

Paul's Epistle to the Romans

LESSON XX: THE BELIEVER'S ULTIMATE VICTORY IN CHRIST — CHAP 8 VERSES 28-39

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. 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. What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us? He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things? Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth. Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us. Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? As it is written, For thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter. Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us. For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord. (Rom 8:30-39 KJV)

And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose. For those God foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the likeness of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brothers. And those he predestined, he also called; those he called, he also justified; those he justified, he also glorified. What, then, shall we say in response to this? If God is for us, who can be against us? He who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all — how will he not also, along with him, graciously give us all things? Who will bring any charge against those whom God has chosen? It is God who justifies. Who is he that condemns? Christ Jesus, who died — more than that, who was raised to life — is at the right hand of God and is also interceding for us. Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall trouble or hardship or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword? As it is written: 'For your sake we face death all day long; we are considered as sheep to be slaughtered.' No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord. (Rom 8:30-39 NIV)

And we have known that to those loving God all things do work together for good, to those who are called according to purpose; because whom He did foreknow, He also did fore-appoint, conformed to the image of His Son, that he might be first-born among many brethren; and whom He did fore-appoint, these also He did call; and whom He did call, these also He declared righteous; and whom He declared righteous, these also He did glorify. What, then, shall we say unto these things? if God [is] for us, who [is] against us? He who indeed His own Son did not spare, but for us all did deliver him up, how shall He not also with him the all things grant to us? Who shall lay a charge against the choice ones of God? God [is] He that is declaring righteous, who [is] he that is condemning? Christ [is] He that died, yea, rather also, was raised up; who is also on the right hand of God — who also doth intercede for us. Who shall separate us from the love of the Christ? tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? (according as it hath been written — 'For Thy sake we are put to death all the day long, we were reckoned as sheep of slaughter,') but in all these we more than conquer, through him who loved us; for I am persuaded that neither death, nor life, nor messengers, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things about to be, nor height, nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of god, that [is] in Christ Jesus our Lord. (Rom 8:30-39 Young's Literal Translation)

v 28 — “This verse may be in adversative relationship to what comes before it — ‘we groan, we do not know how to pray, *but* God is working ...’ — but is probably continuative: in this time of suffering and expectation (vv. 18-25) the Spirit helps us by interceding for us (vv. 26-27) *and*, by God's providence, ‘all things work together for good.’” [Moo, *Romans*, pg 527] “*Nothing is more necessary for Christians than to be well persuaded of the happiness and privileges of their condition, that they may be able to serve God with cheerfulness and freedom of spirit, and to pass through the troubles and difficulties of the world. Here, then, is further consolation: Christians are often in sorrows, sufferings, and trials. This is not in itself joyous, but grievous; but in another point of view it is a matter of joy. Though afflictions in themselves are evil, yet in their effects as overruled and directed by God, they are useful. Yea, all things, of every kind, that happen to the Christian, are overruled by God for his good!*” [Haldane, *Romans*, pg 390]

we know — “This sentence is one that has parallels in both pagan and Jewish literature, and Paul may presume that his readers ‘know’ this to be true because they are familiar with those sayings [e.g., the oft-quoted saying of Rabbi Aqiba: ‘*All the Almighty does, he does for good.*’]. It is more likely, however, that *Paul assumes they know this because they have come to know God in Christ and experienced the fullness of his grace in their lives.*” [Moo, *Romans*, pg 527] “*The Apostle had proposed various considerations, to which he now says we know this is to be added. This does not mean that believers know it merely in a speculative manner, but that it is a knowledge which enters into their heart and affections, producing in them confidence in its*

truth. It is a knowledge of faith which implies certainty and self application, by which the believer not only knows but applies the promises of God, and is able to say, *This promise is mine, it belongs to me. For otherwise, what advantage would there be in a general knowledge of this fact? where would be its consolation, and where its practical use?*” [Haldane, *Romans*, pg 391]

“ALL THINGS” OF THEMSELVES DO NOT WORK FOR GOOD, BUT GOD WORKS ALL FOR GOOD — “[I]t is important to insist that ‘all things’ do not tend toward good in and of themselves, as if Paul held to a ‘naively optimistic’ interpretation of history. Rather, *it is the sovereign guidance of God that is presumed as the undergirding and directing force behind all the events of life.* This being so, it does not finally matter all that much whether we translate ‘all things work together for good’ or ‘God is working in and through all things for good.’” [Moo, *Romans*, pg 528]

WHAT IS THE SCOPE OF “ALL THINGS”? — “We would expect that Paul has particularly in mind the ‘sufferings of the present time’ (v. 18; cf. vv. 35-37), but the scope should probably not be restricted. *Anything that is a part of this life — even our sins — can, by God’s grace, contribute toward ‘good.’*” [Moo, *Romans*, pg 529] “They work together in their efficacy, in their unity, and in their connection. They do not work thus of themselves: it is God that turns all things to the good of His children. The afflictions of believers, in a peculiar manner, contribute to this end. *‘Before I was afflicted I went astray; but now have I kept Thy word. It is good for me that I have been afflicted, that I might learn Thy statutes.’ ‘Tribulation worketh patience.’ ‘No chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous; nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby.’* And believers are chastened by God for their profit, that they may be partakers of His holiness. The Apostle himself was an example of this, when a thorn in his flesh was sent to him to prevent his being exalted above measure. We see how much the sufferings of those spoken of in the eleventh chapter of the Hebrews were calculated to detach their affections from this present world, and lead them to seek a better, even a heavenly country. There is often a need be for their being in heaviness through manifold temptations. *Even the sins of believers work for their good, not from the nature of sin, but by the goodness and power of Him who brings light out of darkness. Everywhere in Scripture we read of the great evil of sin. Everywhere we receive the most solemn warning against its commission; and everywhere we hear also of the chastisements it brings, even upon those who are rescued from its finally condemning power. It is not sin, then, in itself that works the good, but God who overrules its effects to His children, — shows them, by means of it, what is in their hearts, as well as their entire dependence on Himself, and the necessity of walking with Him more closely. Their falls lead them to humiliation, to the acknowledgment of their weakness and depravity, to prayer for the guidance and overpowering influence of the Holy Spirit, to vigilance and caution against all carnal security, and to reliance on that righteousness provided for their appearance before God.*” [Haldane, *Romans*, pg 392]

works together — There is debate as to how much emphasis should be put on the prefix of this Greek word. In essence the difference is between ‘all things *work* for good’ or ‘all things *work together* for good.’ The difference is very minor, the latter sense just puts a little more emphasis upon the fact that all things, good or evil, interact to work for our good. The other emphasis is upon the fact that God takes all things in and of themselves to work for our good; i.e., he turns even the evil things for our good. “There are many places where *συνεργέω* [sunergeō, ‘work together’] loses its ‘with’ connotation and means simply ‘help, assist someone to obtain something.’” [Moo, *Romans*, pg 529]

for good — “Certainly Paul does not mean that the evil experienced by believers in this life will always be reversed, turned into ‘good.’ For many things that we suffer will contribute to our ‘good’ only by refining our faith and strengthening our hope. In any case, *we must be careful to define ‘good’ in God’s terms, not ours. The idea that this verse promises the believer material wealth or physical well-being, for instance, betrays a typical Western perversion of ‘good’ into an exclusively material interpretation. God may well use trials in these areas to produce what he considers a much higher ‘good’: a stronger faith, a more certain hope (cf. 5:3-4). But the promise to us is that there is nothing in this world that is not intended by God to assist us on our earthly pilgrimage and to bring us safely and certainly to the glorious destination of that pilgrimage.*” [Moo, *Romans*, pg 529f] “That *all things work together* for the good of them that love God, is a truth affording the highest consolation. These words teach believers that whatever may be the number and overwhelming character of adverse circumstances, they are all contributing to conduct them into the possession of the inheritance provided for them in heaven. That they are thus working for the good of the children of God, is manifest from the consideration that God governs the world. *The first cause of all is God; second causes are all His creatures, whether angels, good or bad men, animals, or the inanimate creation. Second causes move only under His direction; and when God withdraws His hand, they cannot more at all, as it is written, ‘In Him we live, and move, and have our being.’ As God, then, the first cause, moves all second causes against His enemies, so, when He is favorable to us, He employs all to move and work for our good, as it is said, ‘In that day will I make a covenant for them with the beasts of the field, and with the fowls of heaven, and with the creeping things of the ground; and will break the bow, and the sword, and the battle out of the earth, and will make them to lie down safely,’ Hosea 2:18. And as of men it is said, ‘When a man’s ways please the Lord, He maketh even his enemies-to be at peace with him,’ Proverbs 16:7.* If all things work together for good, there is nothing within the compass of being that is not, in one way or other, advantageous to the children of God. All the attributes of God, all the offices of Christ, all the gifts and graces of the Holy Spirit, are combined for their good. The creation of the world, the fall and the redemption of man, all the dispensations of Providence, whether prosperous or adverse, all occurrences and events — all things, whatsoever they be — work for their good.” [Haldane, *Romans*, pg 392]

for those who love God — “Paul speaks only rarely of Christians ‘loving’ God [1 Cor 2:9; 8:3; cf. Eph 6:24], but the expression is widely used in the OT and Jewish literature to describe God’s people. *‘Loving God’ is therefore a qualification for the*

enjoyment of the promise of this verse, but it is a qualification met by all who belong to Christ. In other words, Paul does not intend to suggest that the promise ‘all things work for good’ ceases to have validity for a Christian who is not loving God enough. ‘Loving God’ sums up the basic inner direction of all Christians — but only of Christians.” [Moo, *Romans*, pg 530] “Those to whom afflictions are a real blessing are described, first, as *those who love God*; and secondly, as *those who are called according to his purpose*. *The former of these clauses describes the character of the persons intended, they love God, which is a comprehensive expression for all the exercises of genuine religion*. The latter clause declares a fact, with regard to all such which has a most important bearing on the apostle’s great object in this chapter, *they are called according to his purpose*.” [Hodge, *Romans*, pg 280]

those who are called — “The second description of those to whom this promise applies looks at our relationship to God from its other, divine, side. While we must not play one of these descriptions off against the other — for both are important — it is nevertheless clear, from vv. 29-30, that this second clause contains the real reason why Christians can know that ‘all things work for good.’ *We might paraphrase: ‘we know that all things are working for good for those of us who love God; and we know this is so because we who love God are also those who have been summoned by God to enter into relationship with him, a summons that is in accordance with God’s purpose to mold us into the image of Christ and to glorify us.’ ‘Those who are called,’ then, describes Christians not as the recipients of an invitation that was up to them to accept or reject, but as the objects of God’s effectual summoning of them to become the recipients of his grace.*” [Moo, *Romans*, pg 530]

