

Series: Romans  
Title: God's Eternal Purpose  
Text: Rom 8: 28-31  
Date: March 3, 2019  
Place: SGBC, NJ

**Romans 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?" (Ro 8:28-31 AV)**

**Proposition:** Everything God brings to pass in time God purposed in eternity.

God's eternal purpose is what God determined before to be done. When God purposed it, it is done. When God thought it, it is done. Then God brings his eternal purpose to pass in time.

Isaiah 14:24: The LORD of hosts hath sworn, saying, Surely as I have thought, so shall it come to pass; and as I have purposed, so shall it stand:

**Romans 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.**

God is working his eternal purpose in everything that comes to pass. It is called providence.

When God says "all things" it includes everything that comes to pass. Our fall into sin and death in Adam, our afflictions, temptations, desertion by loved ones, betrayal, things good and bad, happy and sad, great and small—all are according to God's eternal purpose.

The good that God works in all things is our *spiritual good*.

Psalm 84: 11: For the LORD God *is* a sun and shield: the LORD will give grace and glory: no good *thing* will he withhold from them that walk uprightly.

Proverbs 12:21: There shall no evil happen to the just: but the wicked shall be filled with mischief.

Think of everything that happened to Joseph. His brothers rejected him. He was sold him into slavery. He ended up in prison in Egypt. Then he was exalted to be Pharaoh's chief of staff. He said to his brothers, "*You meant it for evil, but God meant it for good.*"

But God only works all things together for good for a particular people—"to them that love God, to them who are the called." The sinner who passes his entire life hating God, hating Christ, hating his people, hating his gospel, God gave him what he wanted, his own will and way. But God worked nothing for that man's spiritual good. God works all things together for good to them that love God—and God qualifies who it is that loves God—those God has called.

**Romans 8: 28:...according to his eternal purpose.**

This is how God works all things together for good for his people. He does it according to his eternal purpose. There is no such thing as chance or fate or luck. We should drop those words from our vocabulary. Everything in time that comes to pass is by God because God purposed it from eternity.

Isaiah 14: 27: For the LORD of hosts hath purposed, and who shall disannul it? and his hand is stretched out, and who shall turn it back?

Psalm 33:11: The counsel of the LORD standeth for ever, the thoughts of his heart to all generations.

Amos 3:6: Shall a trumpet be blown in the city, and the people not be afraid? shall there be evil in a city, and the LORD hath not done it?

**Subject:** God's Eternal Purpose

**Proposition:** Everything God brings to pass in time God purposed in eternity.

Every verb in this passage is in the past tense. It is in the Greek "aorist" tense which means past action that is complete. When God purposed these things in eternity, they were done. Scripture says the "*works were finished from the foundation of the world*" (Heb 4:3) Then God brought his eternal purpose to pass in time.

## **FOREORDINATION**

**Rom 8: 29: For whom he did foreknow,...**

God's eternal purpose begins with God foreknowing or foreordaining his people to eternal life. The foreknowledge of God here is not God's knowledge of all things future. It includes that but it is more than that.

Note, it says "for whom" and not "what" he foreknew. God's foreknowing is not God knowing before that some would believe on him. If that were the case God would not have predestinated nor called us. God's omniscience is a divine attribute; foreknowledge is a divine act. Nothing can be foreseen that is not predetermined by God. Everything God knows will come to pass in time because it is what God predetermined to come to pass and what God brings to pass.

God foreknew his people in that he eternally, everlastingly loved his people, he knew his people as his choice. He foreordained his people to be his own.

Jeremiah 31:3: The LORD hath appeared of old unto me, *saying*, Yea, I have loved thee with an everlasting love: therefore with lovingkindness have I drawn thee.

John 17:23: I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me.

God also foreknew Christ before the foundation of the world. But it certainly does not mean that God foresaw that Christ would lay down his life therefore God chose him to be the Savior. It meant God foreordained everything that Christ accomplished.

1 Peter 1: 20: Who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you,...

On the day of Pentecost Peter preached that Christ's death was foreordained by God—it was “foreknown”—determined before.

Acts 2:23: Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken and by wicked hands have crucified and slain:

God's elect are his people by the same determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God. It is God foreordaining that we are his. In eternity, we were his. It was done! Christ said on the day of judgment, many will boast of their works, but he will say, “*Depart from me, I never knew you.*”

2 Timothy 2:19: Nevertheless the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are his. And, Let everyone that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity.

