

ROMANS CHAPTER 8

Romans 8:1

Romans chapter 8 is one of the most blessed, encouraging and thrilling chapters in the Bible for the person who is "IN CHRIST JESUS" (compare verse 1, verse 39). The chapter begins with **NO CONDEMNATION** (v.1) and it ends with **NO SEPARATION** (verses 35-39). The key word, in the first part of this chapter, is the word "SPIRIT" (occurring 20 times in chapter 8 whereas it only appears 4 times in the first 7 chapters!).

The person who is "IN CHRIST JESUS" is safe and secure forever (v.1). Romans chapter 8 is one of the key chapters in the Bible which so clearly sets forth the doctrine of eternal security.

"No condemnation (judgment)" (v.1). Not one bit of condemnation! Compare also John 3:18; 5:24 and 1 Cor. 11:32. The word "condemnation" literally means "judgment coming down (on someone)." God's judgment is not going to come down upon me! Why not? See Romans 7:24; 8:2 -- I have been delivered and set free from the law of sin and death. If I were still under the law of sin and death then I would be under God's condemnation (sin demands judgment, death and condemnation -- the penalty for sin must be paid!). But, praise God, Calvary took care of it all. God condemned His Son (Rom.8:3) so that I might never be condemned (Rom.8:1)! God's judgment came down upon His only begotten Son so that His judgment would not need to come down upon me! I am not condemned; rather I AM JUSTIFIED! Keep in mind the teaching of the last part of Romans 5. IN ADAM I am condemned, but IN CHRIST I am justified!

The true believer will not come into condemnation or judgment (John 5:24). There is "no condemnation" for him (Rom. 8:1). All of his sins have been take care of at the cross. The believer's judgment for sin took place about 2000 years ago when Christ was judged and condemned for us! He was punished and condemned for my sins. God's wrath was poured out on Him. "He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities. . . the LORD hath laid on Him the iniquities of us all" (Isaiah 53:6). And when we come to Christ in faith we are justified and declared "NOT GUILTY" by the Judge of all the universe! "Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect? Shall God that justifieth? Who is he that condemneth? Shall Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us?" (Romans 8:33-34). If God is never going to condemn us and if God is never going to charge us with guilt, then we need not worry!

We are "in Christ Jesus," the One who is OUR LIFE. We are so identified with the risen and glorified Christ that as He is so are we. Condemnation could never fall on us because we are identified and attached to Him. In other words, we are so identified with Christ that if God were to condemn us, He would have to condemn His Son also. Impossible! "Herein has love been perfected with us, that we may have boldness in the day of judgment, **because even as He is, we also are in this world**" (1 John 4:17).

On the one hand we are told that the believer will not come into judgment (John 5:24 and Romans 8:1) and on the other hand we are told that every believer will stand before the judgment seat of Christ (Romans 14:10). How can these two seemingly contradictory facts be understood? 1) The believer will never stand before God as JUDGE to be condemned for his sins and punished for his sins. This condemnation and punishment has already fallen upon Christ our Substitute (Romans 8:3 and see the previous paragraph). Remember, if the believer were to be condemned for only one sin, that would be enough to condemn him to the lake of fire forever. 2) The believer will stand before the BEMA or judgment seat of Christ to give an account of how faithfully he has lived the Christian life since the day he was saved. The issue then will not be condemnation or no condemnation, but the issue will be rewards or loss of rewards (1 Cor. 3:12-15). Loss of rewards does not mean loss of salvation. Even the most unfaithful Christian at the judgment seat of Christ "shall be saved" and not condemned (1 Cor. 3:15).

Who can claim and enjoy this wonderful statement of "NO CONDEMNATION"? Only those who are "IN CHRIST JESUS" (v.1). There is no safer place to be! In the days of Noah there was only one safe place to be--in

the ark! God's judgment came down upon everyone who was not in the ark. Today Jesus Christ is our Ark of safety! Those who are positioned in Him are safe and secure and are not in danger of the judgment of God.

"**In Christ Jesus**"--all of the wonderful things that Paul is going to tell us about in Romans 8 apply only to those who are in Christ Jesus. Every true believer is "in Christ" (see Gal. 3:26-28: "baptized into Christ" by faith!). The last time we came across this expression "in Christ Jesus" was in Romans 6:23. In Christ we have eternal life (Rom.6:23)! In Christ we have no condemnation (Rom.8:1)! In Christ we are truly blessed (Eph.1:3)!

