

According To His Purpose (Rom 8:28-30)

- Remember the context of this section is the assurance of justification by faith

I. Why Rom 8:28 MUST be true and certain:

A) “According to His purpose”

1. Paul states this as the basis for all our assurance
 - i. He doesn’t say all things work for good “as long as we continue to love God” (no assurance can be based upon man)
2. We can be completely assured because the Sovereign God has a plan and is carrying it out
 - i. And the true believer is a part of God’s plan
3. The end result is “His purpose”
 - i. The purpose of God cannot be thwarted
 - ii. This is the climax of all Christian assurance
4. The very fact that Paul expounds upon v. 28 (which is complete) by adding v.29-30 is a further proof that he does so for our assurance
 - i. The great doctrines associated with this truth lead us into a better understanding and dependence upon God and His grace

II. “Holy ground”

A) The Christian must be very reverent and careful at this point, for we are now discussing the very “mind of God”

1. Just as we are not at liberty to speculate about the mind and motives of others, we most certainly must not speculate about God
 - i. Here in Romans and in a few other sections of scripture, God gives us insight into His eternal purposes
 - a) We are to study them, and labor to understand what light He has given
 - b) But we must not go further than that, nor speculate using our human philosophies (“but I think...”)
 - 1) God’s doctrines and purposes are not subject to my understanding nor reasoning
 - ii. Deut 29:29- We must be prepared to not fully know the purposes of God

B) The doctrine of election is not for the lost man

1. It cannot be received by him, and is in fact hated by him
 - i. Therefore it is not to be made the focus in evangelism
 - ii. It is never to be argued with unbelievers
 - iii. The unbeliever doesn’t need to understand election:

- a) He must see he is a “lost sinner” and not an “elect sinner”
- 2. Election is not a foundational or elementary doctrine
 - i. It is a truth that comes to the believer later, and is the greatest form of all assurances
 - ii. Church history attests to this in the majority of the great saints:
 - a) Augustine, Tyndale, Wycliffe, Luther, Calvin, Knox, Whitefield, Edwards, Spurgeon, etc.
- 3. Election is a doctrine that leads to and promotes sanctification and holiness
 - i. It does not lead the believer to antinomianism
 - ii. Though it often leads the “professor” to antinomianism

III. God’s eternal purpose

A) God has a plan

- 1. “According to”- in agreement with, because of, due to
 - i. His purpose is the end, all else is the means He uses to bring about that end
 - ii. God will overrule all to accomplish His purpose (v.28)
 - a) This is the story of the entire bible
 - b) This truth is implicit throughout the scriptures, and in a few cases, God makes it explicit:
 - 1) Rom ch 9-11- Paul expounds upon this very doctrine (ch 8) in answer to anticipated objections
 - 2) Eph 1:5-11- “Worketh all things according to His purpose”
 - iii. God determined a course of action before He ever acted, and now He is carrying it out perfectly
 - a) Example- Acts 2:23

B) When He determined this plan

- 1. Gen 3:15- This is the 1st revelation concerning the plan, but not the invention of it
 - i. There is no reactionary plan by God due to sin
 - a) There is no “plan B” as dispensationalism teaches
 - b) There is no contingency plan with God
 - 1) This error is promoted by the Scofield Bible, which teaches that essentially if the Jews had received to “Kingdom Gospel,” then Christ could have completed God’s will and there would be no need for His death
- 2. Eph 1:3-4- God’s purpose planned before the foundation of the world
 - i. 1 Cor 2:6-7- “Ordained (purposed) before the world was”
 - ii. 2 Tim 1:9- His purpose before the world began
 - iii. 1 Pet 1:20- Christ foreordained (purposed) to be sacrificed before the foundation of the world

iv. Rev 13:8- The Lamb slain from the foundation of the world

C) Who is carrying out this plan

1. Rom 8:28-30- God (His/Him) stated 5x's
 - i. Eph 1:3-14- It's the work of the entire Godhead, and not simply the Son
 - a) John 3:16- The Father inaugurated the plan, set it in action
 - b) Gal 4:4- Father sent forth the Son at the due date
 - 1) So the Son is not "persuading" the Father to forgive us, neither pleading for us
 - ii. This is why it is certain
 - a) Notice Paul uses all aorist tense verbs in 8:29-30
 - b) Rom 8:31- Conclusion of Paul's whole argument in a statement
 - iii. Thus O/T prophecy is not God predicting the future, it is His stating the outcome He will bring about most assuredly

D) Even the times and seasons are set by God

1. There is no "chance" or "happenstance" in His will, He directs all
 - i. This makes the "gap theories" of disp. ridiculous and blasphemous
2. Eph 1:9-10- The fullness of the times
 - i. Gal 4:4- When the due date came
 - ii. Eph 3:10-11- Now, just as He planned for His glory (Eph 1:3-11)
 - a) Thus we see that salvation is not ultimately for our sake, but for God's glory
 - b) Then it is impossible that one jot or tittle can fail
 - c) The very fact that anyone goes to hell is the greatest proof of election, for if God loved everyone, as men teach, then how could His love fail???