

“Why Bother?”

1 Peter 1:3-5

March 12, 2023

INTRO: When was the last time you asked yourself:

“Why bother?”

PRAYER

CONTEXT:

- > 1st Peter series: *“No Matter What!”*
- > Quick review of vv.1-3a
- > Last time... Our BE-ing blesses God!
- > Today... shift from **What? & How?** to **Why?**

PREVIEW:

1. Exaltation
2. Explanation
3. Expectation

BIG IDEA: Nothing compares,
or even comes close...

† to **BE-ing** a biblical Chris**†**ian!

TEXT:

1 *Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ,*

To those who are elect exiles of the Dispersion

in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia,

2 *according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, in the sanctification of the Spirit, for obedience to Jesus Christ and for sprinkling with his blood:*

May grace and peace be multiplied to you.

3 *Blessed be the God*

and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! According to his great mercy, he has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, 4 to an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you, 5 who by God's power are being guarded through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.

I. EXALTATION of *GLORIFICATION*

3 *Blessed be the God*

and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ!

(Whenever you find an exclamation mark in the Bible...STOP!)

Motive matters!

Willing-to's and want-to's are at least a heart's length apart from one another! - JDP

Q: Why bother blessing God?

A: ...because it's NOT a bother it's a blessing!
It's a blessing to bless the loving & living God!

T/S: But you better get ready for the war! (cf. [Eph. 6:10-20](#))

Satan's 5 most powerful DIRECT sin-filled weapons:

1. **Pride** (w/ its child self-absorption)
2. **Pain** (with its children: fear & anger)
3. **Pleasure** (with its child idolatry)
4. **Poison** (with its deadly & deceptive flavors)
5. **Perversion** (with its twisting away of true truth)

We live EXALTATION to God's GLORIFICATION...

- a. Inspiration
- b. Adoration
- c. Dedication
- d. Celebration
- e. Exhortation

VIDEO: "Why?"

A.I.T. Intro

Matthew 5:14-16

*"You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden. **15** Nor do people light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a stand, and it gives light to all in the house. **16** In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven.*

II. EXPLANATION of *DEVOTION*

*According to his great mercy, he has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, **4** to an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading,*

He caused us...

A. To *BE* born again...

- i. *According to His great mercy*
- ii. **Think long & hard about God's mercy...**