"**Who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.**" There is a question as to whether these words belong in the inspired text of Scripture. Those who study the Greek manuscripts tell us that some Greek manuscripts contain these words and other Greek manuscripts do not contain these words. See for example the NT translations by John Darby and William Kelly of Romans 8:1: "There is therefore (then) now no condemnation to those in Christ Jesus." [Compare also other translations.] We should note also that these very same words are found at the end of verse 4 (where all the Greek manuscripts are unanimous), and it's possible that a scribe took these words from verse 4 and wrongly added them to verse 1.

Most textual variations in the Greek New Testament are of such minor import that they do not affect the sense of the text in any way and normally they are not worth mentioning, but the textual variation here in Romans 8:1 does have some doctrinal significance. The key question is this: Does our blessed state of "no condemnation" depend upon our position "in Christ Jesus" or does it also depend upon the way we walk and live the Christian life? Does it depend upon Christ and His finished work or does it also depend upon our WALK?

If our lack of condemnation depended upon our walk, we would all be in trouble! Who among us has such a perfect WALK that he could present it to God and God would find no fault, no condemnation in it? Who among us always walks after the Spirit and never walks after the flesh? Who among us would say that our walk is perfect and without sin (1 John 1:8-10)? Who among us would say that we do not need an Advocate with the Father, Christ Jesus the Righteous One, for those times when our walk is not what it should be? All thanks be to our gracious and merciful Saviour that our justification and freedom from condemnation depends only upon our Lord Jesus Christ, His shed blood and His unending LIFE! If it depended upon our walk we would all bathe in the lake of fire forever.

For further study on this textual matter, see *Genesis to Deuteronomy* by C.H. Mackintosh (his discussion under Deuteronomy chapter 4), pages 657-659 in the one volume edition. Mackintosh discussed at length Romans 8:1 and why the last clause does not belong to the God-breathed text of Scripture (but it rightfully belongs in verse 4).

Romans 8:2

Compare with Romans 7:24. The question was "Who shall deliver me?" The answer in Romans 8:2 is this: "Christ has *already* delivered me!" The last part of Romans chapter 7 was a description of a believer's struggling, failing **CONDITION**. In chapter 8 Paul encourages the believer to focus upon his perfect, unfailing **POSITION** in Christ Jesus! The more we believe God's facts about our **POSITION** the more this will affect and change our actual **CONDITION**!

Romans 8:2 mentions two laws. Illustration: the law of gravity and the law of aerodynamics. The law of gravity says that a large, heavy metal object in the sky must fall to the earth and crash (the airplane must crash!). But the law of aerodynamics is a higher law and overcomes the law of gravity and enables the heavy metal airplane to soar and fly and not crash. By the law of sin and death I fail and fall and crash (Rom.7:23-25) but by the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus I am able to live a life that pleases God (Rom.8:2).

Romans 8:3

There are certain things that the law cannot do. The law is just but it cannot justify (Rom.7:12; 3:20). The law is holy but it cannot sanctify (Rom.7:12). The law can tell me that I am a sinner but it can't make me a saint! (The mirror can show me my dirt but it cannot cleanse me!) What the law could not do, **GOD DID!** What **THE LAW**

could not do, **THE LAMB** could!

Why was the law weak? The problem was not with the law but with me! It was "weak through the flesh" (compare Rom.7:14). Actually the law is very powerful. The law is able to GIVE LIFE if a person KEEPS ALL THE COMMANDMENTS ALL OF THE TIME (Luke10:25-28; Matt.19:16-17), but none of us have done this or could do this, so the law cannot give life. It cannot bring blessing, only a curse (Gal. 3:10-11). But the weakness is ours and not the law's. Illustration: Think of a strong anchor. Is the anchor able to hold? YES! But if you lower the anchor into soft mud it will not hold. "What the anchor could not do in that it was weak through the mud." The problem is not with God's holy law but with our sinful flesh!

Notice how the gospel is set forth in Romans 8:3. In essence it is saying that God sent His sinless, unique Son (literally "the Son of Himself") to be condemned in our place and to die for our sins. Why did He do this? That we might live unto righteousness (v.4 and compare 1 Peter 2:24).

