

Romans 8:28

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

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.

Analysis

And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God (οἴδαμεν ὅτι τοῖς ἀγαπῶσιν τὸν θεὸν πάντα συνέργει ἐις ἀγαθόν)—Οἴδαμεν ("we know") is confident certainty. Πάντα ("all things")—not some things, not most things, but all things. Συνέργει ("work together") indicates cooperative action: all events, even evil and suffering, are woven by God's providence into a pattern for good. This isn't optimism ("everything is good") but confidence in God's sovereignty ("God causes all things to accomplish good").

To them who are the called according to his purpose (τοῖς κατὰ πρόθεσιν κλητοῖς οὓσιν)—The promise is limited to τοῖς ἀγαπῶσιν τὸν θεόν ("those who love God") and τοῖς κατὰ πρόθεσιν κλητοῖς ("those called according to purpose"). Loving God and being called are twin marks of the elect. Πρόθεσις ("purpose") is God's eternal plan, His sovereign decree to save specific individuals (Ephesians 1:11). The "good" God works toward is conformity to Christ (v. 29), ultimate glorification (v. 30).

Historical Context

This verse became central in debates over providence and evil. Augustine, Calvin, and Puritan theologians emphasized God's meticulous sovereignty—even Satan's attacks serve God's purposes (Job 1-2; Genesis 50:20). This doesn't make God the

author of sin but affirms His sovereign orchestration of all events toward redemptive ends.

Related Passages

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

1 John 4:8 — God is love

Colossians 1:16 — All things created through Christ

Genesis 1:1 — Creation of heavens and earth

Study Questions

1. How does this promise sustain believers through tragedies that seem anything but "good"?
2. What is the "good" God is working all things toward—what is the ultimate goal?
3. How do "those who love God" and "those who are called" relate—which comes first?

Interlinear Text

οἴδαμεν	δὲ	ὅτι	τοῖς	ἀγαπῶσιν	τὸν	θεὸν
we know	And	to them that		G3588	love	G3588
G1492	G1161	G3754			G25	G2316
πάντα	συνεργεῖ	εἰς	ἀγαθόν	τοῖς	κατὰ	πρόθεσιν
that all things	work together	for	good	G3588	according	to his purpose
G3956	G4903	G1519	G18		G2596	G4286
κλητοῖς	οὖσιν					
the called	to them who are					
G2822	G5607					

Additional Cross-References

1 Peter 5:10 (References God): But the God of all grace, who hath called us unto his eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after that ye have suffered a while, make you perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle you.

James 1:12 (Love): Blessed is the man that endureth temptation: for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him.

Genesis 50:20 (Good): But as for you, ye thought evil against me; but God meant it unto good, to bring to pass, as it is this day, to save much people alive.

1 Corinthians 2:9 (Love): But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him.

Romans 8:30 (Parallel theme): 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.

2 Timothy 1:9 (Parallel theme): Who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began,

1 Corinthians 1:9 (References God): God is faithful, by whom ye were called unto the fellowship of his Son Jesus Christ our Lord.

Revelation 3:19 (Love): As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent.

Exodus 20:6 (Love): And shewing mercy unto thousands of them that love me, and keep my commandments.

Zechariah 13:9 (References God): And I will bring the third part through the fire, and will refine them as silver is refined, and will try them as gold is tried: they shall call on my name, and I will hear them: I will say, It is my people: and they shall say, The LORD is my God.