## **PREDESTINATION**

**Romans 8: 29: For whom he foreknew, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son.**

All things work together for good to them that love God, to them that are the called, because who God foreknew in eternity, God also did set their destination. God determined the end from the beginning. Predestination is God presetting our destination beforehand—*pre-destination*.

Ephesians 1:3: Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ: 4: According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love: 5: Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will, 6: To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved.

If anyone desires for Christ to have all preeminence then they should love God's predestination. It is because the purpose of predestination is to make his people like his Son “*that Christ might be the firstborn among many brethren.*” It is to give Christ all preeminence.

Colossians 1: 18: And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all *things* he might have the preeminence.

God looked upon his perfect, righteous, holy Son and predestinated his people to be conformed to the image of his Son to give his Son all preeminence as our Elder Brother—the firstborn! Our eternal inheritance is ours because God predestinated us to have it in Christ and by Christ.

Ephesians 1:11: In whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will:

## **CALLING**

**Romans 8: 30: Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called:**

The word means “named and made to bear a name.” Before the world was made, God called his people. God called all his people from eternity. He made us bear his name from eternity in Christ Jesus.

2 Timothy 1: 9: [God] hath saved us, and called *us* with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began,...

Galatians 4: 4: But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, 5: To redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons. 6: And BECAUSE YE ARE SONS, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father.

This was not according to our works or according to any goodness in us. It was by God's free and sovereign grace. Since God purposed it, he works all things together for our good, and at his appointed time, he sends the Spirit of his Son into our hearts and irresistibly calls us. The sure certain result is we come to him through faith in Christ, crying, Abba, Father!

1 Peter 2:9...that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light:

1 John 3:1: Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God: therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not.

Brethren, are you noticing that all of this is of God and worked by God and none of it is of us? It was done from before the foundation of the world and that is why God brings it to pass in time.

Ecclesiastes 3:14: I know that, whatsoever God doeth, it shall be forever: nothing can be put to it, nor any thing taken from it: and God doeth *it*, that *men* should fear before him.

## JUSTIFICATION

### **Romans 8: 30...and whom he called, them he also justified:**

God justified his people in his eternal purpose. When God "*blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ: According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world*" those blessings included this spiritual blessing of justification. This was God's eternal purpose—his eternal decree in Christ Jesus his Son—this is God,

Isaiah 46:10: Declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done, saying, My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure: 11 Calling...the man that executeth my counsel from a far country: yea, I have spoken it, I will also bring it to pass; I have purposed it, I will also do it.

In eternity, *when God called Christ to execute his counsel from a far country*, God looked only to his Son and our Surety became "*the lamb slain from the foundation of the world*" (Rev 13: 8). Therefore, in the fulness of time, the Son of God took flesh and went to the cross and justified his people by his blood.

Acts 4: 28: For to do whatsoever thy hand and thy counsel determined before to be done.

When God called us to believe on Christ, he purged our conscience to know "*by him all that believe are justified from all things from which you could not be justified by the law of Moses*" (Acts 13: 39). In other words, he justified us in the court of our conscience through faith in his blood.

Then there is coming a day in judgment when God shall declare us justified before all! We were justified from eternally in the lamb slain from the foundation of the world, justified representatively on the cross by Christ's blood, justified experimentally in the court of our conscience and shall be justified declaratively before all in the day of judgment.

## **GLORIFICATION**

**Romans 8: 30:...and whom he justified, them he also glorified.**

This is too great for me! Did God glorify his people in eternity? Yes, he did in Christ!

John 17:5: And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world was.

God the Father glorified his Son as our Mediator when he trusted the whole work into his hands. All the glory of that office was given to him before the world was. Since God's elect were in him and blessed with all spiritual blessings, we were glorified in him from the beginning. Brethren, the point I want you to get from this is all God's elect have been one with Christ from eternity.

But there is coming a day when we will know exactly what it is to be glorified with Christ when we awake with his likeness perfectly conformed to our Redeemer.

## **APPLICATION**

So, brethren, we have no reason to doubt or worry. The Spirit of God guarantees us *"that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose."*

**Romans 8: 31: What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us?**

**Amen!**