

ROMANS - #8B

ANTIOCH BIBLE CLASS

LESSON TOPIC

PREDESTINATION & MORE

SCRIPTURE TEXT: ROMANS 8:24-39.

MEMORY VERSE; ROM. 8:28. 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.

INTRODUCTION

The previous lesson concluded with thoughts about our hope in the redemption of our body, even though we go through this life with much “groaning”. From there, the chapter continues with thoughts about that hope and our pursuit of it. It then brings in thoughts about “intercessory help” and “all things” which have also been turned into adverse applications. So we do not need to be surprised that the main thrust of this lesson “PREDESTINATION” will be involved with much adverse thinking also.

There are, nevertheless, verses in this chapter that definitely address the theology of predestination. Beyond any question, these verses have a very definite message for us which we need to discern. This thought of predestination brings up such doctrines as “once saved, always saved”; what is meant by the elect; divine sovereignty; divine foreknowledge, and, of course, predestination as Paul intended.

The chapter concludes with thoughts about our inseparability from Christ, in spite of all of the “groaning” we may encounter daily. It closes with the positive assurance that nothing is able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus.

DAILY SCRIPTURES AND COMMENTS.

MONDAY. ROM. 8:24-25. SAVED BY HOPE.

SCRIPTURES.

V24. For we are saved by hope, but hope that is seen is not hope: for what a man seeth, why doth he yet hope for? 25. But if we hope for that we see not, then do we with patience wait for it.

COMMENTS.

Hope is not the medium of salvation it is the result of our conversion to Christ. Hope is the by-product of faith in Christ which we have received because of his grace toward all men. Since it is the by-product of faith, then it is a conditional possession which we have so long as we continue in (the) faith. Thus hope is not seen, it is an assurance of that which we will one day see based upon the principals of faith which we have in the Lord and his promise. Anything that is based upon faith is conditional upon the continuation of that faith. Hope, as we have said, is based upon faith and therefore if we depart from the faith our hope goes with it. But we hope in that we see not (now), but through the eyes of faith we see it afar and therefore we patiently wait for the consummation of our faith.

TUESDAY. ROM. 8. 26, 27, & 34. DIVINE INTERCESSION.

SCRIPTURES.

V26. Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered. V27. And he that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because he maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God. V34. 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.

COMMENTS.

Popular theology paints a picture from these verses that depicts "God" (the Father) seated in a singular location in a throne chair and "God" (the Son) bowing at his feet praying to him on our behalf. And, we are confidently told by this theology, that Jesus is always prostrated before the Father offering petitioning prayer on behalf of all the needs of his children. This, we are assured, is the process by which God meets our needs; Christ literally bowing in prayer to the Father asking him if he will do something on behalf of the needs of his children. If you extend this further into the dogma of the Roman Catholic Church you will be told that an endless array of "saints" are interceding for us and that we pray directly to them. Moreover, the crowning prayer of all, according to Roman dogma, is for us to get "Mary" to intercede with God for us. Further, we are also told that it is "Jesus" who is doing this praying to the Father on our behalf. Look again at verse 26 and 27, which tell us that it is the "Spirit" making intercession. Just which one is it that is praying for us before God? Is it Jesus or the Holy Spirit or both? O, the carnality of the thought.

In the process of all of this, carnality rules and lost in its maze is the pure concept of our own prayer necessity. If Jesus or Mary are doing our most important praying for us, why are we in so much trouble and why do we have to pray ourselves? In addition to that, by this carnal application of these scriptures, we lose sight of their real meaning and application. This carnality is only advanced further by theology improperly derived from verse 34, which says, that Jesus is at the right hand of the God, who also maketh intercession for us. So just who is it that is doing all of this interceding on our behalf somewhere beyond the stars? Is it God the Son or is it God the Holy Spirit? Nowhere in the entire Bible is there any such thing as God's people being taught or practicing or depending on the prayers of

others. Sure, we should pray for each other. But that is not the point being advanced by this carnal theology.

