

# **THE DOCTRINES OF GRACE** **(LESSON THIRTY-ONE)**

## **THE SECURITY OF THE CHRISTIAN** **(PART FOUR)**

At the outset of this Lesson, we desire to restate our position in respect of this particular doctrine. It is our conviction that the standing of a person who has been saved by the grace of God is very secure indeed. We are of the decided opinion that the Bible emphatically supports this view. The Christian's position in Christ is secure because of the **continuous** operation of the Holy Spirit in the life of the saved individual, by which the work of divine grace that began in the heart of such an individual at the point of their conversion, is continued and brought to completion. It is because God never forsakes the work of His hands, but always brings to perfection that which He initiates, that the Christian continues to stand to the very end. The Apostle Paul highlights this truth in **Philippians 1:6**: *“And I am convinced and sure of this very thing, that He Who began a good work in you will continue until the day of Jesus Christ [right up to the time of His return], developing [that good work] and perfecting and bringing it to full completion in you”* (**The Amplified Bible**).

In **Lesson 29**, we started to examine **Romans 8:28-39**. In that Lesson, we considered verse **28** in some detail. There Paul writes, *“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.”*

We stated in Lesson **30** that this verse is certainly one of the most remarkable in the entire Bible, because Paul gives us an absolute guarantee that for those who love God because they have been called to fulfill his designed purpose, every detail of their lives is continually woven together to fit into God's perfect plan of bringing good into their lives! We remarked that this verse, all by itself, should be enough to convince us that our position in Christ is very secure.

We made the point that this amazing guarantee is based upon what Paul explains in verses **29-30**: *“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. 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.”* He uses the five words **foreknow**, **predestinate**, **called**, **justified** and **glorified** to expound his reason for being so confident that all things are working together resulting in good, for those who are loving God as a result of their being divinely summoned according to His purpose.

In these two verses, the Apostle Paul highlights the sequence known as *“the golden chain of salvation.”* This “golden chain” reveals the order in which God saves His people, indicating very clearly that salvation is a work of the Lord from start to finish.

We considered the first two links in “the golden chain of salvation” represented by the words “foreknow and “predestinate.” We stated that God's foreknowledge is an advanced determination by God to carry through a plan which He has eternally purposed in the counsels of His own will. This plan will be carried through without fail because the Lord brings to pass all that He has thus determined and decreed.

God's foreknowledge is not advance knowledge of something which we will one day choose to do. Rather, God's foreknowledge is God bringing to pass in us something which He has planned for us.

We explained that the word "*predestinate*" is the translation of a Greek word which means "to put limits or boundaries upon beforehand, to predetermine." Those whom God foreknew, who were foreordained to be saved, had special limitations put upon them provided within the scope of the salvation which they were to receive, namely, to be conformed to the image of the Lord Jesus, and to be placed as adult sons. Predestination is the effective carrying out of God's will in the case of those who are foreordained to salvation. After God foreknew the elect, He put a label upon them which read, "to be conformed to the image of my Son." The elect were to be kept for just that purpose and no other. This conformation to the image of the Lord Jesus is the work of the Holy Spirit in the process which is called sanctification, a process which begins the moment the sinner is saved, and which continues throughout eternity.

**In light of the fact that God foreknew us and predestinated us to be conformed to the image of Jesus Christ, we are very secure because He causes all things to work together for our good.**

In this Lesson, we will examine the three remaining links in the golden chain of salvation.

The third step in the salvation of a person is God's effectual **call**, His divine summons of that Person. Paul says, "*Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called.*" Those whom God foreknew in respect of salvation and who were predestinated to conform to the image of His Son, were also called by Him. Brothers and sisters, when we understand that salvation is the work of God alone, we will appreciate that there can be no breakdown in its processes.

The Greek word translated as “called” is **kaleo** (kal-eh’-o). According to **Vine’s Expository Dictionary of Biblical Words**, the word is used particularly of the divine call to partake of the blessings of redemption. The word **Kaleo** was used in the first century as a technical word in legal practice, and meant “an official summons,” as in the case of the summoning of a witness to court. The word means here, more than a mere invitation. It is a divine summons. The ones summoned are made willing to obey this summons, not against their will but with their free will and consent. It is an effectual call. The one called always responds. In **Ephesians 2:8** we read, “*For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God.*” Paul is informing us here that we are saved by grace. Salvation is all of grace. The faith we exercise in our possessing of the Saviour is given to us by God when He calls us, and is included in the salvation provided. The call of God, therefore, is a divine summons which is always answered by the one summoned.

When we speak of the “call of God” we are referring to the process by which the soul which was dead in trespasses and sins hears the voice of God and is translated out of death into life. In other words, when God effectually brings to pass in the life of any person, that which He has purposed in Himself according to His decrees and purposes, that person is called.