B. To a living hope

- i. *Thru the resurrection*
 1. *of Jesus Christ*
 - a. *From the dead*

C. **To an inheritance** (see OT roots: Promised Land & Messiah)
*** (all 3 words = same root) ***

i. **Imperishable**

1. Indestructible
2. Incorruptible
3. Impenetrable

ii. **Undeiled**

1. Pure
2. No stain
3. No tint
4. No blemish
5. Perfect

iii. **Unfading**

1. Persistent
2. Perpetual
3. Permanent

III. EXPECTATION of GLORIFICATION

...kept in heaven for you, 5 who by God's power
are being guarded through faith

A. **Kept**

a. **In heaven**

i. **For you (who are)**

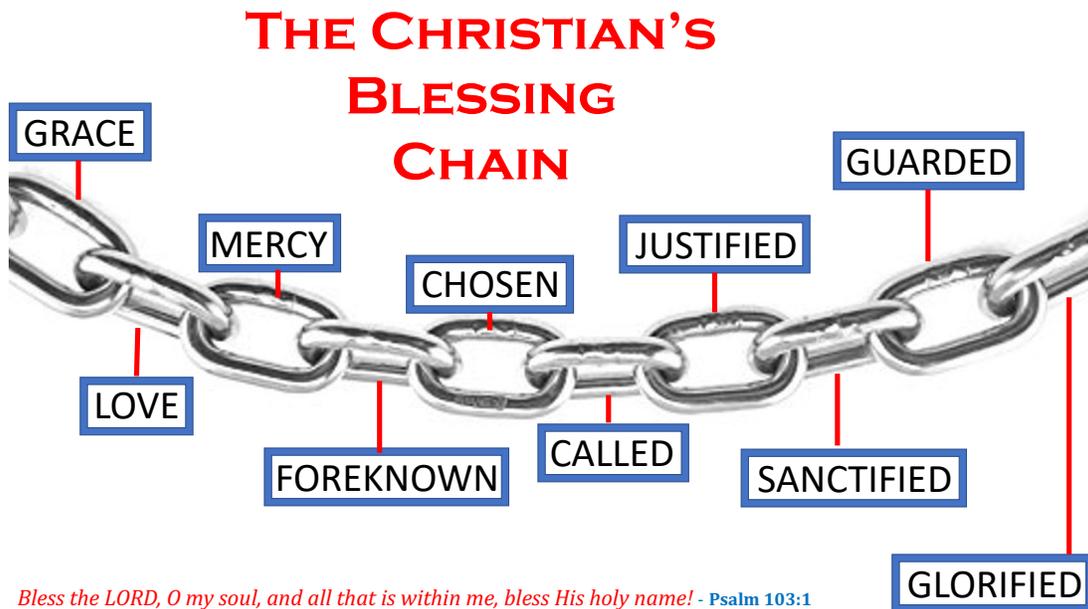
1. **Being guarded**

a. **By God's power**

i. **Thru faith**

VIDEO: Illustration: *"Bins BEing In Christ"*

- b. **For a salvation**
 - i. **Ready to be revealed**
 - 1. **In the last time.**



NOTE: *"Guarded"* explains [Romans 8:28-30](#)

REVIEW: So... Why do we bother to bless God?

Because it's our blessing to share our love and passion for the God whose love and passion saved our souls!

T/S: Let me prove the point with a closing review of vv.1-5

...there nothing that compares to the blessing of
BE-ing a God-blessing, biblical Christian!

CLOSE: There are over 50 blessings in these verses alone!

- *Peter* (no longer Simon)
- *Apostle* (a privileged ambassador)
- *“OF Jesus Christ”* (blood bought... mMm)
- *“to those who”* (intentional souls)
- *“the elect”* (Creator Christ’s chosen & commissioned)
- *“exiles”* (supernatural sojourners, citizens of heaven)
- *“of the dispersion”* (Acts 1:8 evangelists & disciplers)
- *“in Pontus...Bithnyia”* (diversity)
- *“according to”* (sovereign and providential love)
- *“the foreknowledge of“*
- *“God the Father”*
- *“IN the sanctification”*
- *“of The Spirit”*
- *“for obedience”*
- *“to Jesus (The) Christ”*
- *“and”*
- *“for sprinkling”*
- *“with His blood”*
- *“May”* (get intercessory prayer)
- *“grace”*
- *“and”*
- *“peace”*
- *“be multiplied”*
- *“to you!”*

*“Blessed be the God...
and Father of our LORD Jesus Christ!” (4+)*

- *“according to”*
- *“His”*
- *“great mercy”*
- *“He caused us”*
- *“to be”*
- *“born again”*
- *“to a LIVING HOPE”*
- *“thru the resurrection”*
- *“of Jesus (The) Christ”*
- *“from the dead”*
- *“to an INHERITANCE that is”*
- *“imperishable”*
- *“undefiled”*
- *“unfading”*
- *“kept in heaven”*
- *“FOR YOU”*
- *“who by God’s power”*
- *“being guarded”*
- *“thru faith”*
- *“for salvation”*
- *“ready to be revealed”*
- *“in the last time.”*

Let's Pray!

WORSHIP: *Faces of Amazing Grace & Don't Leave Me & Revelation Song*

How Romans 8 Made Me a Calvinist

FEBRUARY 5, 2020 JUSTIN DILLEHAY

To this day, whenever I stand behind a pulpit and say things like “All true saints will persevere to the end and none will be lost,” I still have to pinch myself. I laugh inwardly and think, *What would the 22-year-old me say if he could hear me now?*

You see, I wasn’t always a Calvinist.

