

Prayer:

Slide # 1
Romans

Theme: The Righteousness of God – The Gospel of God

Outline:

- **Prologue:** 1:1-17
- **Doctrinal:** 1:18-8:39
God’s holiness – man’s sinfulness – 1:18-3:20
Justification by grace through faith – 3:21-5:21
- **Sanctification of the believer – 6:1-8:39**
 - **Dispensational:** 9:1-11:36 (The place of Israel and the church)
 - **Practical:** 12:1-15:33 (Duties and privileges of the believer)
 - **Epilogue:** 16:1-27

Romans presents the most systematic presentation of the gospel found in the Word of God. After the introduction Paul begins by showing at length that all are under the condemnation of sin – no exceptions. The pagan, the moralist, and the religionists are all alike under sin. Paul then emphasizes that we are justified (declared righteous) before God on the basis of FAITH ALONE. When we put our faith in Jesus as Lord and Savior we are forever forgiven.

Paul then deals with the ongoing problem of sin. Even though we are forgiven we still struggle with sin because we still have the flesh (the sin nature). As a new man in Christ we now have solidarity with Christ and we have a new nature, but we still also have indwelling sin – the flesh. And consequently, we are conflicted.

However, God has now given us the Spirit and that makes all the difference in the life of a true believer. We now live in the sphere of the Spirit and the Spirit leads in our lives. The Spirit leads us and assures us that we are the children of God and that one day we will be glorified together with Christ.

Even though we struggle and suffer in this present time, even though we groan in these fallen bodies, yet we have the assurance that for those who love God He is working all things together for good in the big scheme of things. This is where we left off last time at Romans 8:28.

And building on this Paul now emphasizes the absolute security that the true believer in Christ has as seen in verses 29 and 30.

However, these verses that are meant to encourage and strengthen the believer have been greatly debated through the centuries. Notice that Paul has just said in Romans 8:28 that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose.

The called are those who respond to the gospel summons of God. They are saved. But note they are the called according to God's purpose. Behind it all is the sovereign PURPOSE of God. God has His purposes for His people in which all things are working together for good.

But now Paul is going to back up and give one long chain of salvation from the God side of things extending from eternity past to eternity future and intersecting with the present. And this is where the debate has raged – especially in relation to the words “foreknew” and “predestined”. Note the emphasis here is all according to the **God side of things**. It's according to what He purposed.

Slide # 2

Romans 8:28-30

God purposed...
 He foreknew...
 He predestined...
 He called...
 He justified...
 He glorified...

This has often been called “The golden chain of salvation”. There has been HUGE debate over the word “***foreknew***” in terms of what this means in relation to human responsibility and faith. The purpose of God is driven by His foreknowledge. But how should this be understood – that has been the subject of great debate.

In trying to reconcile the twin truths of God's sovereignty in salvation and human responsibility in the last few hundred years of the church age there have been four main theories put forward that seek to answer this dilemma – which in my view is past finding out. But let me touch on these and interact briefly with them. No theory is entirely satisfactory – although those in the various camps tend to argue vigorously for their view.

It is important to note that within the various camps of thought there are degrees of variation within the theory. And as we often say, “**He who defines the terms wins the argument.**” For example, when one says they believe in total depravity two people can agree with the statement and yet mean very different things. How is this defined and what are the qualifiers? That becomes the issue.

First let us consider the Calvinist position. It champions the sovereignty of God and the grace of God. The doctrines of Calvinism are often referred to by Calvinists as “The Doctrines of Grace” as each one is thought to champion GRACE!

Slide # 3

Calvinism (TULIP)

Total Depravity (total inability)

Unconditional Election (Pure Grace)

Limited Atonement (Christ died only for the elect)

Irresistible Grace

Perseverance of the saints

As I say, there are degrees of Calvinistic thinking. Some claim to be 3-point Calvinists, some 4, and some 5. Although 5-pointers would often not consider lesser-pointers true Calvinists, there are even what are called hyper Calvinists who champion the sovereignty of God so strong that it makes God the author of sin. I certainly disagree with limited atonement because, in fact, Christ is clearly shown to have died for everyone.

The weakness of high Calvinism (in my view) is that it leaves no space for human responsibility which they consider to be a strength. Hyper Calvinism amounts to fatalism that believes in double predestination. High Calvinism amounts to strict determinism in which people are just puppets. However, there is what I call “blessed inconsistency” and many Calvinists prefer to call themselves “moderate Calvinists” who see a lot of mystery in the mix. In this word game there are a lot of nuances and variations.