Brothers and sisters, it is very important for us to recognize that there are two calls spoken of in the Bible which must be carefully differentiated from each other. There is an outward call that is universal, and there is an inward call that is specific to the elect and which produces life in them.

The outward call comes to all human beings. It comes to them in the proclamation of the gospel. It is of this outward call that our Lord refers in **Matthew 22:14**, “*For many are called, but few are chosen.*”

The Greek word translated “*called*” here is not **kaleo** which is translated as “*called*” in **Romans 8:30**, and, as we have explained, is used of a divine summons. The word used in **Matthew 22:14** is **kletos** (**klay-tos**). According to **Vine’s Expository Dictionary of Biblical Words**, the word **kletos** is used to speak of an invitation. It is used “of the call of the gospel,” as in **Matthew 20:16** and **Matthew 22:14**. It is not used in these verses to refer to “an effectual call.”

The inward call of God is the effect of His eternal foreknowledge and predestination to conform those whom He has chosen to the image of His Son, Jesus Christ. But, this inward call of God is also the actual cause, the actual means, the actual implementation of the eternal purpose whereby we are conformed to the image of God’s Son.

Those who have been inwardly called (**kaleo**), go about proclaiming the outward call (**kletos**), to all men. The Lord Jesus ordained that we should do this in **Matthew 28:19-20**. We are used of God to give the outward call, but only God can give the inward call. The outward call can, and is often rejected, but the inward call is always obeyed.

We would not be doing violence to the Word of God if we were to paraphrase **Matthew 22:14** in the following manner: “Many are called outwardly, but few are called inwardly.”

The inward call is the operation of the Holy Spirit within the heart of those whom God has chosen unto Himself before the foundation of the world. It is an operation that exerts a life-giving power that effectually makes alive those who were dead in trespasses and sins and raises them up to sit in heavenly places in Christ Jesus. The mark of the individuals who have been foreknown and predestined is that they have been effectively quickened so that the life of God has become their life. This call does not merely tell the blind that they should open their eyes and see.

This call gives sight to the blind. This call does not merely tell the deaf that they should use the powers which they have in order to hear. This call unstops the ears of the deaf and brings such life to the ear that the softest whisper of God can be heard by the soul forevermore.

It is possible for a person to hear the outward call and respond to that call only. They may make a profession of faith and even submit to water baptism and speak in tongues at an altar. They become members of the **visible** church. Those who hear the inward call and are therefore converted, become members of the **invisible** Church. Hearing and responding to the outward call only, may have the effect of uniting us to a group of professing members; but the inward call unites us to Jesus Christ Himself, and to all those who have been genuinely born again.

The outward call may bring with it a certain intellectual knowledge of the truth and produce external changes and conformity to creeds and standards; the inward call does much more. The inward call brings with it a radical heart change; it brings with it the faith and the hope which anchors us forever to Jesus Christ; it brings with it a love which always draws us back to Him who first loved us. The inward call will gradually conform us to the image of Jesus Christ and will, one day, cause us to be perfectly whole.

**The third link in the golden chain of salvation is God's effectual call of the believer to salvation.**

**Because of God's effectual call in respect of His elect, "*all things work together for good to them.*"**

The fourth step in the salvation of a person is God's **justification** of that person. Paul informs us that "*whom he called, them he also justified.*" This next link in the supernatural chain of sovereign grace has to do with the recording of our redemption in the eternal books of Heaven.

We were foreknown in the eternal decree of God, predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son, and then we were effectually called. Answering to the calling as it takes place on earth in the heart of the individual believer is our justification, which takes place in Heaven as God counts us righteous in Christ. All of those who are effectually called are justified.

Justification may be defined as that act by which unjust sinners are made right in the sight of a just and holy God. The greatest need of sinners is righteousness. It is this lack of righteousness that is supplied by Jesus Christ on behalf of the believing sinner. Justification by faith alone means justification by the righteousness or merit of Christ alone, not by the sinner's merit or by his or her good works.

The Justification of God is forensic. It is a legal justification that is recognized by the supreme court of heaven! It is the Judge of judges Himself who makes the declaration! We are declared and counted to be righteous when God imputes or credits the righteousness of Christ to our account, having first imputed or credited our sins to the account of Jesus Christ. What an amazing transaction! Those whom God called into salvation, He justified, that is, He takes away the guilt and penalty of their sins, and bestows upon them a positive righteousness. This positive righteousness is Jesus Christ Himself, in whom the believer stands forever, innocent, un-condemned, and righteous in point of law. Our position in Jesus Christ is secure because we have legally been declared righteous by God. When God justifies a person, He gives that person a standing before Him that is so impeccable, so pure and so spotless that no power in heaven, earth or hell can bring any condemning accusation against us.