“CALLED” = THE EFFECTUAL CALL OF GOD — “Some have argued that ‘those who are called’ designates, at least in principle, all people, ‘called’ to a relationship with Christ through the preaching of the gospel and through God’s inward work of grace. However, while Jesus sometimes spoke of what we might refer to as a ‘general’ call (cf. Matt 22:14: ‘many are called, but few are chosen’), Paul always uses the verb *καλέω* [kaleō, ‘to call’] and the noun *κλητοί* [klētoi, ‘the called ones’], when they have God as the subject of the action, of God’s effective summons by which people are brought into relationship with himself. *Κλητοί* [klētoi, ‘the called ones’] designates Christians in Rom 1:6, 7; 1 Cor 1:1, 2, 24; Jude 1; Rev 17:14; the only other NT occurrence is Matt 22:14, mentioned above. For *καλέω* [kaleō, ‘to call’] with God as subject in Paul, see Rom 4:17; 9:12, 24, 25, 26; 1 Cor 1:9; 7:15, 17, 18 (twice), 20, 21, 22 (twice), 24; Gal 1:6, 15; 5:8, 13; Eph 4:1, 4; Col 3:15; 1 Thes 2:12; 4:7; 5:24; 2 Thes 2:14; 1 Tim 6:12; 2 Tim 1:9. The flurry of occurrences in 1 Cor 7:15-22 reveals that, *for Paul, ‘to be called by God’ is equivalent to ‘having become a Christian.’*” [Moo, *Romans*, pg 530f] “*Called*” must refer to the effectual call of God or the verse has no meaning. If “the called” refers to the general call, then that applies to all mankind, therefore the verse says “all things work for the good of all people without distinction.” That is obviously an error. “The word *called* ... is never, in the epistles of the New Testament, applied to those who are the recipients of the mere external invitation of the gospel. It always means *effectually called*, i.e. it is always applied to those who are really brought to accept of the blessings to which they are invited. 1 Corinthians 1:24, ‘But to those who are called,’ i.e., to true Christians. Jude 1, ‘To those who are sanctified by God the Father, and are preserved in Jesus Christ, and called,’ 1 Corinthians 1:2, etc. The word is, therefore, often equivalent with *chosen*, as in the phrase ‘called an apostle,’ 1 Corinthians 1:1; Romans 1:1; and ‘called of Jesus Christ,’ Romans 1:6. And thus in the Old Testament, ‘Hearken unto me, O Jacob, and Israel my called,’ Isaiah 48:12; see Isaiah 42:6, 49:1, 51:2. *Those who love God, therefore, are those whom he hath chosen and called by his grace to a participation of the Redeemer’s kingdom.*” [Hodge, *Romans*, pg 280f] “This is a further description or characteristic of God’s people. *They are called not merely outwardly by the preaching of the Gospel, for this is common to them with unbelievers, but called also by the Spirit, with an internal and effectual calling, and made willing in the day of God’s power*. They are called according to God’s eternal purpose, according to which He knew them, and purposed their calling before they were in existence; for all God’s purposes are eternal. It imports that their calling is solely the effect of grace; for when it is said to be a calling according to God’s purpose, it is distinguished from a calling according to works. *Who 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,*’ 2 Timothy 1:9. It imports that it is an effectual and permanent calling; for God’s purposes cannot be defeated. *The counsel of the Lord, that shall stand.*’ Their calling is according to the purpose of Him *‘who worketh all things according to the counsel of His own will,’* Ephesians 1:11.” [Haldane, *Romans*, pg 395]

according to his purpose — “This calling takes place ‘in accordance with and on the basis of God’s purpose.’ The majority of early interpreters took this to be a human purpose [see, e.g., Chrysostom, Origen, Theodoret], but Augustine was surely right in insisting that *it is God’s purpose that is intended*. Paul adds ‘according to [God’s] purpose’ to ‘those who are called’ to indicate that God’s summons of believers was issued with a particular purpose, or plan, in mind — that believers should become like Christ and share in his glory. And it is because this is God’s plan for us who are called and who, thereby, love God, that we can be certain that all things will contribute toward ‘good’ — the realization of this plan in each of our cases.... Paul connects this πρόθεσις [prothesis, ‘purpose’] of God with his salvific actions in four other key texts (Rom 9:11; Eph 1:11; 3:11; 2 Tim 1:9; the only other Pauline occurrence is of human ‘design,’ or ‘direction,’ in 2 Tim 3:10).” [Moo, *Romans*, pg 531] “Paul accepts fully human free agency but behind it all and through it all runs God’s sovereignty as here and on its gracious side (Romans 9:11; 3:11; 2 Timothy 1:9).” [Robertson, *Word Pictures*, vol 4 pg 377] “This call is not according to the merits of men, but according to the divine purpose. *Who hath saved us, and called us with a 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.*’ 2 Timothy 1:9; Ephesians 1:11; Romans 9:11. The design of the apostle, in the introduction of this clause, seems to have been twofold. *First, to show, according to his usual manner, that the fact that some men love God is to be attributed to his sovereign grace, and not to themselves; and, secondly, that if men are called, according to the eternal purpose of God, their salvation is secure*. By this latter idea, this

clause is associated with the passage that follows, and with the general object of the chapter. That the *calling* of men does secure their salvation, is proved in verses 29, 30.” [Hodge, *Romans*, pg 281]

v 29 — “In these verses Paul spells out the ‘purpose,’ or ‘plan,’ of God. At the same time, however, he also states the ultimate ground for the promise of v. 28 and for the assurance that has been his theme throughout this chapter. The realization of God’s ‘purpose’ in individual believers is the bedrock of ‘the hope of glory.’” [Moo, *Romans*, pg 531]

THE “GOLDEN CHAIN” OF SALVATION — “Paul expositis God’s plan in four parallel clauses, in which Paul repeats key verbs as a way of connecting them closely together. *He thereby creates what has been called a ‘golden chain’ and has furnished theologians throughout the history of the church with rich material for construction of a doctrine of soteriology — particularly for its earliest (predestination) and latest (perseverance) stages. While such application is entirely justified, we must remember that (1) Paul does not intend to give a complete picture of his, still less of NT, soteriology; and (2) these verses have a definite role to play in the argument of this chapter.*” [Moo, *Romans*, pg 531f]

FOREKNOW — “‘Foreknow,’ as its etymology in both Greek and English suggests, usually means ‘to know ahead of time’ [the Greek word is προ– (pro, ‘before’) γινώσκω (ginōskō, ‘know’)]. See Acts 26:5, where Paul says that the Jews ‘*knew before*’ now, for a long time, if they wished to testify, that I had lived according to the strictest party of our religion.’ This being the commonest meaning of the verb, it is not surprising that many interpreters think it must mean this here also. Since, however, it would be a needless truism to say that God ‘knows’ (about) Christians ahead of time, the verb would have to suggest that God ‘foresees’ something peculiar to believers — perhaps their moral fitness (so many patristic theologians) or (which is far more likely, if this is what the verb means) their faith [see, e.g., Pelagius, Alford, Meyer, Lenski, Godet]. In this manner the human response of faith is made the object of God’s ‘foreknowledge’; and this foreknowledge, in turn, is the basis for predestination: for ‘whom he foreknew, he predestined.’ But I consider it unlikely that this is the correct interpretation.