The irony is that Calvin himself was not a Calvinist – not a full blown one. He did not believe in limited atonement. He did not believe that Ephesians 2:8-9 taught that faith is a gift and so forth. It was really the disciples of Calvin that developed the full-blown system that is called “Calvinism”.

In response to the Calvinists along came the Arminians. They championed human responsibility. Just as Calvinists were the disciples of John Calvin, the Arminians were the disciples of Jacob Arminius.

Slide # 4***Arminianism***

Election Based on Knowledge (God elected those He knew would of their own free will believe)

Unlimited Atonement (Jesus died for all making all “saveable”)

Natural Inability (Man cannot save himself – the Holy Spirit must effect new birth)

Prevenient Grace (Preparatory work of the Spirit enables people to believe)

Conditional Perseverance (People can turn from grace and lose their salvation)

The problem with Arminianism is that it is too man centered to the point where salvation is made to depend upon man. If you think you can lose your salvation that means you are working to keep it. That amounts to a man-centered – works oriented salvation.

Again, the irony is that Jacob Arminius was not really a full blown Arminian as he did believe in eternal security. He did not think a person could lose their salvation. Once again, we note it was his disciples who fully developed the theory of what has become known as Arminianism.

I agree with some of Calvinism and with some of the Arminian's points, but as a whole system, I have problems with both. There are a whole host of people who, if you have to have a title for them, are probably ***Calminian***, meaning they are combination of Calvinist and Arminian.

I call myself a “Biblicist” seeking to hold to the biblical tensions of both God’s sovereignty and human responsibility. I seek to be faithful to both truths without compromising either one but admitting there is great mystery here. If I have to have another title it would probably be that of “Calminian” with emphasis first on “Cal” and then “Minian”. I do insist on a “God-centered” theology that puts the emphasis first and foremost on God Himself.

Spurgeon was a strong Calvinist but he said, ***“The fact is, there is some truth in both these systems of theology.”***

And Spurgeon put his finger on the issue when he said...

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But the gist of the matter lies in **the turning of the will**. How that is done no flesh knoweth; it is one of those mysteries that is clearly perceived as a fact, but the cause of which no tongue can tell, and no heart can guess. -**C.H. Spurgeon**, in a sermon entitled “Human Inability” – preached on 3/7/1858

As Spurgeon says, ‘You may look down with contempt on some who do not know so much as you, and yet they may have twice your holiness and be doing more service to God.’ ... On the subject of this book, there is only one point known to me at which Spurgeon’s later thought showed a variation with his early years. He very largely abandoned the practice of calling other Christians ‘Hyper-Calvinists’ or ‘Arminians’.-**Iain Murray** – SPURGEON V. HYPER-CALVINISM, p. xiv

God is sovereign and as Paul says, “***of Him and through Him and to Him are all things***” (Rom. 11:36). Everything starts and ends with God. And yet Sovereignty does not take away from the reality of human responsibility as we see these twin truths side by side throughout the Scriptures.

Thirdly, under the umbrella of Arminianism – really as a subset of it is a view called Corporate Election. This view seeks to hold to the idea of election, but at the same time defend the idea of free will.

Corporate election says God chose a GROUP of people and not individual persons. God chose Christ. He is the chosen One. All who come to faith in Christ are then part of the chosen group by reason of solidarity with Christ. Those who come to faith are then “in Christ” and are then elect. They are not elect until they are “in Christ”. The ultimate choice of being saved is up to the person. If they choose Christ, they will then be elect. God’s choice is made to depend on the person’s choice. Again, this reflects Arminian thinking.

The problem is that the Bible clearly seems to indicate that election is God’s choosing and that He chooses individuals even before time.

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Revelation 13:8 (NASB)

8 And all who dwell on the earth will worship him, **everyone** whose name has not been **written from the foundation of the world in the book of life** of the Lamb who has been slain.

Revelation 17:8 (NASB)

8 “The beast that you saw was and is not, and is about to come up out of the abyss and to go to destruction. And those who dwell on the earth will wonder, **whose name has not been written in the book of life from the foundation of the world**, when they see the beast, that he was and is not and will come.

This would indicate that from the foundation of the world the saved were PERSONALLY written in the book of life. Note the word “everyone”.

There is an old saying that says “the devil is in the details” – well often that is true, but when it comes to the details of salvation – GOD IS IN THE DETAILS. That is the whole point in our text today. However, God does it, He is the architect of the whole thing from A to Z.