Brothers and sisters, the human race was completely ruined by sin. Our fall was not a partial fall, but one that rendered us radically corrupt. This does not mean that there is no good in us, according to our definition of good, but there is no good in us according to God's definition of good. God Himself has declared in His Word that all human beings are sinners and, therefore, condemned. One of the most important theological truths which we need to learn is that God declares a person to be justified because it pleases Him to do so! It pleases Him to declare some persons to be righteous and, therefore, He declares that they are righteous! This declaration has nothing whatsoever to do with the character of the individual whom He, thus, declares justified. Human character is based on human standards of comparison, but God cannot see any difference between human goodness and human badness. Both of them are evil when compared with His own essential holiness.

In justification God records in Heaven that an individual whom He has previously chosen for salvation and planned that he or she should be like Christ, has been effectually called, and is now spiritually alive through the process of salvation.

**The fourth link in the golden chain of salvation is God's justifying of the believing sinner whereby He declares that individual to be righteous.**

**Because of God's justifying of His elect, *"all things work together for good to them."***

The fifth and final step in the salvation of a person is God's **glorification** of him or her. The apostle writes, *"Whom he justified, them he also glorified."* The word *"glorified"* is the translation of the Greek word **doxazo (dox-ad'-zo)**.



Glorification refers to the act of God transforming the entire being of the persons whom He foreknew, predestinated to be conformed to the image of His Son, called, and justified. This transformation is so complete, that their whole spirit and soul and body is perfected forever, rendering them immune to sin and all its effects.

Peter tells us in **1 Peter 1:21** that when God raised up Christ from the dead, He gave Him glory. In the upper room the Lord Jesus, in His prayer to His Father said, “*And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one*” (**John 17:22**). We are, one day, to share the resurrection glory of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Brothers and sisters, everything which we receive from God, is a gift of His grace. Nothing that comes to us, from God’s foreknowledge of us, through to His glorification of us, could have ever come to us in any other way than by grace. For this reason, we are persuaded that glorification will come to all of God’s elect. Since every step in the process of salvation, every link in the golden chain of salvation, is bound up with the sovereignty of God, the unchangeableness of His purpose, and the constancy of His good pleasure and since they are all brought about because of the effectual working of God’s mighty power, then, the glorification of those who have been foreknown, predestinated, called and justified by the grace of God, is absolutely certain, for glorification is also a gift of God’s grace.

The glorifying of the saints will actually occur when the Lord Jesus Christ returns. Paul speaks about this in **1 Corinthians 15**.

### **1 CORINTHIANS 15:50-57**

*50 Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption.*

*51 Behold, I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed,*

*52 In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.*

*53 For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality.*

*54 So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory.*

*55 O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?*

*56 The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law.*

*57 But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.*

It is obvious that this passage has to do with a future event. And yet, when Paul speaks about the glorifying of the saints in **Romans 8:30**, he speaks about it in the past tense. He does not say that God will one day glorify those whom He has justified, but he says, “*Whom he justified, them he also glorified.*” This is absolutely amazing! It is the boldest anticipation of faith that even the New Testament contains. Paul is trying to get us to understand that when God chose us in Christ before the foundation of the world, He did not merely purpose that we should be delivered from sin but He also purposed that we should be clothed in His glory. In the mind of God, we are already glorified. It must happen, because He, the sovereign God, is the One who is to glorify us and who or what can prevent Him from doing so?

Brothers and sisters, we do not have to live our lives in suspense, wondering whether or not we will ultimately be saved. If we have genuinely been saved by God's grace, we can be just as certain that we are going to be in Heaven as we are certain that Jesus Christ is in heaven now! If we do not understand our text in this way, the remaining portion of the chapter loses its power and its meaning. God is explicitly stating that He already looks upon us as though we were already in Heaven. Indeed, this is how He has looked upon us from all eternity. It is critically important for us to be convinced that we were known to God before the creation, and that the golden chain which began with Him at the eternal decree in Heaven, came down to us in effectual calling, and bound us back to Him in our glorification. We do not have to wait until we die to know whether or not we are going to heaven. In the eternal councils of God, we are already glorified. We are predestined for glory.

**The fifth and final link in the golden chain of salvation is God's glorifying of the Christian.**

**Because of the absolute certainty that God will glorify of His, *"all things work together for good to them."***

We conclude this Lesson by observing again that every step in the salvation of a person, every link in the golden chain of salvation represents divine action. It is God Himself who does the foreknowing, the predestinating, the calling, the justifying and the glorifying! Paul makes no mention here of God depending on human beings to do their part. He does not say that if human beings do not cooperate with God the process will be aborted. Paul knows that God will bring to completion every project that He begins and that He is never dependent on human beings to finish what He initiates.

Because salvation is from start to finish a sovereign work of God, we can be assured that the position of a saved person in Jesus Christ is extremely secure.