- *The NT usage of the verb and its cognate noun [προγινώσκω, prognōsis] does not conform to the general pattern of usage. In the six occurrences of these words in the NT, only two mean ‘know beforehand’ (Acts 26:5, cited above, and 2 Pet 3:17); the three others besides the occurrence in this text, all of which have God as their subject, mean not ‘know before’ — in the sense of intellectual knowledge, or cognition — but ‘enter into relationship with before’ or ‘choose, or determine, before’ (Rom 11:2; 1 Pet 1:20; Acts 2:23; 1 Pet 1:2)....* While somewhat strange against the background of broad Greek usage, this meaning flows naturally from the use of γινώσκω [ginōskō, ‘know’] in the LXX to translate the Hebrew [yāda’, ‘know’] when it denotes intimate friendship. This OT relational sense of [yāda’, ‘know’] is too well known and widely accepted to require argument. Some outstanding examples are Gen 18:19 — ‘for I have *known* [RSV, NIV, ‘chosen’] him [Abraham]’; Jer 1:5 — ‘Before I formed you in the womb I *knew* you’ [where ‘know’ is paralleled by ‘consecrate’ and ‘appoint’]; Amos 3:2 — ‘You [Israel] only have I *known* [NIV ‘chosen’] of all the families of the earth.... The verb προγινώσκω (proginōskō, ‘know’) itself does not occur in the LXX....
- *That the verb here contains this peculiarly biblical sense of ‘know’ is suggested by the fact that it has a simple personal object. Paul does not say that God knew anything about us but that he knew us, and this is reminiscent of the OT sense of ‘know.’*
- *Moreover, it is only some individuals — those who, having been ‘foreknown,’ were also ‘predestined,’ ‘called,’ ‘justified,’ and ‘glorified’ — who are the objects of this activity; and this shows that an action applicable only to Christians must be denoted by the verb. If, then, the word means ‘know intimately,’ ‘have regard for,’ this must be a knowledge or love that is unique to believers and that leads to their being predestined. This being the case, the difference between ‘know or love beforehand’ and ‘choose beforehand’ virtually ceases to exist. What, then, is the meaning of this ‘beforehand’? While it is of course true that God’s actions, in and of themselves, are not bound to created ‘time,’ it is also clear that the ‘before’ can have no other function than to set the divine action in the conceptual framework of what we call ‘time.’ The ‘before’ of God’s ‘choosing,’ then, could relate to the time at which we come to ‘love God’ (v. 28), but *1 Pet 1:20 and Eph 1:4 suggest rather that Paul would place this choosing of us ‘before the foundation of the world.’**

“With this first verb, then, Paul highlights the divine initiative in the outworking of God’s purpose. This does not entail any minimizing of the importance of the human response of faith that has received so much attention in chaps. 1-4. But this ‘before’ does make it difficult to conceive of faith as the ground of this ‘choosing.’ As Murray puts it, *what is involved is ‘not the foresight of difference but the foresight that makes difference to exist, not a foresight that recognizes existence but the foreknowledge that determines existence.*” [Moo, *Romans*, pg 532f] “As the words *to know* and *foreknow* are used in three different senses, applicable to the present passage, there is considerable diversity of opinion which should be preferred. The word may express *prescience* simply, according to its literal meaning; or, as *to know* is often *to approve* and *love*, it may express the idea of peculiar affection in this case; or it may mean to select or determine upon. Among those who adopt one or the other of these general views, there is still a great diversity as to the manner in which they understand the passage. These opinions are too numerous to be here recited. As the literal meaning of the word *to foreknow* gives no adequate sense, inasmuch as all men are the objects of the divine prescience, whereas the apostle evidently designed to express by the word something that could be asserted only of a particular class; those who adopt this meaning here supply something to make the sense complete. *Who he foreknew would repent, and believe, or who would not resist his divine influence, or some such idea. There are two objections to this*

manner of explaining the passage. 1. The addition of this clause is entirely gratuitous; and, if unnecessary, it is, of course, improper. There is no such thing said, and, therefore, it should not be assumed, without necessity, to be implied. 2. It is in direct contradiction to the apostle's doctrine. It makes the ground of our calling and election to be something in us, our works; whereas Paul says that such is not the ground of our being chosen. 'Who hath called us not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, etc.,' 2 Timothy 1:9, and Romans 9:11, where the contrary doctrine is not only asserted, but proved and defended. To say that faith as distinguished from works is what is foreseen, and constitutes the ground of election, does not help the matter. For faith is a work or act, and it is the gift of God, the result or effect of election, and therefore not its ground. The second and third interpretations do not essentially differ. The one is but a modification of the other; for whom God peculiarly loves, he does thereby distinguish from others, which is in itself a selecting or choosing of them from among others. The usage of the word is favorable to either modification of this general idea of *preferring*. 'The people which he foreknew,' i.e., loved or selected, Romans 11:2; "Who verily was foreordained (Gr. *foreknown*) i.e., *fixed upon, chosen* before the foundation of the world," 1 Peter 1:20; 2 Timothy 2:19; John 10:14, 15; see also Acts 2:23; 1 Peter 1:2. ***The idea, therefore, obviously is, that those whom God peculiarly loved, and by thus loving, distinguished or selected from the rest of mankind; or to express both ideas in one word, those whom he elected he predestined, etc.*** It is evident, on the one hand, that [prognōsis] expresses something more than the prescience of which all men and all events are the objects, and, on the other, something different from the [proorismos] (predestination) expressed by the following word: 'Whom he foreknew, them he also predestinated.' ***The predestination follows, and is grounded on the foreknowledge. The foreknowledge therefore expresses the act of cognition or recognition, the fixing, so to speak, the mind upon, which involves the idea of selection. If we look over a number of objects with the view of selecting some of them for a definite purpose, the first act is to fix the mind on some to the neglect of the others, and the second is to destine them to the proposed end. So God is represented as looking on the fallen mass of men, and fixing on some whom he predestines to salvation. This is the [prognōsis], the foreknowledge, of which the apostle here speaks. It is the knowing, fixing upon, or selecting those who are to be predestinated to be conformed to the image of the Son of God.***" [Hodge, *Romans*, pg 283f] "The word foreknow has three significations. One is general, importing simply a knowledge of things before they come into existence. In this general sense it is evident that it is not employed in this passage, since it is limited to those whom God predestinated to be conformed to the image of His Son. He foreknows all things before they come to pass; but here foreknowledge refers only to particular individuals. A second signification is a knowledge accompanied by a decree. In this sense it signifies ordinance and providence, as it is said, Acts 2:23, 'Him being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God;' that is to say, by the ordinance and providence of God. The reason why this word is used to denote the Divine determinations is because the foreknowledge of God necessarily implies His purpose or decree with respect to the thing foreknown. For God foreknows what will be, by determining what shall be. God's foreknowledge cannot in itself be the cause of any event; but events must be produced by His decree and ordination. It is not because God foresees a thing that it is decreed; but He foresees it because it is ordained by Him to happen in the order of His providence. Therefore His foreknowledge and decrees cannot be separated; for the one implies the other. When He decrees that a thing *shall* be, He foresees that it will be. There is nothing known as what will be, which is not certainly to be; and there is nothing certainly to be, unless it is ordained that it shall be. All the foreknowledge of future events, then, is founded on the decree of God; consequently He determined with Himself from eternity everything He executes in time, Acts 15:18. Nothing is contingent in the mind of God, who foresees and orders all events according to His own eternal and unchangeable will. Jesus Christ was not delivered by God fore knowing it before it took place, but by His fixed counsel and ordination, or His providence. Thus believers are called elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, 1 Peter 1:2; and in the same chapter, ver. 19, 20, the Apostle Peter says that Jesus Christ was foreknown before the foundation of the world. Here foreknown signifies, as it is rendered, fore-ordained. The third signification of this word consists in a knowledge of love and approbation; and in this sense it signifies to choose and recognize as His own, as it is said, Romans 11:2, 'God hath not cast away His people whom He foreknew,' — that is, whom He had before loved and chosen; for the Apostle alleges this foreknowledge as the reason why God had not rejected His people. In this manner the word 'know' is often taken in Scripture in the sense of knowing with affection, loving, approving; as in the first Psalm, 'The Lord knoweth the way of the righteous; but the way of the ungodly shall perish.' To know the way of the just, is to love, to approve, as appears by the antithesis. Paul says to the Corinthians, 'If any man love God, the same is know of Him,' 1 Corinthians 8:3; and to the Galatians, 'But now after ye have known God or rather are known of Him.' In the same way, God said by His Prophet to Israel, 'You only have I known of all the families of the earth,' Amos 3:2. At the day of judgment Jesus Christ will say to hypocrites, 'I never knew you,' Matthew 7:23; that is to say, He never loved or acknowledged them, although He perfectly knew their characters and actions. In this last sense the word foreknow is employed in the passage before us. Those whom God foreknew — those whom He before loved, chose, acknowledged as His own — He predestinated to be conformed to the image of His Son. It is not a general anticipated knowledge that is here intended. The Apostle does not speak of all, but of some, whom in verse 33 he calls 'God's elect;' and not of anything in their persons, or belonging to them, but of the persons themselves, whom it is said God foreknew. And He adds, that those whom He foreknew He also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of His Son; and whom he predestinated He also called, and justified, and glorified. By foreknowledge, then, is not here meant a foreknowledge of faith or good works, or of concurrence with the external call. Faith cannot be the cause of foreknowledge, because foreknowledge is before predestination, and faith is the effect of predestination. 'As many as were ordained to eternal life believed,' Acts 13:48. Neither can it be meant of the foreknowledge of good works, because these are the effects of predestination. 'We are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works; which God hath before ordained (or before prepared) that we should walk in them,' Ephesians 2:10. Neither can it be meant of foreknowledge of our concurrence with the external call, because our effectual calling depends not upon that

concurrence, but upon God's purpose and grace, given us in Christ Jesus before the world began, 2 Timothy 1:9. By this foreknowledge, then, is meant, as has been observed, the love of God towards those whom He predestinates to be saved through Jesus Christ. All the called of God are foreknown by Him, — that is, they are the objects of His eternal love, and their calling comes from this free love. 'I have loved thee with an everlasting love; therefore with loving-kindness I have drawn thee,' Jeremiah 31:3." [Haldane, *Romans*, pg 396f]

WHO MAKES THE FINAL DECISION IN MAN'S SALVATION? — Being under the teaching of a "Baptist Temple"— type church for the first five years of my Christian life, I struggled between these definitions of foreknowledge. I could see the scripture speaking of election, the sinfulness of man, and the need for the Spirit drawing man to salvation. But for me all of that was acceptable as long as it was I who "decided" to trust Christ and my election rested upon the fact that God fore-saw the day I would eventually come to Christ. I even went as far as believing the Lord brings all people to a certain point of understanding and at that point allows that person to choose. As with many, I struggled with the final "letting go" of the fact that my salvation was not my choice. These verses were key in my understanding foreknowledge. As discussed, this "golden chain" is unbreakable and the ones God "foreknows" ultimately are glorified; therefore, this "foreknowledge" cannot involve all people.

