

Romans Session 122
The Ultimate Security 1
The Purpose and progress of Salvation 1

Romans 8:29-30 (NASB)

²⁹ For those whom He foreknew, He also predestined to become conformed to the image of His Son, so that He would be the firstborn among many brethren;

³⁰ and these whom He predestined, He also called; and these whom He called, He also justified; and these whom He justified, He also glorified.

From the time of the early church, Christians have debated the possibility of a believer's losing his salvation. Many a bitter controversy have centered on that single issue.

We have expressed many times in this study, that it is a strong claim of Scriptures, that everyone who is genuinely saved is eternally saved.

We can never be in danger of losing the spiritual life given to us by God through Jesus Christ.

The verses above, contain what tis perhaps the clearest and most explicit presentation of that truth in all of God's Word. In these two verses Paul reveals the unbroken pattern of God's sovereign redemption, from His eternal foreknowledge of a believer's salvation to its ultimate completion in glorification.

For the sake of easier understanding, the first heading in this chapter will be taken out of textual order. Because the second half of verse 29 states the purpose of five aspects of salvation that Paul mentions in these two verses, that phrase will be considered first.

THE PURPOSE OF SALVATION

Romans 8:29c (NASB)

to become conformed to the image of His Son,

Paul introduced the truths of the believer's security and of God's purpose of salvation in the previous verse stating,

Romans 8:28 (NASB)

²⁸ God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose.

God's calling precedes and makes possible a person's hearing and responding in faith to that divine call.

The resulting salvation is made secure by the Lord's causing everything in a believer's life to work for his ultimate good. Conversely, it is impossible for any evil to cause a believer any ultimate harm.

In the middle of verse 29, Paul states the twofold purpose of God's bringing sinners to eternal salvation.

The secondary purpose is stated first: to make believers into the likeness of His Son.

TO CONFORM BELIEVERS TO CHRIST

Romans 8:29c (NASB)

to become conformed to the image of His Son,

From before began, God chose to save believers from their sins in order that they “**might become confirmed to the image of His Son,**” Jesus Christ.

Consequently, every true believer moves inexorably toward perfections in righteousness, as God makes for Himself a people recreated into the likeness of **His** own divine **Son** who will dwell and reign with Him in heaven throughout all eternity.

God is redeeming for Himself an eternally holy and Christlike race, to be citizens in His divine kingdom and children in His divine family.

For a believer to lose his salvation would be for God to fail in His divine purpose and to condemn to hell those whom He had sovereignly elected to redemption.

It would be for God (who cannot lie) to break His covenant with Himself, made before the foundation of the earth.

It would mean that the divine seal of the Holy Spirit, imprinted by the king of kings and Lord of lords upon each of His elect children, would be subject to violation and abrogation.

2 Corinthians 1:22 (NASB)

²² *who also sealed us and gave us the Spirit in our hearts as a pledge.*

Ephesians 1:13 (NASB)

¹³ *In Him, you also, after listening to the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation—having also believed, you were sealed in Him with the Holy Spirit of promise,*

Ephesians 4:30 (NASB)

³⁰ *Do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption.*

Leading up to the climactic truth that, without exception, God will complete the salvation of every sinner, who is converted to Christ, Paul has already established that;

Romans 8:1 (NASB)

¹ *Therefore there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.*

And that God’s Holy Spirit indwells every believer?

Romans 8:9 (NASB)

⁹ *However, you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you. But if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Him.*

And that every believer is already, in this life, an adopted child of God.

Romans 8:14-16 (NASB)

¹⁴ *For all who are being led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God.*

¹⁵ *For you have not received a spirit of slavery leading to fear again, but you have received a spirit of adoption as sons by which we cry out, "Abba! Father!"*

¹⁶ *The Spirit Himself testifies with our spirit that we are children of God,*

And also, that those children are heirs;

Romans 8:17 (NASB)

¹⁷ *and if children, heirs also, heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him so that we may also be glorified with Him.*

And that the Spirit helps our weakness, and intercedes for the saints according to the will of God;

Romans 8:26-27 (NASB)

²⁶ *In the same way the Spirit also helps our weakness; for we do not know how to pray as we should, but the Spirit Himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words;*

²⁷ *and He who searches the hearts knows what the mind of the Spirit is, because He intercedes for the saints according to the will of God.*

Building on the categorical declaration that no believer will again face God's condemnation, the apostle progressively establishes that, no condemnation eventuates in glorifications.