Fourthly, there is a view called Molinism that is a theory that was first put forward by a Jesuit priest named Luis Molina (1535-1600).

Molinism seeks to be the middle position between Calvinism and Arminianism. It tries to reconcile God’s sovereignty and the free will of man without violating either one. It holds to what is called “Middle Knowledge”. This is the idea that God knows all the possible variables and works with it accordingly to accomplish His sovereign purposes.

This view says God is totally sovereign and He knows what free creatures will do in any given situation and therefore He sovereignly acts accordingly orchestrating all manner of situations to the end that of their own free will the elect will choose God. God sovereignly orchestrates it in such a way that people of their own free will choose Him. In this way the sovereignty of God is preserved without compromise as is the free will of man.

Molinism is often criticized by both Calvinists and Arminians. Calvinists claim that holding to human free will denies God’s absolute sovereignty. Arminians claim that, if God is in control of who is or is not saved, then free will is merely an illusion. – ***Gotquestions.org***

Try as hard as we may mankind cannot figure out the tension between God’s sovereignty and human responsibility. It is like a dog trying to catch its tail – go as hard as it can it never quite succeeds.

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Slide # 8

The best we as humans can do is to accept the Bible's teaching about both the absolute sovereignty of God and freedom of men to make their own moral decisions whether to believe in Christ or not, without changing either teaching. From the standpoint of human logic and philosophical reasoning, the two teachings are in conflict, but from a biblical standpoint they are not. **-Robert Thomas (In The Master's Seminary Journal – Fall 2001, pg. 202)**

God's sovereignty and man's responsibility are taught us side by side in the same Bible; sometimes, indeed, in the same text. Both are thus guaranteed to us by the same divine authority; both, therefore, are true. It follows that they must be held together, and not played off against each other. ... The antinomy which we face now is only one of a number that the Bible contains.

We may be sure that they all find their reconciliation in the mind and counsel of God, and we may hope that in heaven we shall understand them ourselves. But meanwhile, our wisdom is to maintain with equal emphasis both the apparently conflicting truths in each case, to hold them together in the relation in which the Bible itself sets them, and to recognize that there is a mystery which we cannot expect to solve in this world.

-J.I. Packer- EVANGELISM AND THE SOVEREIGNTY OF GOD, pp. 22-24

This in my mind is the mindset of a true Biblicist. A faithful Biblicist holds to the whole counsel of God holding to both sovereignty and human responsibility without compromising either one.

This is a tension past finding out. Indeed, if I have to lean one way it is on the sovereignty of God “who works all things according to the counsel of His will” (Eph. 1:11).

A faithful position on divine election, first and foremost, agrees with the Scriptural emphasis that election is GOD’S CHOICE. It doesn’t compromise God’s sovereignty, the doctrine of grace, or giving God all the glory. And yet, at the same time, it doesn’t cancel out human response or human responsibility.

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Deuteronomy 29:29 (NKJV)

29 “The **secret things belong to the LORD our God**, but those things which are revealed belong to us and to our children forever, that we may do all the words of this law.

Psalms 139:6 (NKJV)

6 Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; It is high, **I cannot attain it.**

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Romans 11:33 (NKJV)

33 Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! **How unsearchable are His judgments and His ways past finding out!**

My mentor, Dr. John Whitcomb, used to say that God’s sovereignty and human responsibility are an antinomy. An antinomy is a seeming contradiction between two beliefs or conclusions that are reasonable in and of themselves but cannot be figured out when taken together.

Let me give you an example. Jesus said to the Jews of His day, “you are **not willing** to come to Me that you may have life.” (Jn. 5:40). But He also said, “No one can come to Me unless the Father...**draws him**” (Jn. 6:44). Well, which was it? Was it that they **could not** come, or was it that they **would not** come? It is both even though we can’t reconcile them! It is an example of an antinomy.

Slide # 11

Historically, there have been two major interpretations of the concept of God’s choosing us. Behind Door #1, **Calvinism** teaches that God’s choosing means the believer has nothing to do with his own salvation: even the faith of the believer is itself a gift. Behind Door

#2, Arminian teaching emphasizes the believer's choice and suggests that God's choice was based on God's knowledge of what the believer would choose. If we simply take Paul's words at face value, it would seem that neither of these theological conclusions is adequate.