The difference between one believing the doctrines of grace and one rejecting that teaching boils down to one question: who makes the decision in salvation? Does God bring all people to a certain point and allows them to choose? Then the final decision rests upon the will of man. Or does God first choose who will be saved and then works on those people in their hearts to bring them to that salvation? If so, then the final decision rests upon the will of God. Beyond these verses, I think it obvious which the scripture teaches as the truth:

"For who makes you different from anyone else? What do you have that you did not receive? And if you did receive it, why do you boast as though you did not?" (1 Cor 4:7 NIV)

"But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in His name, who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God." (John 1:12, 13 NASB)

"But we should always give thanks to God for you, brethren beloved by the Lord, because God has chosen you from the beginning for salvation through sanctification by the Spirit and faith in the truth." (2 Thes 2:13 NASB)

"For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; not as a result of works, so that no one may boast." (Eph 2:8,9 NASB)

"Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth, that we should be a kind of firstfruits of his creatures." (James 1:18 KJV)

"When the Gentiles heard this, they began rejoicing and glorifying the word of the Lord; and as many as had been appointed to eternal life believed." (Acts 13:48 NASB)

"All that the Father gives Me will come to Me, and the one who comes to Me I will certainly not cast out.... No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him; and I will raise him up on the last day.... It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh profits nothing; the words that I have spoken to you are spirit and are life." (John 6:37, 44, 63 NASB)

"Jesus spoke these things; and lifting up His eyes to heaven, He said, Father, the hour has come; glorify Your Son, that the Son may glorify You, even as You gave Him authority over all flesh, that to all whom You have given Him, He may give eternal life." (John 17:1,2 NASB)

"Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ, just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we would be holy and blameless before Him In love He predestined us to adoption as sons through Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the kind intention of His will, to the praise of the glory of His grace, which He freely bestowed on us in the Beloved. In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of His grace which He lavished on us. In all wisdom and insight He made known to us the mystery of His will, according to His kind intention which He purposed in Him with a view to an administration suitable to the fullness of the times, that is, the summing up of all things in Christ, things in the heavens and things on the earth. In Him also we have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to His purpose who works all things after the counsel of His will, to the end that we who were the first to hope in Christ would be to the praise of His glory." (Eph 1:3-12 NASB)

PREDESTINATE — "While this first verb generates much of the discussion, it is the second verb that Paul emphasizes. 'Foreknowing' is simply the step that leads to what Paul is really concerned to stress: God's 'foreordaining,' or 'predestining,' to conformity with the image of his Son. This second verb takes a step beyond the first by focusing attention on the purpose of God's electing grace [some Puritans distinguished between 'foreknowing' as 'eternal' election and 'predestining' as election 'in time']. And the way in which Paul disrupts his careful parallelism in the last part of v. 29 to develop this idea reveals the importance it had for him.... The verb is προορίζω [proorizō]. The simple verb ὀρίζω [horizō] means 'appoint,' 'determine'; προ-ορίζω [pro-orizō] then means 'pre-determine' or 'pre-destine.' In the NT, it has as its objects the crucifixion (Acts 4:28), the 'wisdom' now manifested in Christ (1 Cor 2:7), and believers (Eph 1:5, 11; and here). Once more, the 'before' will mean 'before the foundation

of the world' (cf. Eph 1:4-5)." [Moo, *Romans*, pg 533f] "To predestinate is to destine or appoint beforehand, as the original word is used in Acts 4:28, 'To do whatsoever thy hand and counsel determined before to be done;' 'Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children,' Ephesians 1:5; 'Being predestinated according to the purpose of Him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will,' Ephesians 1:11. In all the cases in which this predestination is spoken of, the idea is distinctly recognized, that the ground of the choice which it implies is not in us. We are chosen in Christ, or according to the free purpose of God, etc. This is a *fore-ordination*, a determination which existed in the divine mind long prior to the occurrence of the event, even before the foundation of the world, Ephesians 1:4; so that the occurrences in time are the manifestations of the eternal purpose of God, and the execution of the plan of which they form apart." [Hodge, *Romans*, pg 285] "In ... Ephesians 1:5, *the cause of predestination is traced solely to God. After saying that God had predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ, it is added, 'to Himself,' to show that God has no cause out of Himself moving Him to this grace. In order to enforce this, it is further added, 'according to the good pleasure of His will;' and, in the third place, it is subjoined, 'to the praise of the glory of His grace;' from all which it follows that it must necessarily be by grace, — that is, free, unmerited favor.* Love to God, or conformity to the image of Christ, cannot in any respect have its origin in fallen man. 'Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us.' 'We love Him, because He first loved us.' 'It is a foolish inference,' says Calvin, 'of these disputants, who say that God has elected such only as He foresaw would be worthy of grace. For Peter does not flatter believers, as if they were elected for their own individual merits, but refers their election to the eternal counsel of God, and strips them of all worthiness. In this passage, also, Paul repeats in another word what he had lately intimated concerning God's eternal purpose; and it hence follows that this knowledge depends on the good pleasure of His will, because, by adopting whom He would, God did not extend His foreknowledge to anything out of Himself, but only marked out those whom He intended to elect.' ... *In the election of some, and the passing by of others, the wisdom of God is manifest; for by this means He displays both His justice and mercy, — otherwise one of these perfections would not have appeared. If all had been withdrawn from their state of corruption, the justice of God would not have manifested itself in their punishment. If none had been chosen, His mercy would not have been seen. In the salvation of these, God has displayed His grace; and in the punishment of sin in the others, He has discovered His justice and hatred of iniquity. This doctrine of election is full of consolation, and is the true source of Christian assurance. For who can shake this foundation, which is more firm than that of the heavens and the earth, and can no more be shaken than God Himself? The sheep whom God hath given to His Son by His predestination no one can pluck out of His hands.*" [Haldane, *Romans*, pg 397f]

to be conformed to the image of his Son — "The 'destination' toward which believers have been set in motion is that we might 'be conformed to the image of [God's] Son.' The language Paul uses here reminds us of his central 'with Christ' theology and suggests a (negative) comparison with Adam. Now it is God's purpose to imprint on all those who belong to Christ the 'image' of the 'second Adam.' ... [P]aul thinks here of God's predestining us to future glory, that glory which Christ already enjoys.... The word [συμμόρφους, *summorphous*, 'conformed'] is used by Paul in Phil 3:21 in a similar way, and even in a similar syntactical structure: 'who [Christ] will transform the body [belonging to] our [state of] humiliation, making it conformed [σύμμορφον, *summorphon*] to the body [belonging to] his [state] of glory.'" [Moo, *Romans*, pg 534f] "This implies that the children of God must all be made to resemble Christ, their head and elder brother. *This likeness respects character and suffering, as well as all things in which such similarity is found to exist.* The Lord Jesus Christ, the first elect of God, is the model after which all the elect of God must be formed. Man was created in the image of God; but when sin entered, he lost this image; and Adam 'begat a son in his own likeness after his image,' Genesis 5:3; thus communicating to his posterity his corrupted nature. But as God had determined to save a part of the fallen race, it was 'according to His good pleasure' to renew His image in those whom He had chosen to this salvation. This was to be accomplished by the incarnation of His Son, 'who is the brightness of His glory, and the express image of His person,' to whose image they were predestinated to be conformed." [Haldane, *Romans*, pg 399f] "[A]n inward and not merely superficial conformity. *Eikōn* is used of Christ as the very image of the Father (2 Corinthians 4:4; Colossians 1:15).... Here we have both *morphē* and *eikōn* to express the gradual change in us till we acquire the likeness of Christ the Son of God so that we ourselves shall ultimately have the family likeness of sons of God. Glorious destiny." [Robertson, *Word Pictures*, vol 4 pg 377]

the firstborn among many brethren — "[T]he idea of Christ as 'firstborn' reminds us of Christ's place as the 'first fruits' of those who are raised (1 Cor 15:20; cf. vv. 10-11). *It is as Christians have their bodies resurrected and transformed that they join Christ in his glory and that the purpose of God, to make Christ the 'firstborn' of many to follow, is accomplished.*" [Moo, *Romans*, pg 535] "Next to the glory of God, the object of His incarnation was the salvation of a multitude which no man can number of those whose nature He assumed, and this was accomplished by His death. Referring to this, He Himself says, 'Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone; but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit.' Accordingly, in the everlasting covenant between the Father and the Son, when grace was given to His people in Him before the world began, 2 Timothy 1:9, and when God promised to Him for them eternal life also before the world began, Titus 1:2, it was determined that when He should make His soul an offering for sin, He should see of the travail of His soul and be satisfied, and that by the knowledge of Him *many* should be justified. He was to bear the sins of *many*. 'Glorify Thy Son, that Thy Son also may glorify Thee; as Thou hast given Him power over all flesh, that He might give eternal life to as *many* as Thou hast given Him.' By His obedience *many* were to be made righteous. As the Captain of their salvation, He was to bring *many* sons unto glory. To Him *many* shall come from the east and west, and shall sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven. 'The gift by grace which is by one man Jesus Christ hath abounded unto *many*.' And as He that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified

are all of one, He is not ashamed to call them *brethren*. But as in all things He must have the pre-eminence, so this limitation is introduced, that among them all He must be the ‘firstborn;’ that is to say, the first, the principal the most excellent, The Governor, the Lord.” [Haldane, *Romans*, pg 400f]