I was raised a classical Arminian in the Free Will Baptist tradition. As a teenager, I cut my teeth on theologians like F. Leroy Forlines and J. Matthew Pinson, along with older divines like James Arminius and John Wesley. As a 22-year-old man, I believed and taught that grace was always necessary but never irresistible, and that genuine Christians could abandon Christ and forfeit their justified status.

Beneath these beliefs lay a view of the God/man relationship that went like this: humans were created to exist in a loving relationship with God. The nature of that loving relationship requires a free—and *undetermined*—response on our part. To quote Forlines, I saw God working with man in an “influence-and-response relationship” rather than a “cause-and-effect relationship” (like the Calvinists thought). God could *influence* us, but he respected our personhood by always leaving the final decision up to us. And God did this, not because he was weak, but because this was how he meant for the relationship to work.

And in case you’re wondering, the difference between a God who *influences* and a God who *causes* can be summed up in one word: *guarantee*. Forlines puts it this way in his book *The Quest for Truth*:

I think the description of God’s relationship to man that Calvinists would give would be much like my description of *influence* and *response*. However, the result is thought to be *guaranteed*. . . . Any time the result is guaranteed, we are dealing with *cause* and *effect*. When the *guarantee* is gone, *Calvinism is gone*.

He’s right. I agreed with him then; I agree with him now. I’ve simply changed sides. So what happened? The short answer is I ran up against [Romans 8:28–30](#).

Passionate Preacher, Problem Passage

[Romans 8:28–30](#) is often referred to as “the golden chain of redemption”—so called because of its five “links” of divine foreknowing, predestining, calling, justifying, and glorifying.

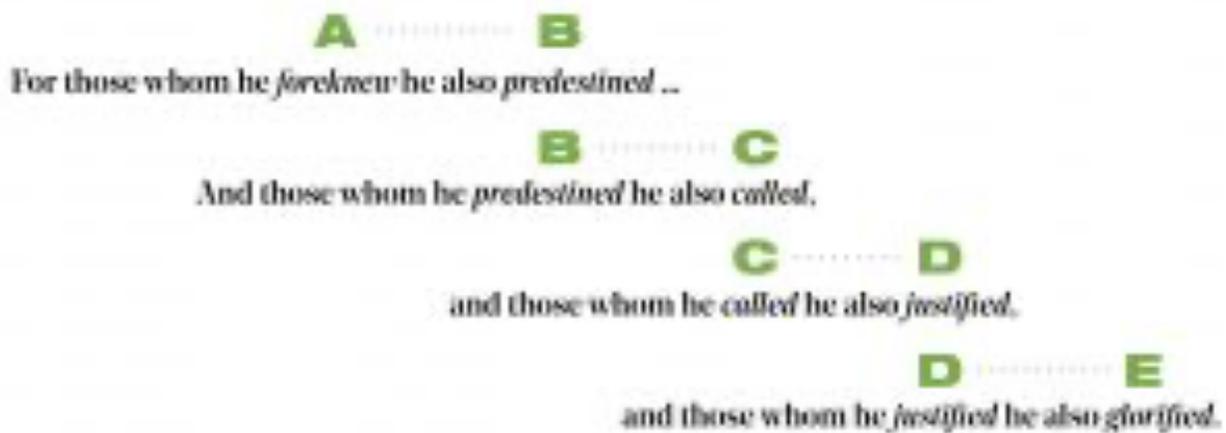
As an Arminian, I saw [Romans 8:28–30](#) as a problem passage. Verse 29 was definitely a key proof-text for election-based-on-foreseen-faith. But the rest was difficult. I knew what my preferred commentators said about it, but I’d never been fully satisfied. So I chalked it up to an anomaly. After all, no theological system explains everything perfectly.

Eventually I came to realize that Paul’s golden chain, like Calvinism, was very much about a guarantee.

Then I started listening to John Piper’s sermons on Romans, and my world was unmade. It was 2004, I was 22, and I had never heard such preaching. His meticulous exposition exposed all the weaknesses I already sensed in my interpretation of the passage, while uncovering some new ones. I can’t say I emerged from those sermons a convinced Calvinist. But my confidence was severely shaken. And eventually I came to realize that Paul’s golden chain, like Calvinism, was very much about a guarantee.