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Paul asserts that God chose us before the foundation of the world (Ephesians 1:4), and Paul doesn't even discuss God's foreknowledge in Ephesians 1. Paul does reference God's foreknowledge in Romans 8:29 as preceding predestination, but he does not discuss choosing (or election) in the Romans 8 context. It would seem that God's choice is "according to the kind intention of His will" (Ephesians 1:5b, NASB 1995) and that His purpose is according to His choice (Romans 9:11) and not based on what we might or might not do. At the same time, we have been saved by grace through faith (Ephesians 2:8), and the faith is necessary.

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Jesus' explanation of salvation makes it conditional only upon belief in Him (e.g., John 3:15–16; 6:47), and He puts the responsibility on the one who is to believe. So there is a third door. Door #1 suggests God is sovereign, and man is not involved; Door #2 suggests that God is not expressing His sovereignty, and the choice is entirely up to the person. Door #3 suggests that God has expressed His sovereignty—He chose us before the foundation of the world (Ephesians 1:4)—and He places the responsibility of faith upon the individual (Ephesians 2:8). Both the sovereignty of God and the responsibility of humanity are evident in Paul's letter to the Ephesians and in his explanation of how we came to be so greatly blessed.

- **GotQuestions.org**

But back to our text here in Romans 8. The emphasis in verses 29-30 is all on the work of God. God gets all the credit for our salvation from A to Z. All the glory goes to Him and Him alone.

There is no boasting (Eph. 2:8-9). As Jonah said in the belly of great fish just before it puked him out, "Salvation is of the LORD." (Jon. 2:10). None of us as believers walk around saying, "Thank God, I saved myself."

Or, “thank God for my contribution.” No, we give all to God for He is our all! Yes, we are responsible, yes, we must believe, but the saving is all of God.

As I now work through Romans 8:29-30 you will see shades of the various aforementioned theories coming through, but as I say there is no theory that is completely satisfactory.

Having stated God works all things together for good for those who love Him, who are the called according to His purpose – Paul now develops the thought of God’s purpose which began in eternity past.

Romans 8:29–30 (NKJV)

29 For whom He foreknew, He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren.

The called according to God’s purpose were foreknown. The word “foreknew” (Gk. *proginosko*) simply means “to know beforehand”. As someone has well said, “The text itself does not explain foreknowledge here; only theologians do.” And boy do they!

Probably no doctrine has evoked a greater variety of interpretations than that of God’s foreknowledge. – *The Liberty Bible Commentary*

Calvinists emphasize that “foreknow” is the idea of determining a relationship beforehand. They would turn to texts like Amos 3:2 where God says of Israel, “You only have I known of all the families of the earth”. There, and various other places, God clearly uses “know” in the sense of relationship (cf. Rom. 11:2; also Gen. 18:19; Ps. 1:6, 144:3; Jer. 1:3; Hos. 13:5; Mt. 7:23; Jn. 10:27; 1 Cor. 8:3; Gal. 4:9).

So, the Calvinist sees “foreknew” here as the equivalent of election in the sense of foreknowing to have a relationship with the elect, but it doesn’t really say all that. However, they would then argue that 1 Peter 1:2 says, “elect according to the foreknowledge of God” showing an inspired consistency with this idea.

Arminians say it means that God foreknew the believers faith. They would argue the great theme previously in the book is justification by faith and that God foresaw those who would come to faith.

They further argue that is why foreknowledge is listed first and then predestination. God predestinated those whom He foresaw coming to faith. Note a few objective realities here. WHOM in verse 29 refers back to those that love God in verse 28 whom God called according to His purpose. So clearly we are talking about believers. God foreknows all things about everyone but this is a certain foreknowing about believers. It is personalized saying WHOM He foreknew not WHAT He foreknew.

Note the WHOM is plural.

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The pronoun **whom** is plural, not singular. Paul is thinking of a group here – composed of individuals to be sure – but nevertheless a group of individuals who constitute a corporate whole.

– ***Wycliffe Bible Commentary***

But note that God’s foreknowledge here is driven by His purpose related to those who are called as seen in verse 28.

This is a purpose driven foreknowledge. It is not merely passive information. The Moody Handbook of Theology says, “The data of God’s foreknowledge originates in advanced planning, not in advanced information.” That would seem to be consistent with the idea of PURPOSE.

Certainly, God foreknows all things, but He is also sovereign over all things meaning He controls all things in keeping with His PURPOSE.