V 30 — CALLED — “Paul resumes his ‘chain’ of verbs by repeating the one with which the chain was ‘broken’: ‘predestined.’ Forming the next link is the verb ‘he called’ (as discussed in v. 28), which denotes God’s effectual summoning into relationship with him. *The exact correspondence between those who are the objects of predestining and those who experience this calling is emphasized by the demonstrative pronoun ‘these’: ‘it was precisely those who were predestined who also were called.’ This leaves little room for the suggestion that the links in this chain are not firmly attached to one another, as if some who were ‘foreknown’ and ‘predestined’ would not be ‘called,’ ‘justified,’ and ‘glorified.’*” [Moo, *Romans*, pg 535] “That the *calling* here spoken of is not the mere external call of the gospel, is evident both from the usage of the word, and from the necessity of the case; see 1 Corinthians 1:9, ‘God is faithful by whom ye were called to the fellowship of his Son,’ i.e. effectually brought into union with him. In the same chapter, ver. 24, ‘To those which are called, Christ the power of God,’ etc. *The called are here expressly distinguished from the rejecters of the external invitation.* 1 Corinthians 7:15, 18, in which chapter *calling* is repeatedly put for effectual conversion, ‘Is any man *called*, being circumcised,’ etc. Hebrews 9:15, ‘That they which are called may receive the promise of eternal inheritance.’ Romans 9:12; Ephesians 4:4; 1 Thessalonians 2:12, and many similar passages. This use of the word, thus common in the New Testament, is obviously necessary here, because the apostle is speaking of a call which is peculiar to those who are finally saved. Whom he calls he justifies and glorifies; see verse 28.” [Hodge, *Romans*, pg 286] “God calls them by His grace, Galatians 1:15, — that is, without regard to anything in themselves. Effectual calling is the first internal operation of grace on those who are elected. They are not merely called externally, as many who are not elected. The scriptures speak of the universal call of the Gospel, addressed to all men; but this is not inseparably connected with salvation; for in this sense the Lord has said that ‘many are called, but few are chosen.’... In the passage before us, and in various other places, as in verse 28, it is effectual calling that is spoken of. This calling, then, signifies more than the external calling of the word. It is accompanied with more than the partial and temporary effects which the word produces on some, and is always ascribed to the operation of God by the influence of the Holy Spirit. Even when the external means are employed to most advantage, it is God only who gives the increase, 1 Corinthians 3:6. It is He who opens the heart to receive the word, Acts 16:14, — who gives a new heart, Ezekiel. 36:26, — who writes His law in it, — and who saves His people, not by works of righteousness which they have done, but by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost, Titus 3:5 *If it be inquired whether God calls all men with a calling sufficient for their salvation, that is to say, if He gives to all grace sufficient to save them, it is replied, that this calling may be considered as sufficient or insufficient in different points of view; for the sufficiency of grace may be considered either on the part of God or of man. On the part of God, it must be said that His general calling is sufficient, for God having created man upright, with a disposition to obey Him, if we consider this general calling connected with that original perfection, there can be no doubt that it is sufficient. But, on the part of man, viewed in his natural state of corruption, assuredly the outward call is not sufficient, unless accompanied with the internal operation of the Holy Spirit, to enlighten the eyes of the understanding, and to open the heart to receive the calling of God, any more than if Jesus Christ had spoken to a deaf or dead man, without removing his deafness, or imparting to him life. If the voice of Jesus calling Lazarus had been unaccompanied with His power, it would not have been sufficient to raise him from the grave. The calling, then, which is not accompanied with the power of the Spirit of God, is not sufficient in regard to man, while man is inexcusable, and has no just ground of complaint, for he resists that call which, unless he was a sinful creature and an enemy to God, would be sufficient. He is, as the Psalmist says, ‘like the deaf adder that stoppeth her ear; which will not hearken to the voice of the charmers, charm they never so wisely.’*” [Haldane, *Romans*, pg 402f]

JUSTIFIED — “The next link in the chain brings us back to the central theme of chaps. 1-4: justification. As we recall Paul’s repeated stress on faith in those chapters, we do well to remember that *Paul’s focus in these verses on the divine side of salvation in no way mitigates the importance of human response. It is, indeed, God who ‘justifies’; but it is the person who believes who is so justified.*” [Moo, *Romans*, pg 535] “The justification here spoken of, is doubtless that of which the apostle has been speaking throughout the epistle, the regarding and treating sinners as just, for the sake of the righteousness of Christ. The blessings of grace are never separated from each other. Election, calling, justification, and salvation are indissolubly united; and, therefore, he who has clear evidence of his being called, has the same evidence of his election and final salvation. This is the very idea the apostle means to present for the consolation and encouragement of believers. They have no cause for despondency if the children of God, and called according to his purpose, because nothing can prevent their final salvation.” [Hodge, *Romans*, pg 286]

GLORIFIED — “With the final verb in the chain, Paul has come back to his starting point in this paragraph and to the paragraph’s central theme: glory. This verb is in the same tense [aorist] as the others in the series. What makes this interesting is that the action denoted by this verb is (from the standpoint of believers) in the future, while the other actions are past. Most interpreters conclude, probably rightly, that *Paul is looking at the believer’s glorification from the standpoint of God, who has already decreed that it should take place. While not yet experienced, the divine decision to glorify those who have been justified has already been made; the issue has been settled. Here Paul touches on the ultimate source of the assurance that Christians enjoy, and with it he brings to a triumphant climax his celebration of the ‘no condemnation’ that applies to every person in Christ.*” [Moo, *Romans*, pg 535f] “A man is justified the moment he believes in Christ; and here being glorified is connected with justification. *No believer, then, finally comes short of salvation. If he is justified, he must in due time be*

glorified. To be glorified is to be completely conformed to the glorious image of Jesus Christ; when we shall see Him as He is, and be made like unto Him, enjoying that felicity which the Psalmist anticipated: ‘Thou wilt show me the path of life; in Thy presence is fullness of joy; at Thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore.’ The glorifying of the saints will have its consummation in the day of the blessed resurrection, when their bodies shall be made like unto the glorious body of Jesus Christ; when that natural body, which was sown in corruption, in dishonor, in weakness, shall be raised a spiritual body in corruption, in glory, in power. Then death will be swallowed up in victory, all tears shall be wiped away, the Lamb will lead and feed them, and God shall be all in all.” [Haldane, *Romans*, pg 405f]

THE “ALREADY ... NOT YET” TENSION — “Scholars are fond of using the inelegant phrase ‘already ... not yet’ to describe an essential dimension of NT teaching: while ‘already’ redeemed, justified, reconciled to God, and so on, the believer has ‘not yet’ been glorified, released from temptation and suffering, and the like. Nowhere in the NT is this tension as clear as in this paragraph; and nowhere is the solution to that tension more clearly expressed. *God’s intention, Paul emphasizes, is to bring to glory every person who has been justified by faith in Jesus Christ. Our assurance of ultimate victory rests on this promise of God to us. But Paul, ever the realist, knows that that ultimate victory may lie many years ahead — years that might be filled with pain, anxiety, distress, and disaster. Thus he also encourages us by reminding us that God sends his Spirit into the heart of everyone he justifies. The Spirit brings power and comfort to the believer in the midst of suffering; and he brings assurance in the midst of doubt. Christians who are unduly anxious about their relationship to the Lord are failing to let the Spirit exercise that ministry. It is by committing ourselves anew to the life of devotion — prayer, Scripture reading, Christian fellowship — that we enable the Spirit to have this ministry of assurance in our hearts.*” [Moo, *Romans*, pg 536f]

THE CHAIN IS UNBREAKABLE — “The plan of salvation is here set before us in its commencement, in the intermediate steps of its progress, and in its consummation. Its commencement is laid in the eternal purpose of God, and its consummation in the eternal glory of the elect. He calls those whom He hath predestinated to faith in Christ, to repentance and to a new life. He justifies by the imputation of the righteousness of Christ those whom He hath called; and, finally, He will glorify those whom He hath justified. *The opponents of the doctrine contained in this passage distort the whole plan of salvation. They deny that there is any indissoluble connection between those successive steps of grace, which are here united by the Apostle, and that these different expressions relate to the same individuals. They suppose that God may have foreknown and predestinated to life some whom He does not call, that He effectually calls some whom He does not justify, and that He justifies others whom He does not glorify. This contradicts the express language of this passage, which declares that those whom He foreknew He predestinated, that those whom he predestinated them He also called, that those whom He called them He also justified, and that those whom He justified them He also glorified. It is impossible to find words which could more forcibly and precisely express the indissoluble connection that subsists between all the parts of this series, or show that they are the same individuals that are spoken of throughout.... In the passage before us, we see that all the links of that chain by which man is drawn up to heaven, are inseparable. In the whole of it there is nothing but grace, whether we contemplate its beginning, its middle, or its end. Each of its parts furnishes the most important instruction. If we are elected, let us feel and experience in ourselves the effects of our election. If we are called, let us walk worthy of our vocation. If we are justified, let us, like Abraham show our faith and prove our justification by our works. If we shall be glorified, let us live as fellow-citizens of the saints, and of the household of God. Let our conversation be in heaven, and let us confess that we are pilgrims and strangers on the earth.*” [Haldane, *Romans*, pg 406f]

v 31 — “This beautiful and familiar celebration of the believer’s security in Christ comes in response to Paul’s rehearsal of the blessings that have been granted to the believer through the gospel. Since Paul has been enumerating these blessings from virtually the first verses of the letter, this paragraph could be the climax of the letter up to this point. At the other extreme, ‘these things’ in v. 31 could refer only to those blessings enumerated in the immediately preceding verses (28, or 29-30). But the similarity in the language and contents of this passage and Rom 5 suggests rather that this paragraph, while responding immediately to what Paul has been saying in chap. 8, and especially 8:18-30, is intended to cap Paul’s many-sided discussion of Christian assurance in chaps. 5-8 as a whole. Thus, we hear again, as in 5:1-11, of the love of God in Christ for us and the assurance that that brings to us; of the certainty of final vindication because of the justifying verdict of God; and of how these great forces render ultimately impotent and unimportant the tribulations of this life.” [Moo, *Romans*, pg 537f]