With all of this being said, it leaves little space to discuss what these verses really are saying to us. To begin with, the medium (and the only medium) between man and God, is the man Christ Jesus. If you pursue that undeniable fact it will lead you to the reality that “faith” is that medium. There is a profound truth available to us regarding our salvation that declares that “no man cometh to the Father but by me” (Jn. 14:6). The meaning of this is not some carnal by-way through which we literally come to Jesus. It is a reference to the “mediatorial” office or work of Christ on our behalf. This mediatorial work is the process of the death, burial and resurrection of Christ, which is the basic substance of the entire gospel. And here is the crux of that truth and the application of this “intercession” on our behalf”: that the atoning work of Christ at calvary is ever before God as the channel of petitioning power on behalf of all who come to him for deliverance from their sins. That mediatorship is never vacated and is always present before God on behalf of anyone who solicits, through the atoning work of Christ, redemption from sin. That is the true sense in which Christ solicits help for us before the throne of God. Even the thought of “the right hand of God” is, in and of itself, a description of the mediatorial function of the sacrifice of Christ. With all the emphasis possible, IT HAS ABSOLUTELY NOTHING TO DO WITH THE GODHEAD, other than to emphasize how that the “intercessory action of Christ’s work at calvary” pleads on behalf of all who come to God by him. The words of Paul in I Tim. 2:5, should confirm and settle the application which I have made of these verses: “For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus”.

This “intercession” between God and man is a function that is carried out through the operation of faith, which is the go-between or mediator between God and man. Thus the word of God (word of faith which Paul preached, Rom. 10:8) teaches us that we are sinners; that by faith in Christ we can be saved, and this reality of saving faith is ever before the throne of God “interceding”, as it were, on our behalf. Otherwise, there is no “medium” through which we may approach God. It is also important to acknowledge that, as verse 26-27 tells us, the (Holy) Spirit maketh or enables our own intercession with groaning which cannot be uttered. Indeed, our own praying needs the inspiration of the Holy Spirit so that they are not just some fleshly utterances.

Therefore, these scriptures do not teach us that one member of the godhead is bowing before another member of that godhead, praying for us. It is not about “godhead positions”; it is about the mediation of the plan and purposes of God on behalf of believers. That mediation is accomplished only through the faith which one may obtain from the word of Christ and is ever before the divine throne of God as our advocate for mercy. No matter how limited our own praying may be, we will not be able to place that responsibility upon the Son of God in some posture of literal praying before God.

In this chapter, Paul has been emphasizing the spiritual life or life in and by the Holy Spirit as opposed to life by our own carnal inspiration of the flesh. Note that in verse 16, he speaks of the Spirit (of God) bearing witness with our Spirit, that we are the children of God. In what sense does this take place? Is it not in the sense that we seek the “mind of the Spirit” so that we do not follow our own carnal minds? Thus there is a communication between the child of God and the Spirit of God. This

communication is not some mysterious or visionary communication but it is our seeking God's holy will and subduing our own will unto that. In a similar manner there is intercession between us and God, accomplished by his Spirit which dwells within us.

Theologically speaking, there is an intercessory function between the child of God and the only medium between God and men, the man Christ Jesus. This intercessory medium is ever available and always present before God ("deity" as opposed to humanity) on our behalf as his children. We always have access to the "Father", not, as it were, directly, but only through our Lord Jesus Christ. (No man cometh unto the Father but by me). This intercessory communication can also be described as the work of the Holy Spirit impressing, empowering and inspiring our prayers to God, thereby helping our "groaning" from a carnal state to be able to reach his throne of grace.

WEDNESDAY. ROM. 8:28. "ALL THINGS"

SCRIPTURE.

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.

COMMENTS.

This verse of scripture has offered comfort to countless followers of Christ through the ages. It is a very powerful thought that, in the providence of God, all things work together for good to his children. The very nature of its promise of "ALL THINGS" working for our good is likewise so frequently abused and applied in a carnal sense. Without any regard to the restrictive language in this verse, we "glibly" apply it to every circumstance and every person, no matter what. But the verse does have restrictions in it.

First, it is restricted to "those who love God". And this is not some superficial love, but assumes a real love and commitment to God and his purpose. Then it adds, "to them who are the called according to his purpose". This completely eliminates a universal application of the verse to anyone on the planet and limits it to those only who are called as per the divine calling and purpose of God.

This scripture is teaching us that in the plan and providence of God, even when life does not click as we want it to and things go awry, yet somewhere in God's scheme of things, life will work out for our good. This does not mean that we won't have to endure hardness as good soldiers of the cross; we will. It means that in spite of living in a carnal world where "we ourselves groan within ourselves", that, by following the Lord Jesus, we will overcome and in the ultimate end our good will be accomplished in eternal life. It is not a promise for every wish and desire which "we think" should be granted to us, that it shall ultimately be.