There is no failure or partial fulfillment in the sovereign operation of God's salvation plan.

Every believer who is saved will one day be glorified. There is absolutely no allowance for the possibility of a believer's sinning himself out of God's grace.

He can no more work himself out of salvation than he could have worked himself into it.

Nor is there any allowance for an intermediate state of limbo or purgatory, in which some Christians fall short of being fully **conformed to the image of God's Son** and must, after death, somehow complete their salvation by their own works or have it completed by others on their behalf.

Although the full truth of it is far too vast and magnificent even for a redeemed human mind to grasp, the New Testament gives us glimpses of what being **conformed to the image** of Christ will be like.

First of all, we will be like Christ bodily.

One day the Lord will transform the body of our humble state into conformity with the body of His glory, by the exertion of the power that He has even to subject all things to Himself.

Philippians 3:20-21 (NASB)

²⁰ *For our citizenship is in heaven, from which also we eagerly wait for a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ;*

²¹ *who will transform the body of our humble state into conformity with the body of His glory, by the exertion of the power that He has even to subject all things to Himself.*

And as the term itself denotes, glorification (our ultimate conformity to Christ) will be God's gracious adornment of His children with the very glory of **His divine Son**.

The writer of Hebrews tells us that;

Hebrews 1:2-3 (NASB)

² *in these last days has spoken to us in His Son, whom He appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the world.*

³ *And He is the radiance of His glory and the exact representation of His nature, and upholds all things by the word of His power. When He had made purification of sins, He sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high,*

John tells us;

1 John 3:2 (NASB)

² *Beloved, now we are children of God, and it has not appeared as yet what we will be. We know that when He appears, we will be like Him, because we will see Him just as He is.*

In the meanwhile, as long as we remain on earth,

2 Corinthians 3:18 (NASB)

¹⁸ *But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as from the Lord, the Spirit.*

Romans 6:5 (NASB)

⁵ *For if we have become united with Him in the likeness of His death, certainly we shall also be in the likeness of His resurrection,*

1 Corinthians 15:49 (NASB)

⁴⁹ *Just as we have borne the image of the earthy, we will also bear the image of the heavenly.*

All human beings share a common kind of physical body, but each person has his own distinctive looks and personality. The same way, the redeemed in heaven will share a common kind of spiritual body but will be individually distinguished from one another.

The Bible nowhere teaches the idea that individuality is destroyed at death and that the soul of the deceased becomes absorbed unidentifiably into some cosmic wholeness, or worse yet, some cosmic nothingness.

Scripture is clear that, in eternity, both the saved and the damned will retain their individuality.

The final resurrections will be of all human beings of all times, a resurrection of life for the righteous and the resurrection of death for the wicked.

John 5:28-29 (NASB)

²⁸ *"Do not marvel at this; for an hour is coming, in which all who are in the tombs will hear His voice,*

²⁹ *and will come forth; those who did the good deeds to a resurrection of life, those who committed the evil deeds to a resurrection of judgment.*

Acts 24:15 (NASB)

¹⁵ *having a hope in God, which these men cherish themselves, that there shall certainly be a resurrection of both the righteous and the wicked.*

Secondly, and more importantly, although not becoming deity, we will be like Christ spiritually.

Our incorruptible bodies will be infused with the very holiness of Christ, and we will be both outwardly and inwardly perfect, just as our Lord.

The writer of Hebrews gives us insight into God's gracious plan of redeeming those who believe in His Son and of conforming them to His image when he writes;

Hebrews 2:9-11 (NASB)

⁹ *But we do see Him who was made for a little while lower than the angels, namely, Jesus, because of the suffering of death crowned with glory and honor, so that by the grace of God He might taste death for everyone.*

¹⁰ *For it was fitting for Him, for whom are all things, and through whom are all things, in bringing many sons to glory, to perfect the author of their salvation through sufferings.*

¹¹ *For both He who sanctifies and those who are sanctified are all from one Father; for which reason He is not ashamed to call them brethren,*

TO MAKE CHRIST PREEMINENT

“so that He would be the firstborn among many brethren;”

We will take this on next time.