PARAGRAPH DIVISION — “*Various subdivisions of the paragraph have been suggested, but I think it is simplest and most natural to divide the paragraph into two parts: vv. 31-34 and vv. 35-39. The first is dominated by judicial imagery — ‘on our behalf,’ ‘hand over,’ ‘bring any charge,’ ‘justify,’ ‘condemn,’ ‘intercede.’ God being ‘for us’ means that the verdict he has already rendered in justification stands as a perfect guarantee of vindication in the judgment. In vv. 35-39, Paul expands the picture by adding to our assurance for the ‘last day’ assurance for all the days in between. Not only is the believer guaranteed ultimate vindication; he or she is also promised victory over all the forces of this world. And the basis for this many-faceted assurance is the love of God for us in Christ; God’s, or Christ’s, love is the motif of this paragraph, mentioned three times (vv. 35, 37, 39; cf. Rom 5:5-8).*” [Moo, *Romans*, pg 538f]

what shall we say to these things — “As we have seen, Paul uses the rhetorical question ‘What, then, shall we say?’ frequently in Romans to advance his argument. Here, however, as in 3:1 and 4:1 (and cf. the variant in 9:19), these words do not stand alone but are part of a substantive question: ‘What shall we say in view of these things?’” [Moo, *Romans*, pg 539]

if God be for us — “The preposition I translate ‘for’ could also be translated ‘on behalf of.’ Paul uses it frequently to depict the vicarious work of Christ (cf. especially 5:6-8); here he suggests that God is ‘on our side,’ that he is working ‘for’ us.” [Moo, *Romans*, pg 539] “The expression *if*, which Paul here uses, does not denote doubt, but is a conclusion, or consequence, or affirmation, signifying *since*; as if he had said, Since we see by all these things that God is for us, who shall be against us? For is it not evident that God is for us, since He hath sent forth the Spirit of His Son into our hearts, crying, ‘Abba, Father;’ since the Spirit helps our infirmities; since all things work together for our good; since we are predestinated to be conformed to the image of His Son? When we were alienated from Him, He called us; when we were sinners, He justified us; and, finally, translating us from a scene of trouble and afflictions, He will confer on us a crown of immortal glory. Since, then God thus favors us, who can be against us?” [Haldane, *Romans*, pg 409]

who can be against us? — “If this be so, Paul asks, ‘who is against us?’ Obviously, Paul does not mean that nobody will, in fact, oppose us; as Paul knows by experience (to which he alludes in v. 35), opposition to believers is both varied and intense. What Paul is suggesting by this rhetorical question is that *nobody* — *and no ‘thing’* — *can ultimately harm, or stand in the way of, the one whom God is ‘for.’ This is how Chrysostom put it:*

‘Yet those that be against us, so far are they from thwarting us at all, that even without their will they become to us the causes of crowns, and procurers of countless blessings, in that God’s wisdom turneth their plots unto our salvation and glory. See how really no one is against us!’”

[Moo, *Romans*, pg 539]

SALVATION SECURE FOR THOSE IN CHRIST, EVEN AGAINST THEIR OWN APOSTASY — “This verse shows clearly what has been the apostle’s object from the beginning of the chapter. He wished to demonstrate that to those who accede to the plan of salvation which he taught, i.e. to those who are in Christ Jesus, there is no ground of apprehension; their final salvation is fully secured. The conclusion of the chapter is a recapitulation of all his former arguments, or rather the reduction of them to one, which comprehends them all in their fullest force; **GOD IS FOR US**. He, as our Judge, is satisfied; as our Father, he loves us; as the supreme and almighty Controller of events, who works all things after the counsel of his own will, he has determined to save us; and as that Being, whose love is as unchanging as it is infinite, he allows nothing to separate his children from himself. *It has been objected, that if Paul had intended to teach these doctrines, he would have said that apostasy and sin cannot interfere with the salvation of believers. But what is salvation, but deliverance from the guilt and power of sin? It is, therefore, included in the very purpose and promise of salvation, that its objects shall be preserved from apostasy and deadly sins. This is the end and essence of salvation. And, therefore, to make Paul argue that God will save us if we do not apostatize, is to make him say, those shall be saved who are not lost. According to the apostle’s doctrine, holiness is so essential and prominent a part of salvation, that it is not so much a means to an end as the very end itself. It is that to which we are predestinated and called, and therefore if the promise of salvation does not include the promise of holiness, it includes nothing. Hence, to ask whether, if one of the called should apostasies and live in sin, he would still be saved, is to ask, whether he will be saved if he is not saved. Nor can these doctrines be perverted to licentiousness without a complete denial of their nature. For they not only represent sin and salvation as two things which ought not to be united, but as utterly irreconcilable and contradictory.*”

[Hodge, *Romans*, pg 287]

V 32 — LACK OF CONNECTIVITY — “The lack of connecting conjunction between this verse and v. 31 is typical of this paragraph, lending it a solemn and elevated style. *But the implicit connection is with ‘for us’: God being ‘for us’ has its deepest demonstration in his giving his own Son for us, a demonstration that should leave us in no doubt about his commitment to be ‘for us’ right up to, and including, the end.*” [Moo, *Romans*, pg 539]

He who indeed ... — a detail missing from many of our translations is worth our notice. “*The emphatic nature of this assertion is heightened by Paul’s use of γε [ge], ‘even,’ an intensive particle here that adds a ‘sweetness full of exultation’ to the awesome fact that God ‘indeed’ gave his own Son for us.*” [Moo, *Romans*, pg 539] Note Young’s Literal translation: “*He who indeed His own Son did not spare, but for us all did deliver him up...*”. Kenneth Wuest: “*In view of the fact that God is on our behalf, who could be against us? Indeed, He who His own Son did not spare, but on behalf of us all delivered Him up, how is it possible that He shall not with Him in grace give us all things?*” (8:31b-32; *Wuest’s Expanded Translation*)

God’s own Son — “The argument of this verse — God’s giving his Son as a guarantee of his future blessings — is very close to 5:8-9 and is another example of the way in which the last part of chap. 8 comes back to the basic themes with which this section of the letter began. Calling Christ God’s ‘own’ Son distinguishes him from those many ‘adopted’ sons that have come into God’s family by faith (8:14-16); but it may also suggest a parallel with Abraham’s giving of his ‘beloved’ son Isaac (Gen 22).” [Moo, *Romans*, pg 539f] “*That ground of confidence and security which includes all others, is the love of God; and that exhibition of divine love which surpasses and secures all others, is the gift of HIS OWN SON.* Paul having spoken of Christians as being God’s sons by adoption, was led to designate Christ as his own peculiar Son, in a sense in which neither angels (Hebrews 1:5) nor men can be so called.” [Hodge, *Romans*, pg 287] “The gift of ‘his own son’ is the promise and the pledge of the all things for good of verse 28. Christ is all and carries all with him.” [Robertson, *Word Pictures*, vol 4 pg 378] “*With Him* — Not merely in addition to Him, but all gifts of God are to be received, held, and enjoyed in communion with Christ.” [Vincent, *Word Studies*, vol 3 pg 97]

delivered him up for us all — “Rather than ‘sparing’ his Son, God ‘handed him over,’ a verb that reminds us of the initiative of God in the crucifixion. The addition of ‘all’ to ‘us’ stresses that it is for all believers (‘you’ in this context) that God has given his Son.... The verb is παραδίδωμι [paradidōmi], which is *prominent especially in the Gospel passion predictions, and is picked up from LXX Isa 53, where it is used three times to describe the ‘handing over’ of the suffering Servant. Paul also uses the word frequently with reference to Jesus’ death — sometimes, as here, of the Father’s ‘handing him over’ to death (cf. the passive in 4:25 and 1 Cor 11:23), and at other times of the Son’s own ‘giving himself over’ to death (Gal 2:20; Eph 5:2, 25).... ‘Who delivered up Jesus to die? Not Judas, for money; not Pilate, for fear; not the Jews, for envy — but the Father, for love!’*” [Moo, *Romans*, pg 540]

how will he not also freely give us all things — “[B]y introducing the second [clause] with ‘how,’ Paul suggests how inconceivable it would be for this ‘then’ clause to remain unfulfilled: ‘If God has, indeed, given his Son for us, how can anyone doubt that he will not also freely give us all things along with him?’ How broad is the scope of the ‘all things’ that God so graciously bestows on us? Paul could be alluding to our share in Christ’s sovereignty over creation. But it is not clear that these ideas play a role in our present passage. Certainly Paul’s focus is on those things necessary for our salvation; but, as with ‘the good’ in v. 28, we should not restrict the meaning to salvation as such but include all those blessings — spiritual and material — that we require on the path toward that final salvation.” [Moo, *Romans*, pg 540f] *“If God has done the greater, he will not leave the less undone. The gift of Christ includes all other gifts. If God so loved us as to give his Son for us, he will certainly give the Holy Spirit to render that gift effectual. This is presented as a ground of confidence. The believer is assured of salvation, not because he is assured of his own constancy, but simply because he is assured of the immutability of the divine love, and he is assured of its immutability because he is assured of its greatness. Infinite love cannot change. A love which spared not the eternal Son of God, but freely gave him up, cannot fail of its object.”* [Hodge, *Romans*, pg 288]

v 33 — “There are at least six possible ways to punctuate this verse and the next; but the best alternative is the one that emerges most clearly in the NASB: ‘Who will bring a charge against God’s elect? God is the one who justifies, who was raised, who is at the right hand of God, who also intercedes for us.’ ‘Bring a charge’ is the first of the of the explicitly judicial terms in this context. *The future tense of the verb focuses attention on the last judgment: Who will stand and accuse us at that time? To be sure, Satan, the ‘accuser,’ may seek to do so; so may our enemies and, perhaps most persuasively of all, our own sins. But no accusation will be effective because it is against God’s ‘elect’ that the accusation is being made; and, as Paul has shown in vv. 28-30, those who are God’s ‘elect ones’ by virtue of his calling and purpose are assured of glory. In a sense, then, this manner of designating Christians in the question itself is the only answered required. But it is natural to view the following sentence as a further basis for the ultimate failure of any accusations against us: it is God who is justifying.*” [Moo, *Romans*, pg 541f]