If this is true then, we must also look at the "ALL THINGS" portion of this verse. Just what does all things mean if it does not mean "all things"? It does not mean that "ALL THINGS" are good or that all things will become good. It means that, in spite of "all things" which occur in life (like Paul's suffering) in the end they only WORK TOGETHER FOR OUR GOOD; not that they are good. Yet there is much

more about this “all things” designation. A good explanation of “all things” is rendered in verse 37 of this chapter, which says: “Nay, in all these things (see V36) we are more than conquerors”. Verse 32 states, “how shall he not freely give us all things”. Does this involve houses, land, cars, money, etc.? Let us consider some other examples of “ALL THINGS”, in order to see its restrictive use.

- a. Rom. 14:20, “All things” indeed are pure. Are they?
- b. I Cor. 6:12, “All things” are lawful unto me – but “all things” are not expedient.
- c. II Cor. 6:10, Having nothing and yet possessing “all things”.
- d. Eph. 5:20, Giving thanks always for “all things”.
- e. Eph. 6:9, The Lord shall make known to you “all things”.
- f. Ph. 3:8, I count “all things” but loss; I have suffered the loss of “all things”.
- g. I Tim. 6:17, who giveth richly all things to enjoy

Some other points for consideration regarding “all things” and the good they may result in. The apostle James was martyred while at the same time Peter was miraculously delivered. Explain that under “all things” working out good. Job suffered the loss of “all things”, yet had “all things” restored. Paul said, “the things” which happened unto me, fell out to the furtherance of the gospel. And there is much more.

The point to be made in all of this is that, while we must endure groaning in “all things” of this life, yet in the end analysis, if we are faithful in “all things”, God will bring us to eternal life. Thus it can be victoriously stated that “all things”, no matter what, worked together for our good, because God’s grace saw us through “all (these) things”. Further, the point to be made is that this assurance of “all things” working for our good is not to be construed to imply that the hardships of this earthly life will cease to be hardships and will turn into good things. They will still be hard things, but if we endure “all things” according to his will, they will be overcome and all will be well in Christ. To use this verse of scripture for the fulfilling of modern “prosperity gospel” teaching is a distortion of its truth. To use it as a comfort in the midst of life’s sufferings and trials, knowing that, in spite of them, ultimately life comes to a good end through Christ and his merciful providence in eternal life, is its real purpose.

LET THIS BE A DIVIDING LINE, THEREBY MAKING TWO LESSONS OUT OF THIS ONE PRINTING.

THURSDAY. ROM. 8:29-33. “PREDESTINATION”

SCRIPTURES.

V29. 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. 30. 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. 31. What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us? 32. 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? 33. Who shall lay anything to the charge of God’s elect? It is God that justifieth.

COMMENTS.

Verse 29 begins with the thought that, "For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate". This refers back to the ending of verse 28 which describes "them who are the called according to his purpose". The theology on God's "foreknowledge" and "predestination" is all over the chart by some and completely avoided by others. Perhaps the worst application of these two conditions is that of trying to make them as exclusive rights and divine purpose in the individual life instead of a reference to God's great plan of salvation. If you ask the question, whom did God foreknow? The answer is that he foreknew everyone. If you then extend that question to the act of predestination, you conclude that God has determined beforehand exactly which members of the human family will be saved and which will be lost. That is a total breach of biblical truth and divine purpose.

Paul has been writing in this letter about the sinfulness of both Jew and Gentile and at the same time about the amazing grace by which God has brought salvation to both. He has also explained that this salvation is not obtained by the law, but is a function of faith which is offered to us by the grace of God. His letter is to the "Church" at Rome and by extension to the church universal. His emphasis up until these verses to the Roman church has been to show that through the death, burial and resurrection of Christ, we too must die to the sins of the flesh; be buried in baptism in a death like Christ's and then be raised to walk in a new life in him. He is taking an over view of God's plan through the ages, reaching all the way back to Abraham, who was justified by faith and not by circumcision or the law, and has brought it down to the work of Christ at calvary and the subsequent work of salvation in the heart of everyone who believes on him. He has emphasized the glorious thought that there is now no condemnation to them which are in Christ (as opposed to the law), who walk not after the flesh but after the Spirit. Then, in the earlier verses of this chapter, he shows us the glory and wonder of a "Spirit-filled life". He emphatically states that, "if the Spirit of him that raised up Christ from the dead dwell in you, he shall quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you", and further, those who are led by the Spirit of God are the sons of God.

All of this was what God had in mind through Christ Jesus, before the world began and before man was ever created or had sinned. His eternal plan of grace was known to him before there was even a need for it and when there was, immediately he put the process in action to bring it to pass. In all of the types and shadows of the Old Testament, the one central truth was the coming of a Savior to redeem fallen man back to his creator. Every detail, type and sacrifice of the law was not an end in itself but was only a school master to bring men to Christ. The prophets came with many messages to God's people but the one central message in all of it was that "lo our God will come He will come and save us".