Will the Chain Be Unbroken?

Let me lay out verses 29–30 to help us visualize the argument. (Read from the top left to the bottom right, and note carefully the italicized words and matching letters.)



As an Arminian, I naturally agreed with commentator Joseph Benson: “The apostle does not affirm . . . that precisely the same number of persons are called, justified, and glorified.” After all, that would imply a guarantee. The more I studied the passage, though, the more it seemed like that was exactly what Paul was affirming.

First, consider each link individually. (For clarity, I’ve labeled the five groups with letters.) Paul begins by describing a group of people based on something God does for them (“those whom he foreknew”). He then adds something else God does for *that same group of people* (“he *also* predestined”). The word “also” in each link tells us that we’re dealing with the same people in both halves. Those he foreknew are *also* the ones he predestined. Hence $A = B$. This is true in each clause of the chain.

Paul is affirming that precisely the same number of people—indeed, *the exact same group of people*—are foreknown, predestined, called, justified, and glorified.

— But then notice the overlap between each clause. The second verb in each line serves as the first verb in the next. This is what binds the five clauses like links in a chain. And it’s why I eventually had to conclude that Benson and I were wrong. Paul *is* affirming that precisely the same number of people—indeed, *the exact same group of people*—are foreknown, predestined, called, justified, and glorified. Or to spell it out, $A = B = C = D = E$.

As an Arminian I’d been forced to argue that these five steps were simply a general sequence all true saints had to pass through, with no guarantee that those in group A would make it to group E. Indeed, I believed that some could fall out at any stage in the process. It was less like a chain and more like a bullseye, in which the circles got smaller as you moved inward.

But the more I examined the actual language, the more implausible this belief became. This inevitably pushed me to Calvinism. After all, if all the called get justified, then the call must *guarantee* faith, since faith precedes justification ([Rom. 5:1](#)). Further, if all the justified get glorified, then justification must be a permanent status—a verdict God never revokes.

This much I had always been uncomfortably aware of, though I hadn’t fully appreciated the difficulty before listening to Piper. But there was one more problem Piper raised that I hadn’t yet considered.

Guaranteeing Purpose of the Golden Chain

It's important to recognize why Paul forges this chain to begin with. The answer is found in the famous verse 28:

And we know that for those who love God, all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose.

Notice that Paul isn't simply making a factual claim here (e.g., "All things work together for their good"). He's making a knowledge claim (e.g. "we know that all things work together for their good").

Which raises the question: "How do we know?" What guarantee can we possibly have that, despite all appearances, all things will conspire for the good of those who love God and are called by him? That's the question the golden chain exists to answer. That's why verse 29 begins with the word "for"—it's providing an argument for how we know verse 28. And here's the argument in a nutshell: *We know that all things will work together for the good of the called because if you're called, that means you were first foreknown and predestined to be conformed to the image of Christ, and it means that you're now justified and will eventually be glorified.*

That's how we know: because there are no breaks in this chain.

God hasn't left the composition of Christ's family in the hands of fickle human beings.

Forlines was right. In the Arminian influence-and-response framework, there can be no guarantee. But that would defeat the purpose of the passage, because a guarantee is exactly what Paul is after. If people can fall out of the chain at any point, then we can never know that all things will work together for the good of the called. They might, but then again they might not—because the outcome would ultimately depend on the called themselves. Many of the called would never be justified, much less glorified.

But the good news is that this chain *is* unbreakable, having been forged by God himself. None of this means that our preaching or faith is unnecessary. Nor does it mean we can be assured of our salvation regardless of whether we persevere. It simply means that God hasn't left the composition of Christ's family in the hands of fickle human beings. God does more than just influence—he predestines. That's why all things *will* work together for the good of the called, and Christ *will* be the firstborn among many brothers ([Rom. 8:29](#)).

God is in charge. The outcome is secure. And that, my friends, is a guarantee.

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