

All Things for Good

Romans 8:28

I. The Language of Romans 8:28

1. For we know (eido)
2. All Things (panta)
3. Work together (sunergei) -- cooperate
4. To them that love God
5. To those who are the called (kletos) according to His purpose.
“the called ones”

The purpose here is to show that things occur according to the sovereign will of God. Examples:

- a. The choice of Jacob rather than Esau (9:11)
- b. Ephesians 1:11
- c. Ephesians 3:9-11 (everything material and immaterial)
- d. The express purpose in context is 8:29-30 “to be conformed to the image of His Son.

II. The context of Romans 8:28

You cannot understand Romans 8:28 unless you understand chapter 8.

III. The Application of Romans 8:28

1. Everything works out for good for those who love God.
2. Absolutely nothing will work out for good to those who are lost.
3. The place of this promise in the light of temporal afflictions

2 Corinthians 4:17-18 -- ¹⁷ For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, is working for us a far more exceeding *and* eternal weight of glory, ¹⁸ while we do not look at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen. For the things which are seen *are* temporary, but the things which are not seen *are* eternal.

John Gill on Romans 8:28

There is a temporal good, and a spiritual good, and an eternal one. Temporal good is what the men of the world are seeking after, and generally have the greatest share of, and the saints the least; yet they (the saints) have as much as is needful for them, and what they have, they have with a blessing;

and even afflictions work for the temporal good of God's children:

spiritual good lies in a lively exercise of grace and a conformity of the soul to God; and is what the men of the world least regard, and the saints most; and sometimes afflictions issue in this sort of good, as they do also in eternal good, for they work for us an exceeding weight of glory: by "all things" may be meant, all beings good and bad: all good beings eternal or created: eternal, as Jehovah the Father, all his perfections, purposes, promises, provisions, and performances; Jehovah the Son, as the mighty God, and as Mediator, all that he is in himself, all that he has in himself, all that he has done, or is doing, all his titles, characters, and relations; Jehovah the Spirit, in his person, offices, and operations; these all have worked together in the council of peace, in the covenant of grace, and in redemption; and they do work together in sanctification, and so they will in glorification, and that for the good of the saints:

all created ones, as good angels, good magistrates, good ministers of the Gospel: all evil beings, as devils, persecuting magistrates, heretics, and false teachers: all things, good and bad: all good things, outward peace and prosperity, external gifts, the ministry of the word, the administration of ordinances, church censures, admonitions, and excommunications; all evil things, sin the evil of evils: original sin, or the fall of Adam, which contains all other sins in it, was attended with aggravating circumstances, and followed with dismal consequences,

yet has been overruled for good; hereby a Savior became necessary, who was sent, came, and wrought out salvation; has brought in a better righteousness than Adam lost; entitled his people to a better life than his was, and makes them partakers of the riches both of grace and glory:

actual sin, inward or outward; indwelling sin; which is made use of, when discovered, to abate pride, to lead to an entire dependence on Christ, to teach saints to be less censorious, to depend on the power and grace of God to keep them, and to wean them from this world, and to make them desirous of another, where they shall be free from it; outward sins, of others, or their own;

... all evils or afflictions, spiritual and temporal, work together for good; all spiritual ones, such as the temptations of Satan, which are made useful for humiliation, for the trial of grace, to show us our weakness, our need of Christ, and to conform us to him, and also to excite to prayer and watchfulness; the hidings of God's face, which make his presence the more prized when enjoyed, and the more desirable. Temporal afflictions, afflictions in body, name, or estate, nay even death itself, all work together for the good of God's people.