deliverance through God's love. How does your experience compare to Paul's?
6. As the world grows increasingly evil, what can we do to remain faithful witnesses for Christ?

—Valante M. Grant.

Golden Text Illuminated

“What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us?” (Romans 8:31).

The golden text consists of two questions the Apostle Paul presented. First, he asked, “What shall we then say to these things?” It appears this question looks back to all the apostle had written since the beginning of chapter 8.

The second question is, “If God be for us, who can be against us?” This is a rhetorical question, but it actually answers the first one. All that Paul has taught in the previous chapters gives us confidence to affirm that nothing can stand against those of us who know Christ. Certainly, there are people and forces that are “against us.” Satan and his followers oppose us, as does the world and the flesh. What Paul means, though, is that nothing can *effectively* stand against us because God is with us; He is on our side. This is evident from the fact that He “spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all” (vs. 32). If He did this for us, surely He will “give us all things,” including the assurance that we will prevail against all opponents.

We are on the winning side. When Jesus overcame death, He gained the victory for us (I Cor. 15:57). Because Jesus has already won, we can move forward from a position of triumph.

Are you hiding in a corner, letting your fears keep you from your calling? Are you in the midst of the battle, weary, and in need of refreshment? Remember, you can walk courageously, confident that nothing can stand against you because God stands with you.

—Jennifer Francis.