Slide # 15

GOD’S SOVEREIGNTY

- God promotes some things
- God permits some things
- God prevents some things

But all things are ordained according to sovereignty!

In terms of how God’s sovereignty interacts with human responsibility I would be the first to say I don’t have this all figured out. However, foreknowledge in context here relates to God’s sovereign purpose as seen in verse 28.

PURPOSE is the key word that drives this whole text! However, foreknowledge is not in conflict with the human response of “the obedience of faith” as seen in Romans 1:5; or justification by faith so strongly emphasized in Romans 3b through 5a. Exactly how it all works out involves mystery.

But Paul's point here is that those called according to the purpose of God have been in view since eternity past. There has been a PLAN all along that had them in view and it will be worked through to consummation according to God's purposeful intention. It will not fail!

The word "**predestined**" (Gk. proorizo) means "to decide upon beforehand" – "to mark out beforehand" - "to predetermine" (cf. Acts 4:28; rom. 8:29; 1 Cor. 2:7; Eph. 1:5, 11). Foreknowledge is distinct from predestined. Both clearly relate to believers as the context here shows, but predestined specifically has the goal of being conformed to the image of Christ.

God has never lost one of His children! He never loses one of the called! What He has purposed for them will be fulfilled! The sovereign intention of God will be fulfilled in having all things work together for good for the called. But note specifically what God's purposeful intention is. Those whom He foreknew He specifically predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son.

Those who love God, who are the called, for them God has a previously thought-out plan. And that plan is to make them like Jesus! This is not only about security but where God is taking them in terms of destiny. Even if our present life seems full of pain and groaning, we can rest in the truth of what God is doing – in what He has preordained to do in us.

And that is to conform us to the image of His Son. He wants us to be like Jesus. This is all about sanctification that will culminate in glorification. Little by little God is shaping us to be like Jesus in terms of our character.

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2 Corinthians 3:18 (NKJV)

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

This process of being conformed to the image of Christ will be completed when we see Jesus at His coming.

Slide # 17

1 John 3:2 (NKJV)

2 Beloved, now we are children of God; and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be, but we know that when He is revealed, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is.

The ultimate destiny of believers is that we will share in Christ's glory, we will have a resurrection body just like His, we will share in His holiness, His humility, His grace, His inner beauty, His tenderness, His patience. All that is good and holy we will share in – in terms of our character. We will be like Jesus through and through. We won't be Jesus but we will be like Him.

And God has predetermined this to the end that Christ might be the firstborn among many brethren. Firstborn is often used in the Scripture in the sense of HIGHEST IN RANK. The one in the supreme position or that has the preeminence.

Slide # 18

Colossians 1:18 (NKJV)

18 And He is the head of the body, the church, who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in all things He may have the preeminence.

Jesus is one of us, as He is fully human. We are his brother! But He as our Lord is FAR superior to us. He is the FIRSTBORN Who as the God-Man is over all (cf. Ex. 4:22; Ps. 89:27).

But note the end of the verse says that He might be the firstborn, “among many brethren.” There are MANY in God's family! There are a whole host of us that God has predetermined to make like Jesus!

Slide # 19

Hebrews 2:10 (NKJV)

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

There are “MANY brethren” – Christ is bringing “MANY sons” to glory and not one of them will be lost in the process! God has foreordained it!

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

The order here seems logical although there may be some overlap chronologically.

Note those God foreknew He predestined – that relates to eternity past. And then in time He called them and justified them.

The “called” ones are those who love God as seen back in verse 28. There is a general call to all the lost (cf. Rom. 10:9-13; Mt. 11:28; Jn. 3:16; 7:37-38; Rev. 22:17). But the “called” as used by Paul refers to those who respond in saving faith to the summons of God. In 1 Corinthians 1:21 it says that it pleased God to “save those who believe” and then Paul says not many are called but some are as seen in 1 Cor. 1:26-29. The called are those who believe.

Moody used to say, “The elect are the ‘whosoever wills’; and the nonelect are the ‘whosoever won’ts’”.

God foreknew them, predestined them, and called them. This call is God’s doing. Note “whom He called”. This is often referred to as “an effectual call”.

This is the activity of God as are all 6 links in this golden chain. There is no appeal anywhere to be called or justified. However, there is an appeal to believe. And so we are back to the aforementioned tensions.