Who shall lay anything to the charge of God’s elect? — “[T]o come forward as accuser (forensic term) in case in court, to impeach, as in Acts 19:40; 23:29; 26:2, the only N.T. examples. Satan is the great Accuser of the brethren.” [Robertson, *Word Pictures*, vol 4 pg 378] “[T]he word [egkalein] means *to summon before the bar of justice*. The question is in the form of a challenge, and implies the strongest confidence that no accuser against God’s elect can appear. If the law of God be satisfied, ‘the strength of sin,’ its condemning power, is destroyed.” [Hodge, *Romans*, pg 288] *“It is here established that the elect are saved in such a way that nothing can be laid to their charge. All their debt, then, must be paid, and all their sins must be atoned for. If full compensation has not been made, something might be laid to their charge. This shows that salvation is by justice, as well as by mercy, and gives a view of salvation that never would have entered into the heart of man. Nay, it is so far from human view, that even after it is revealed, it still lies hid from all the world, except from those who are taught of God. And some, even of them, being slow of heart to believe, are but partially enlightened in this glorious view of the salvation of the guilty.”* [Haldane, *Romans*, pg 413]

It is God that justifieth — *“To justify, is to declare the claims of justice satisfied. If God, the supreme judge, makes this declaration, it must be true, and it must stop every mouth. No rational creature, no enlightened conscience, can call for the punishment of those whom God justifies. If justice is not satisfied, there can be no justification, no peace of conscience, no security either for salvation or for the moral government of God. The Bible knows nothing of mere pardon. There can be no pardon except on the ground of satisfaction of justice. It is by declaring a man just, (that is, that justice in relation to him is satisfied,) that he is freed from the penalty of the law, and restored to the favor of God.”* [Hodge, *Romans*, pg 289] “God is the Judge who sets us right according to his plan for justification (Romans 3:21-31). The Accuser must face the Judge with his charges.” [Robertson, *Word Pictures*, vol 4 pg 378]

v 34 — “That ‘who is the one condemning?’ is not a fresh, independent question but a ‘follow-up’ on the discussion in v. 33, is suggested by the fact that ‘condemn’ and ‘justify’ are natural contrasts. This question is, then, to be seen as an additional rhetorical response to the statement in v. 33b that it is God who justifies.” [Moo, *Romans*, pg 542] Paul proceeds to give four reasons of their freedom from condemnation: — 1st, Christ’s death; 2nd, His resurrection; 3rd, His enthronement at the right hand of God; and, 4th, His intercession.

WHO CONDEMNNS? — *The sense of the verse is this: “Who will condemn? No one [implied], for Christ Jesus ...”. “It is a bold accuser who can face God with false charges or with true ones for that matter for we have an ‘Advocate’ at God’s Court (1 John 2:1), ‘who is at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us.’ Our Advocate paid the debt for our sins with his blood. The score is settled. We are free (8:1).”* [Robertson, *Word Pictures*, vol 4 pg 379]

Yea rather, that is risen again — “This is the second ground affirmed by the Apostle against the possibility of the condemnation of God’s elect. What purpose would the death of Christ have served, if He had been overcome and swallowed up by it? ‘If Christ be not raised, your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins.’ If He be not risen, it must be because He had not expiated those sins for which He died, and was therefore retained a prisoner by death. But since the Surety has been released from the grave, complete satisfaction must have been made; for if but one sin which had been laid upon Him had continued unatoned for, He would have remained for ever in the grave, death being the wages of sin. But now, since He has risen from the grave, the obligation against His people must be effaced and entirely abolished, His resurrection being their resurrection, Colossians 2:12.” [Haldane, *Romans*, pg 415]

Who is even at the right hand of God — “I.e., is associated with God in his universal dominion. Psalm 110:1, ‘Sit thou on my right hand,’ i.e., share my throne; Ephesians 1:20; Revelation 3:21. ‘As I also overcame and am set down with my Father in his throne.’ Hebrews 1:3, ‘Who sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high.’ From these and other passages in their connection, it is evident that Christ is exalted to universal dominion, all power in heaven and earth is given into his hands. If this is the case, how great the security it affords the believer! He who is engaged to effect his salvation is the Director of all events, and of all worlds.” [Hodge, *Romans*, pg 289f]

THE INTERCESSION OF CHRIST FOR HIS PEOPLE — “The enumeration of actions accomplished by, and through, Christ occurs in ascending order, with the emphasis falling on the last in the series. *Not only has Jesus died to secure our justification — ‘more than that’ he has ‘been raised’ and has also ascended to the right hand of God, so that he may intercede for us, ensuring that the justifying verdict for which he dies is applied to us in the judgment.* The language of Jesus being at ‘the right hand of God’ is taken from Ps 110:1, one of the most often quoted OT verses in the NT. The language is, of course, metaphorical, indicating that Jesus has been elevated to the position of ‘vice-regent’ in God’s governance of the universe. *But it is not with the universe, but with Christians, that Paul is concerned here. Because Christ lives and has ascended, he is able to ‘intercede’ for us, acting as our High Priest in the very presence of God.*” [Moo, *Romans*, pg 542f]

v 35 — “The question that begins and sets the tone for the next five verses is formally parallel to those in vv. 33 and 34; but, materially, it makes a new start. Left behind is the forensic image of ‘God for us’; begun is the more personal and relational emphasis on the love of God in Christ for us. Not, of course, that these images are contradictory, or even to be put in separate compartments. As 5:6-10 makes absolutely clear, it is in the ‘giving of his Son’ ‘for us’ that God’s love is preeminently shown; and *God’s love for us is not simply an ‘emotion’ but his gracious action on our behalf.* But, perhaps because he has just delineated the work of Christ for us, Paul in this verse speaks not, as in v. 39, of the love of God but of the love of Christ.” [Moo, *Romans*, pg 543] “This is the last step in the climax of the apostle’s argument; the very summit of the mount of confidence, whence he looks down on his enemies as powerless, and forward and upward with full assurance of a final and abundant triumph. No one can accuse, no one can condemn, no one can separate us from the love of Christ. This last assurance gives permanency to the value of the other two. *The love of Christ* is clearly Christ’s love towards us, and not ours towards him. Paul is speaking of the great love of God towards us as manifested in the gift of his Son, and of the love of Christ as exhibited in his dying, rising, and interceding for us. This love, which is so great, he says is unchangeable.” [Hodge, *Romans*, pg 290]

UNDESERVED LOVE — “*It is likewise to be remarked, that the confidence of believers that they shall not be separated from the love of Christ, is not founded on their high opinion of themselves, or on their own ability to remain firm against temptations, but is grounded on Christ’s love, and His ability to preserve and uphold them. As nothing can be laid to their charge — as none can condemn them — as all things that happen to them, instead of proving injurious, work together for their good, — it is impossible that they can be finally lost. If Christ so love them, what shall separate them from that love?*” [Haldane, *Romans*, pg 418]

TO NOT BELIEVE CHRIST LOVES THE BELIEVER IS A FAILURE OF FAITH — “*The great difficulty with many Christians is that they cannot persuade themselves that Christ (or God) loves them; and the reason why they cannot feel confident of the love of God, is, that they know they do not deserve his love, on the contrary, that they are in the highest degree unlovely. How can the infinitely pure God love those who are defiled with sin, who are proud, selfish, discontented, ungrateful, disobedient? This, indeed, is hard to believe. But it is the very thing we are required to believe, not only as the condition of peace and hope, but as the condition of salvation. If our hope of God’s mercy and love is founded on our own goodness or attractiveness, it is a false hope. We must believe that his love is gratuitous, mysterious, without any known or conceivable cause, certainly without the cause of loveliness in its object; that it is, in short, what it is so often declared to be in the Bible, analogous to the love of a parent for his child. A father’s or mother’s love is independent of the attractiveness of its object, and often in spite of its deformity.*” [Hodge, *Romans*, pg 290f]

CHRISTIAN TRIALS AND THE EXPERIENCE OF PAUL — “The list of difficulties that follows requires little comment, except to note that all the items except the last are found also in 2 Cor 11:26-27 and 12:10, where Paul lists some of those hazards he himself has encountered in his apostolic labors. All these, then, Paul himself has experienced, and he has been able to prove for himself that they are quite incapable of disrupting his relationship with the love of Christ. And the last — the ‘sword,’ death by execution — Paul was to find overcome for him in the love of Christ at the end of his life.” [Moo, *Romans*, pg 543]

“Tribulation — This is placed first, as being a general term, comprehending all the particulars which he afterwards enumerates. It

means affliction in general. It refers not only to the general state of suffering which, when man had sinned, it was pronounced should be his lot — 'In sorrow shalt thou eat of it (of the produce of the ground) all the days of thy life' — but also more particularly to the tribulation which the disciples of Christ shall all more or less experience. 'In the world ye shall have tribulation,' John 16:33. The tribulation of unbelievers is the effect of the wrath of God; but the afflictions of His people are salutary corrections, which, so far from separating them from His love, yield the peaceable fruits of righteousness, and are for their profit, that they might not be condemned with the world, but be partakers of His holiness. 'As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten.' To tribulation is added,

“Distress — which signifies straits, difficulties, critical situations. It means the perplexity in which we are, when, under pressure or trouble, we see no way of deliverance, and no way to escape presents itself. The word denotes a narrow place, in which we are so much pressed or straitened that we know not where to go or turn; which expresses the condition of the believer when he is not only oppressed, but reduced to extremity. 'Thou hast enlarged me when I was in distress,' Psalm 4:1.

