

Salvation: Eternity Past to Eternity Future (*Part 1*)

Romans 8:28-30

Thought for the Day: Our salvation is perfect, not precarious, because it is the work of God from beginning to end and is therefore eternally secure.

The Road to Righteousness in the book of Romans stretches from eternity past to eternity future. In Romans 8:28 Paul tells us that we can have the confident expectation that God is intimately acquainted *with* and effectively working *in* all the circumstances of our lives. But verses 29 and 30 also indicate that the good God is working for in our lives began in eternity past and will extend beyond the present time out into eternity future.

Paul did not go into a detailed doctrinal explanation in these verses. In just two verses and two sentences he mentions the incredibly complex and controversial doctrines of foreknowledge, predestination, calling, justification and glorification with no explanation whatsoever! But there are two very important facts that Paul clearly communicated to the believers in these verses.

I. The Perfection of Our Salvation

A. Our salvation is the work of God from beginning to end

- We have the power to choose and we are responsible for the choice that we make concerning the Lord Jesus Christ. In order to be saved, we must confess and repent of our sins; we must place our faith in the Lord Jesus Christ; and we must invite Him to come into our lives to be our Savior.
- But here in these verses, Paul portrays our salvation as wholly the work of God and this is the consistent teaching of Scripture (Ephesians 2:8-9; Acts 5:31; 11:18; 14:27; 16:14; 2 Timothy 2:25)
 - "Our response in salvation is faith, but even that is not of ourselves [but is] the gift of God. Faith is nothing that we do in our own power or by our own resources. In the first place we do not have adequate power or resources. More than that, God would not want us to rely on them even if we had them. Otherwise salvation would be in part by our own works, and we would have some ground to boast in ourselves. Paul intends to emphasize that even faith is not from us apart from God's giving it." (*The MacArthur New Testament Commentary*)
- So then, we are responsible to exercise faith and repentance, but faith and repentance are gifts of God's grace to us:
*I know not how this saving faith To me He did impart,
Nor how believing in His Word Wro't peace within my heart.
I know not how the Spirit moves, Convincing men of sin,
Revealing Jesus thro' the Word, Creating faith in Him.* (Daniel W. Whittle)
- Salvation is the work of God and He will get all the credit for it!
- "The only thing that a man can contribute to his redemption is the sin from which he needs to be redeemed." (*William Temple*)

B. Our salvation, in Christ, is eternally secure

- From Foreknowledge and Predestination in eternity past, to our Calling and Justification during our present lifetime here on earth, to our Glorification in eternity future, God's gift of salvation is an unbroken, unbreakable chain.
 - The good work which God began for us in eternity past, He *will* bring to completion in eternity future; and He's not going to lose anyone in between!
- In order for us to "lose our salvation", we would have to be able to reach back into eternity past and undo the work of a sovereign, all-powerful, all-knowing God! And in so-doing, we would have to nullify His Foreknowledge, His Predestination, His Calling and His Justification.
 - If we can negate and cancel out the work of God in eternity past and in the present in order to lose our salvation, then we have the power to make God less than perfect! We would have to be more powerful and more sovereign than God!
- "When the Lord—who is the Great Shepherd of the Sheep, the Good Shepherd of the Sheep, and Chief Shepherd of the Sheep—starts out with one hundred sheep, He's going to come home with one hundred sheep; He will not lose one of them."
(Dr. J. Vernon McGee)
- We can't *get* ourselves saved and we can't *keep* ourselves saved!
- Don't let your doubts and fears keep you from putting your trust in the Lord Jesus Christ. Don't let the things you don't understand keep you from trusting in the things you do understand:
 1. We know that we have broken God's laws and disobeyed His commands. We know that we all like sheep have gone astray, that each of us had turned to his own way. We know that we've rebelled against God and ignored Him and been indifferent to Him.
 2. We know that our sins have earned us an eternity of separation from God. We know that we deserve whatever punishment God decides to send our way.
 3. We know that God became a Man, the Lord Jesus Christ, that He came to die on the cross to pay the penalty for our sins. We know that His death was a substitutionary sacrifice—He died the death we deserve and received the punishment that we have earned.
 4. We know that Jesus rose from the dead; that He was victorious over sin and that He defeated death and the devil.
 5. We know that if we will confess and repent of our sins and ask Jesus Christ to come into our life and forgive us of our sins, He will do it!
 6. And we can know, with absolute assurance, that if we will put our trust in Jesus Christ, He's not going to lose us somewhere along the way. We're not going to fall through the cracks and somehow get left behind!

***Our Salvation is a Perfect, Certain and Definite Salvation.
It is not a Precarious, Changeable nor Dubious Salvation!***

II. The Purpose of Our Salvation

III. The Process of Our Salvation