



The Golden Chain of Redemption

One of the perennial questions that is often debated among Christians is the question whether Christians are able to lose their salvation. That is an important question because it affects the way that we approach everything in the Christian life. If the answer is yes, then what are some of the things that we should be doing to ensure that we do not lose our salvation? If the answer is no, then does that mean we can go on sinning and living in any way that we want?

Our passage today addresses some, but not all, of these questions. This passage has often been called the Golden Chain of Redemption. As we continue our series on Unearthing Hope, we will see that this passage has an abundance of hope that we can “unearth”. Ultimately, we will come to appreciate the love and grace of our God more and more.

Launch

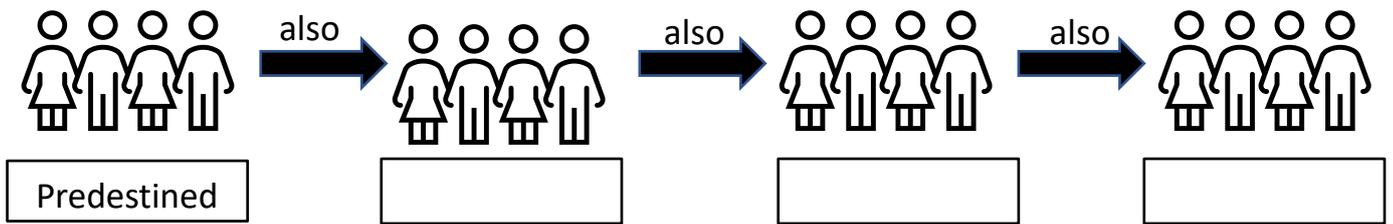
- 1) As the world goes through an upheaval because of the pandemic, what has it exposed about where people (or yourself) put all their hopes and security in?

THE GOLDEN CHAIN

Read Romans 8:29-30

- 2) What does God do to those whom he foreknew? (v29) What does that imply about the goal of our Christian growth?
 - a. What do you think “foreknew” means? (cf. Jer 1:5, Amos 3:2) What is the object of God’s foreknowledge – is it the person or the actions of a person?
- 3) Who are these people whom God has foreknown? (cf. Rom 8:28)
- 4) What does “conformed to the image of his Son” mean? (v29) (cf. Rom 12:1-2)
- 5) What do you think being “firstborn” means in v29? (cf. Col 1:15)

6) Complete the diagram below:



7) Take some time to discuss what each of these verbs mean.

- a. Predestined
- b. Called
- c. Justified
- d. Glorified

8) What do you notice about each of the verbs in v30, including the one that seems to be referring to the future? What do you think that implies?

9) What kind of assurance does understanding God's golden chain of redemption help in living out our Christian lives?

10) How does this verse guard against the two dangers listed in our opening paragraph?
 (Pressure to "perform" in our Christian lives and the freedom to sin)

11) Which of those two dangers are you normally tempted to drift towards and what can you do about it?



Conclusion

This is a great passage that describes the certainty and assurance that we have in God. It is important to note that the object of God's foreknowledge is *the person* rather than the actions of a person. God did not foreknow the actions of a person who believed and then predestine that person. In fact, why would there be there a need to predestine the person who will already believe? The word "foreknew" reaches back to the Old Testament, where the word "know" emphasises God's covenantal affection for his people. (Gen 18:19, Jer 1:5, Amos 3:2)

For these people, he predestined them to be conformed to the image of his Son. That is the goal of our Christian life – to grow to be more like Christ. We are not meant to go on sinning in our Christian life. If we have died to sin, why would we continue living in sin? (cf. Rom 6). In verse 30, we have this wonderful chain of redemption that Paul lays out for us – those God has predestined, he also called, justified, and glorified. It is the same group of people from the start to the end. Paul also uses the past tense for each verb, including glorification which happens in the future, because in his mind, these are certainties and completed actions. Our redemption, from predestination all the way to glorification, is secure.

So, can a true Christian who loves God lose their salvation? According to this passage, no. On the other hand, that does not mean that we have the freedom to go on sinning. As Christians, we are predestined to be conformed to the image of Christ. We still have the responsibility to grow in our holiness. However, our redemption is not dependent on our growth in holiness. Our souls are simply incapable of handling that overwhelming burden. Rather, the motivation for our growth in holiness is our love for God. That changes the whole approach of how we view and live out the Christian life.

Our hope then, is not in our performance to guarantee our salvation. Our hope lies entirely on God. A wonderful thing to note in this passage is that it is God who is the subject of all the verbs. It is God's guarantee of our salvation that leads to our growth in Christ. That is the hope that we have.