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Hebrews 3:7–8 (NKJV)

7 Therefore, as the Holy Spirit says: “Today, **if you will hear His voice**, [Divine action]

8 Do not harden your hearts [Human response/responsibility] as in the rebellion, In the day of trial in the wilderness,

Consistently we see this combination. The God side of things drives everything but it is beyond what we can comprehend. But it is clear that the called are those who actually respond in saving faith.

Furthermore, those whom God called He also justified. To be justified means “to be declared righteous”. As noted earlier in our study of Romans justification is by faith alone.

Slide # 21

Romans 5:1 (NKJV)

1 Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ,

But again, Romans 8:30 does not deal with the response of faith – just the divine side where God justifies those whom He calls. Those who respond in saving faith are the called and they are justified.

And finally he says, ***“these He also glorified”***.

What is interesting is that this verb “glorified” is in the aorist tense which denotes fact of action as though it has already happened even though it is yet future.

We don’t yet have our glorified bodies. We are not yet sinless. But this is so sure to happen that in the mind of God it is spoken of as already being a reality. Sometimes in the OT God speaks of prophetic events in the past tense although they are still future. This is called “the prophetic perfect”. Again, it is so certain to happen that God speaks of it as already a fact.

In the NT it says in Eph. 2:6 that we have been raised up and made to sit together with Christ in the heavenly places. Now we are not yet there actually, but positionally this is already our position and so certain to be that it is already spoken of as a reality.

This statement of glorification as a fact has been called ***“the most daring verse in the Bible”***. It totally presumes that glorification is the destiny of all believers because God has purposed it.

Believers are headed for glory – for glorification. We as joint heirs with Christ will actually share in His glory (Jn. 17; Rom. 8:17, 21). God as predestined believers to be like Jesus and to be glorified!

Actually, all five of the verbs in Romans 8:29-30 are in the aorist tense. Every action of God is spoken of as a fact of action. Often times the call in view is called an effectual call, but actually every step is effectual. The foreknowing is effectual, the predestination is effectual, the calling is effectual, the justification is effectual and the glorification is effectual.

In the mind of God each step is already a reality. The entire process is as good as done! Every step will be completed.

Our destiny as believers is certain! The golden chain of what God has purposed cannot be broken! The security of the believer in Christ is total security – eternal security no matter how severe the suffering and groaning may be! God is greater than all of it and His plan for us will be fulfilled!

It has been pictured in this way. Here is a vast host of people hurrying down the broad road with their minds fixed upon their sins, and one stands calling attention to yonder door, the entrance into the narrow way that leads to life eternal. *On it is plainly depicted the text, “Whosoever will, let him come.”* Every man is invited, no one need hesitate. Some may say, “Well, I may not be of the elect and so it would be useless for me to endeavor to come, for the door will not open for me.” But God’s invitation is absolutely sincere, it is addressed to every man.

“Whosoever will, let him take of the water of life freely” ([Revelation 22:17](#)). If men refuse to come...Such men can never blame God for their eternal destruction. The door was open, the invitation was given, they refused and He says to them sorrowfully, “Ye will not come unto me that ye might have life.” But see, as the invitation goes forth ... [If]...such an one draws near and listens and the Spirit of God impresses the message upon his heart and conscience and he says, “I am going inside: I will accept the invitation; *I will enter that door,*”.

[A]nd [so] he presses his way in and it shuts behind him. As he turns about he finds written on the inside of the door the words, “Chosen in Christ before the foundation of the world.”

“What!” he says, “had God His heart fixed on me before ever the world came into being?” Yes, but he could not find it out until he got inside.

You see, you can pass the door if you will, you can trample the love of God beneath your feet, you can spurn His grace if you are determined to do it, but you will go down to the pit and you will be responsible for your own doom.

- H.A. Ironside, *In the Heavens* (Ephesians), 1935

The very last invitation in the Bible is found in the very last chapter of the Bible.

Slide # 22

Revelation 22:17 (NKJV)

17 And the Spirit and the bride say, "**Come!**" And let him who hears say, "**Come!**" And let him who thirsts **come**. Whoever desires, let him take the water of life freely.

All I know is that the God side of things will take care of itself. It is safe with God. And once you are in you can rest securely in the fact that God will complete His plan for you. Your destiny is GLORY!

However, if you are not yet saved, you need to respond. You need to COME! Come is a Bible Word! It's the last invitation in the Bible. Three times it is stated in one verse. When something is stated three times it is stated in effect as a superlative.

Yes, God is sovereign, but people are responsible to respond to the invitation. "***Whoever desires, let him take the water of life freely.***" It is free but you have to COME!

COME!