“Persecution — is affliction for the profession of the Gospel. The persecuted have often been pursued and constrained to flee from place to place, as the Lord Jesus was carried into Egypt when Herod sought to kill Him. 'If they have persecuted Me, they will also persecute you.' But so far is persecution from separating believers from the love of Christ, that 'Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake.'

“Famine — To this the persecuted are frequently subjected, though they may have been rich and powerful.

“Nakedness — The disciples have often been reduced to indigence and poverty, stripped by their enemies, and obliged to wander naked in deserts, and to hide themselves, like wild beasts, in caves of the earth, Hebrews 11:38. Paul himself was frequently exercised with hunger, and thirst, and fastings, and cold, and nakedness.

“Peril — This refers to the dangers to which the Lord's people are exposed. These, at some times, and in some countries, are exceedingly many and great; and at all times, and in all countries, are more or less numerous and trying. If God were not their protector, even in this land of freedom, the followers of the Lamb would be cut off or injured. It is the Lord's providence that averts such injuries, or overrules events for the protection of His people. This is too little considered even by themselves, and would be thought a most unfounded calumny or fanatical idea by the world. But let the Christian habitually consider his safety and protection as secured by the Lord, rather than by the liberality of the times. That time never yet was when the Lord's people could be safe, if circumstances removed restraint from the wicked. Those who boast of their unbounded liberality would, if in situations calculated to develop their natural hatred of the truth, prove, after all, bitter persecutors.

“Sword — This means violence carried to the utmost extremity. It is persecution which stops not with smaller injuries but inflicts even death.” [Haldane, *Romans*, pg 419f]

v 36 — SUFFERING IS TO BE EXPECTED — “This verse is something of an interruption in the flow of thought, and one that is typical for Paul. For he is constantly concerned to show that *the sufferings experienced by Christians should occasion no surprise* (see a similar interruption in Phil 1:29). Here Paul cites Ps 44:22 to show, as Calvin puts it, that *‘it is no new thing for the Lord to permit his saints to be undeservedly exposed to the cruelty of the ungodly.’*” [Moo, *Romans*, pg 543f] “And to what purpose would, it be to appeal to the afflictions of the Church under the former dispensation, were it not to lead us to patience under the Gospel? For if believers in that period bore their trials with patience, how much more should we do so when God now clearly reveals His saving grace, and not as formerly in figures and shadowed. In this manner the Lord and His Apostles frequently appeal to the Old Testament Scriptures, by which they testify to them as the word of God, and also show the agreement between the Old Testament and the New.” [Haldane, *Romans*, pg 420]

v 37 — “The ‘but’ connects this verse with v. 35. Paul assumes a negative answer to the question of v. 35 and here proceeds to go even further: not only are such things as enumerated in that verse unable to separate us from Christ's love, but, on the contrary, we are ‘more than conquerors’ with respect to them. ‘More than conquerors’ is a felicitous rendering, going back to the Geneva Bible, of the intensive verb Paul uses here. If more than simple emphasis is intended, *perhaps Paul wants to emphasize that believers not only ‘conquer’ such adversities; under the providential hand of God, they even work toward our ‘good’ (v. 28). But the victory is not ours, for it is only ‘through the one who loved us’ that it happens.*” [Moo, *Romans*, pg 544] Wuest: “*But in these things, all of them, we are coming off constantly with more than the victory through the One who loved us.*” (8:37; *Wuest's Expanded Translation*) “We gain a surpassing victory through the one who loved us.” [Robertson, *Word Pictures*, vol 4 pg 379] “A victory which is more than a victory. ‘A holy arrogance of victory in the might of Christ’ (Meyer).” [Vincent, *Word Studies*, vol 3 pg 98] “This verse is connected with the 35th. ‘So far from these afflictions separating us from the love of Christ, they are more than conquered.’ That is, they are not only deprived of all power to do us harm, they minister to our good, they swell the glory of our victory. *Through him that loved us.* The triumph which the apostle looked for was not to be effected by his own strength or perseverance, but by the grace and power of the Redeemer. 1 Corinthians 15:10; Galatians 2:20; Philippians 4:13, ‘I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me.’” [Hodge, *Romans*, pg 291]

v 38, 39 — “The assurance expressed in v. 37 is now grounded in a more personal testimony of Paul's own. Paul stands completely convinced that nothing at all will be able to separate believers from the love of God in Christ. The enumeration of

possible threats to this security unfolds mainly in obvious pairs: ‘death and life,’ ‘angels and rulers,’ ‘things present and things to come,’ ‘height and depth.’ Only the word ‘powers’ disrupts the sequence of pairs.” [Moo, *Romans*, pg 544]

DEATH NOR LIFE — “‘Death’ probably comes first in the list because it picks up the reference to ‘being put to death’ in the quotation (v. 36). While this might suggest that Paul has specifically martyrdom in mind, it is more likely that he is thinking of physical death in any form. Similarly, while ‘life’ has been taken to mean the distractions and cares of this life or the sufferings of this life, it is preferable to regard Paul as using the term in a rather ‘unreflective’ way, as a natural contrast to ‘death’ and without any specific aspect of life in mind. We must avoid introducing more precision in Paul’s choice of terms than his evident rhetorical purpose would justify. The first pair of terms, then, refers in the most general way to the two possible states of existence.” [Moo, *Romans*, pg 544f]

ANGELS NOR RULERS — “The second pair of terms, ‘angels and rulers,’ embraces the spirit world. While there are places where Paul uses ‘angel’ to refer to any ‘spirit’ being, whether good or evil, he usually uses the word to denote the ‘good’ angels, and this is probably his intention here also. ‘Rulers’ is never used with ‘angels’ elsewhere in Paul. Paul can use ‘ruler’ to denote a secular authority, but more often he uses it to denote powers or authorities of the spirit world, sometimes those of an evil nature (Eph 6:12; Col 2:15) but also in a general way that makes it difficult to know whether evil, or evil and good, spirit ‘rulers’ generally are meant. If ‘angels’ refers to ‘good’ angels, it is natural to think that ‘rulers’ denotes evil spiritual powers, but the lexical evidence makes it impossible to be sure.” [Moo, *Romans*, pg 545]

THINGS PRESENT NOR THINGS TO COME — “Having touched on the modes of human existence and the spirit world, Paul now includes the temporal dimension in his enumeration of those ‘powers’ that are unable to separate the believer from God’s love. These ‘things present’ and ‘things to come’ are sometimes also taken as references to spiritual beings, but evidence is lacking for such an identification. Paul’s point is rather that the believer need have no fear that either present or future circumstances and events will call into question his relationship to God in Christ.” [Moo, *Romans*, pg 545]

POWERS — “The last term in this verse, ‘powers,’ is the only one in the list (except, of course, for the last, summarizing item) that occurs by itself. Since Paul uses the word to denote miracles, he may mean that nothing of such a nature — performed perhaps by Satan — can threaten our security as believers. But the occurrences of ‘powers’ with ‘rulers’ to denote spiritual beings suggests rather that some kind of spiritual forces are denoted here. Why the word occurs on its own is impossible to know.” [Moo, *Romans*, pg 545f]

HEIGHT NOR DEPTH — “The final pair of terms — ‘height’ and ‘depth’ — is the most controversial. There are two main possibilities. First, since these terms, or terms like them, were used in astronomical contexts to denote the celestial space below and above the horizon, and, derivatively, celestial powers, Paul may be referring to spiritual beings. However, neither term occurs elsewhere in the NT with this meaning, and the imagery in some of the texts where the term occur — especially Eph 3:18 — suggests that Paul is using the terms in a simple ‘spatial’ sense. According to this, the second main interpretation, the terms are intended to embrace the entire universe: either those things above the heavens and beneath the earth, heaven and earth itself, or, perhaps most likely, heaven and hell.” [Moo, *Romans*, pg 546]

NOR ANY OTHER CREATED THING — “Lest a picky reader think that Paul has omitted something that could threaten the believer’s security in Christ, Paul concludes with the comprehensive ‘any created thing.’ Are even the responsible decisions of Christians themselves included in this last phrase? Calvinists usually think so, and conclude that Paul clearly teaches here the eternal security of believers. Others, however, argue that Paul, by implication, focuses on only those forces that lie outside the believer’s own free and responsible choices; and that what Paul says here and in this paragraph does not, then, preclude the possibility that a believer might decide to separate himself from the love of God in Christ. While we must not press Paul’s language beyond what he intends, *we think that the broad ‘who’ in v. 35 and the phrase here more naturally would include even the believer herself within the scope of those things that cannot separate us from Christ.*” [Moo, *Romans*, pg 546f]

CONCLUDING REMARKS — “The subparagraph ends on the note with which it began: the impossibility that the believer can be ‘separated’ from the divine love. The fact that this love is identified specifically as ‘the love of Christ’ in v. 35 and ‘the love of God’ here only shows again how much Paul joined (without equating) God and Christ in the experience of the believer. But even here, this love of God for us is ‘in Christ Jesus our Lord.’ For it is in giving ‘his own Son’ that God’s love is above all made known to us, and only in relation to Christ do we experience the love of God for us. As we have noted repeatedly, the absence from Romans of an extended passage on Christology per se should not blind us to the centrality of Christology in the letter. Here again, as at the conclusion of chaps. 5, 6, and 7 (cf. v. 25a), Paul reiterates the supreme significance of Christ for all that he is teaching.” [Moo, *Romans*, pg 547]