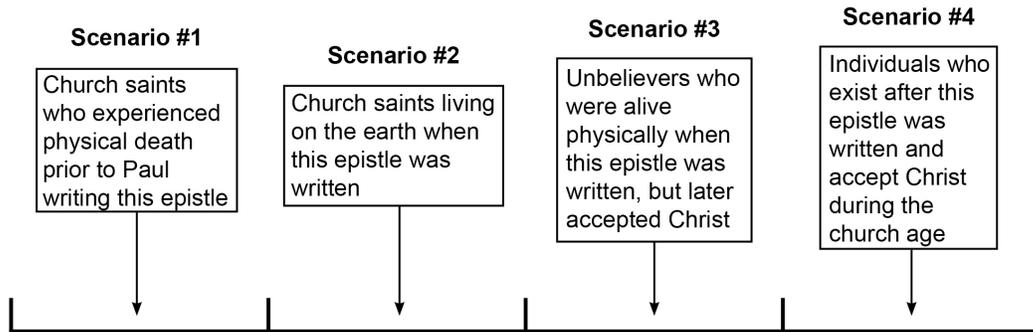


Four Possible Groups to Whom Paul Was Referring in Romans 8:29-30



And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose. For whom He foreknew, He also predestined to become conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the first-born among many brethren; and whom He predestined, these He also called; and whom He called, these He also justified; and whom He justified, these He also glorified. (Romans 8:28-30)

The proponents of “bad dog” “good dog” theology (that the New Testament believer possesses two natures instead of one) perceive passages such as Romans 8:30 as supporting their view. Thus, they conclude that New Testament believers are “*glorified*” “positionally” (whatever that means) while on earth but in actuality at physical death. Such can’t be the case due to the use of the aorist tense (past tense) “*glorified*” in Romans 8:30. The recipients of this epistle were already “*glorified*” in their souls and spirits due to having become the new man at the point of justification—before receiving this epistle and after exercising repentance and faith while depraved. We recognize once again the gross inconsistencies associated with “Positional Truth”—which advocates that the New Testament believer is a dual natured, no good, worthless, sinner saved by grace until entering heaven. Should this theological position be accurate, all New Testament believers would live in spiritual adultery until physical death—with the sinful nature (old self) married to the Law and the new man (new self) betrothed to Christ (Romans 7:4).

The past tense “*glorified*” (Romans 8:30) verifies that God has made our spirits and souls, who we are, into finished products. You may ask, “Doesn’t Philippians 3:21 teach that Jesus ‘...will transform the body of our humble state into conformity with the body of His glory...,’ and doesn’t this transpire at some point after we are released from our earthly

bodies?” Most definitely, if you are a follower of Jesus Christ, you will receive your glorified body at some point in the future. But the term “*glorified*” in Romans 8:30 is not referencing that amazing event. “*Glorified*” in this context points to what was done in our spirits and souls in conjunction with our being placed in Christ and made new. Consequently, when we were placed in Christ, subsequent to our exercising repentance and faith while depraved, our spirits and souls were “*glorified*” to the greatest degree possible—in an instant of time! Yes, we will commit occasional acts of sin so long as we live in our physical bodies. But even in the midst of these sinful acts, we are “*glorified*” saints making temporary mistakes—not lowly, second-class citizens of the kingdom.

God’s Awesome Provision and Protection

Considering all that Paul has taught in this wonderful epistle, when I read the words, “*What then shall we say to these things?...*” (Romans 8:31), all I can “*say*” is “Wow”! What a fascinating work the Lord assembled through His apostle to the Gentiles. I have found no section of Scripture that presents the gospel more concisely than does the epistle to the Romans.

Paul’s answer to the question, “*What then shall we say to these things?...*” (Romans 8:31), is:

...If God is for us, who is against us? (Romans 8:31)

Should enemies attempt to disrupt what God is doing in and through us, He alone is (and always will be) the answer to our dilemma. Try as hard as we may, we could never imagine anything greater in intelligence, power, and authority than our God. Hence, the indwelling Creator sees us through by means of a limitless energizing flow from His Person alone. Adding to this thrilling news, Paul writes:

He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how will He not also with Him freely give us all things? (Romans 8:32)

God will “*...freely give us all things*” (v.32)—meaning that He will abundantly supply all future needs. We must be careful with the phrase, “*delivered Him up for us all.*” Paul is not teaching the “L” of the TULIP, Limited Atonement (that Jesus died for the elect of Calvinism alone), for if such were the case it could also be concluded that Jesus died solely for Paul and the believers at Rome. Remember as well Paul’s words from Romans 5:6,

which prove that only the elect of Calvinism would be born “*ungodly*” should Limited Atonement be true:

For while we were still helpless, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly. (Romans 5:6)

Who will bring a charge against God’s elect? God is the one who justifies; who is the one who condemns? Christ Jesus is He who died, yes, rather who was raised, who is at the right hand of God, who also intercedes for us. (Romans 8:33-34)

Paul follows in verses 33 and 34 by declaring that no one can “...*bring a charge against God’s elect....*”—the “*elect*” being those New Testament believers who have been placed in God’s “*elect*” one (Isaiah 42:1 KJV), Jesus Christ, and made new, after repenting and believing while depraved. Why can no one “*bring a charge against God’s elect*”? “...*God is the one who justifies*” (Romans 8:33; Romans 5:1). Because Jesus died, rose, and “*intercedes for us*” in heaven (Romans 8:34), we cannot be condemned (Romans 8:1). Yes, God is in our corner, covering us on every front. Truly, He is our Friend!

Do you at times question God’s love? Should you face pain and hardship, does it mean that God has ceased caring for you? Paul was equipped to answer questions of this sort, as verified by Romans 8:35-36:

Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? Just as it is written, “FOR THY SAKE WE ARE BEING PUT TO DEATH ALL DAY LONG; WE WERE CONSIDERED AS SHEEP TO BE SLAUGHTERED.” (Romans 8:35-36)

After intense trial and persecution, Paul still writes:

But in all these things we overwhelmingly conquer through Him who loved us. (Romans 8:37)

Paul teaches that Christ’s indwelling presence could conquer any hardship (confirmed by 2Corinthians 11-12), for Christ was his “*life*” (Colossians 3:4). However, to understand the significance of Christ’s presence in our lives, suffering is normally required. In fact, pain allows us to say with Paul:

For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor

height, nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord. (Romans 8:38-39)

Are you yet “*convinced*” (v.38)? If not, you can rest assured that God knows what is required for this change to transpire. Due to His unfathomable love, He is absolutely determined that we learn to live from His perspective—the only perspective that provides hope in the midst of societal chaos, turmoil, and despair.

My prayer is that God might use what we have studied to transform not only your life, but also the lives within the sphere of your influence. We should take every opportunity to know our Lord as intimately as possible. We will then stand amazed as He, through our unique personalities, enriches and deepens the lives of those seeking the excellent way.

Please think on the things you have heard. Several people who have studied with us have returned months (even years) later and said, “I am finally understanding how to apply what I learned in Romans 1-8. It took some challenging circumstances to bring it about, but they were used of God to catapult me to where I am today. I am so very appreciative of His incredible grace.”

Thankfully, the Lord is responsible for maturing us as we face the variables of our day. Therefore, we must take hold of His huge, powerful hand and allow Him to lead us through the sunshine and the rain, realizing every step of the way that He is working it all for our good!