Therefore to say that, as Paul did in Rom. 8:29-33, that God foreknew and predestined, called and justified and then glorified, is almost an understatement. That is what God has been busy at for about 4000 years before Christ came and died at calvary. God did not determine that the nation of Israel, then, now or ever, would be his (only chosen) people. He had determined that with the fall of Adam, he would send Christ to the world to save "whosoever believeth on him". That was his plan in eternity and it is still today and that is what Paul is describing. The Jews were not God's foreordained people and purpose only. He has shown that both Jew and Gentile are both in sin and in need of salvation. God's "FOREKNOWLEDGE, PREDESTINATION AND FOREORDAINED purpose was to bring

the opportunity of salvation from sin to everyone on earth that would accept it. This was done through the sacrifice of Christ at calvary. He did not predestine one set of individuals to be saved, thereby eliminating others. We are told that this was his “glorious election of saints”. That is not the case. His glorious election of saints was through the redeeming blood of Christ which is available to whosoever makes it their choice to accept, and he does this through the auspices of his CHURCH. Thus it is that the predestination and foreknowledge Paul is describing is about Christ and the church, made up of both Jew and Gentile, with no respect of persons between them.

It has been predestined that I could have salvation – “IF” I hear, believe, accept, obey and live the gospel of Jesus Christ. You have been predestined to the same opportunity. In a more strict sense, Paul is telling the Christians at Rome, made up of both Jew and Gentile converts, that God predestined to bring the whole (Gentile) world into his universal plan of salvation. In order to affirm this as strongly as possible, Paul describes that whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified; and whom he justified, them he also glorified. He called the Gentile world to his plan of salvation through grace; and to those whom he called he also justified, that is, he accepted and forgave their sins; and whom he justified he also glorified by way of the gift of his Spirit.

FRIDAY. ROM. 8: 35-39. THE POWER OF THE LOVE OF CHRIST FOR US.

SCRIPTURES.

V35. Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? 36. As it is written, for thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter. 37. Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us. 38. For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, 39. 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.

COMMENTS.

Paul is affirming the wonderful love Christ has for his people. In the context of this chapter, it is a love for the church and specifically including the Gentile people. He has addressed the groaning we all must endure and the constant influence of our carnal nature always seducing us from the right way of life. Yet, in all of these things, we can be victorious through the love of Christ for us. Love is a powerful force. In this case, the love of Christ for the church is our assurance that he will give us strength to endure every conflict. So often we complain about our lot in life, that indeed may be bad; but these verses assure us that there is no temptation or conflict which can destroy our faith in Christ. But we should be reminded that, since it is by faith, this puts a responsibility upon us to meet the conditions. In other words, it is not simply that God sends his love and it removes the obstacles of life. Instead it is that God sends his love which empowers our faith in him to endure the obstacles of life. We cannot use faith, grace, love or any other undeserved provision of God to remove our responsibilities.

The good news is that there is no power on earth that can destroy the predetermined, predestined, foreordained plan and purpose of God which is able to save all who come to him through Jesus Christ our Lord. His love for us is more than a religious symbol; it is a personal affection for everyone who commits their life to his care. Anyone who forsakes the love of God will do so of their own desires and self will.

SUMMARY

In this lesson Paul has covered some very extreme sounding messages: Messages of divine intercession, all things working for our good, predestination and the inseparable love of Christ. He has presented these deep and difficult thoughts based upon the hope of salvation which we have. In the earlier part of the chapter his emphasis was on a Spirit filled life. This is the life which brings us into the realm of the predestined love and care of Christ which is so great that no intruder of this world is able to destroy that which God calls us to.

The points of this lesson which should be specifically described and outlined are these:

1. The Christian life is one which is filled with the Spirit of the Lord and does not follow the will of the flesh.
2. In this life we groan under the daily influence and events of an earthly, carnal life.
3. Nevertheless, we, according to his promise, wait for the redemption of our bodies.
4. This is our hope.
5. God helps us in every way: by his Spirit to guide us, help us live, pray and be faithful.
6. God predestined the plan of salvation for all who would believe on him before the world began.
7. His providential care guides us so that, ultimately, all things work for our good.
8. There is no power in this world able to separate us from this wonderful plan of God.

QUESTIONS.

1. What is the basis for the hope we have in Christ?
2. In what manner does Christ make intercession for his children?
3. How can it be said that all things work together for our good?
4. What did God predestine?
5. Is your love for Christ like his for you? Inseparable?