Notice how carefully Paul states these things. If he had said it in just a slightly different way it would have resulted in heresy (false teaching on the person of Christ). He did not say "in the likeness of flesh" because this would be saying that Christ was not really a man. Christ truly did come in the flesh and was a real Man (1 John 4:2-3). Paul did not say "in sinful flesh" because this would have made Christ a sinner! What is Paul saying? He is declaring that Christ was truly a man but not a sinful man!

"**For sin**"--as a sacrifice for sin! As the hymnwriter says, "In my place condemned He stood!" Compare 2 Corinthians 5:21. Condemnation refers to God's judgment coming down upon a person. God's judgment for sin came down upon my sinless Substitute when He died on the cross so that it will not come down upon me (Rom.8:1). The fire of God's judgment burned the cross and the ground around it, so when I take my place (by faith) at the foot of the cross the fire of God's judgment will not burn me (the fire will not burn the same area twice).

Romans 8:4

"**Righteousness**" means "righteous requirements." The law has certain righteous requirements. The law demands and requires that a person live a righteous life of loving God (perfectly) and loving one's neighbor (perfectly). How can I fulfill what the law requires? How can I keep the law? The Person and Power of the Holy Spirit makes this possible. Note carefully that the verse does not say "by us", it says "in us"! This is something God does **IN ME** by His power and by His Working and by His Spirit! "The flesh" is that which I do in and of myself (that which I produce). "The Spirit" refers to that which God does in me by the Person of the indwelling Holy Spirit. The law requires that I LOVE GOD and LOVE MY NEIGHBOR (Matthew 22:36-40) These two commandments summarize not only the Ten Commandments but all of God's commandments. I cannot keep the law by trying to keep the law. A sinner cannot keep God's holy law; it's impossible. Even a "renewed sinner" cannot do this. As we saw in Romans 7:14-25, the saved person wants to but he can't: "How to perform that which is good (the keeping of God's law) I find not" (Rom. 7:18). The key to fulfilling the law is LOVE (Rom.13:8-10 and Gal. 5:14). The key to having LOVE is a Spirit-filled walk (Gal. 5:13-23 and Rom.8:4). The Spirit of God thus produces this LOVE in me (Gal. 5:22). I cannot but He can! If a person is walking according to the Spirit, then God is at work in him producing that righteous life. We are His workmanship (Eph.2:10)! It's impossible for me, that is my flesh, to keep God's law. It's impossible for God in me (when I allow Him to do His work) not to keep the law! What the flesh could never do, God can do (compare verse 3).

Consider the following chart showing the contrast between the person dominated by the flesh and the person dominated by the Spirit. This chart deals with the first 14 verses in Romans chapter 8:

Romans 8:1-14

Contrast Between The Person Dominated By The Flesh And The Person Dominated By God The Holy Spirit

(see chart on the next page)

Two Categories	
THE PERSON DOMINATED BY THE FLESH "they that are after the flesh" (v.5)	THE PERSON DOMINATED BY THE SPIRIT "they that are after the Spirit" (v.5)
Two Realms	
"IN THE FLESH" (v.8)	"IN THE SPIRIT" (v.9)
Two Spiritual Conditions	
"He is none of His." (v.9)	He is His. (He is a Christian.)
Two Births	
Born of flesh (Jn.3:6) (We are in the flesh by natural birth.)	Born of Spirit (John 3:5-6) (We are in the Spirit by the new birth, by regeneration.)
Two Mind Sets	
He sets his mind on the things of the flesh (verses 5-7).	He sets his mind on the things of the Spirit (verse 5 and see Col. 3:1-2; Matt. 16:23).
Present Condition	
Death (verse 6) (Having no relationship with God) Cannot please God (verse 8)	Life and Peace (verse 6) Life in a dead world Peace in a troubled world
Future Condition	
Death (verse 13) (See Galatians 5:19-21)	Resurrection life (verses 11,13)
Present Possession	
He does not have the Spirit (verse 9).	He has the Spirit (verse 9).
Relationship to God's Law	

Lawless (verse 7) He is a rebel against God's law and one who CANNOT submit to it.	The law is fulfilled in this Spirit-controlled person (verse 4).
Relationship to God	
An enemy (verse 7 and compare Rom. 5:10)	A son (verse 14)
Guidance	
No supernatural guidance (verse 14)	Led by the Spirit (verse 14)
The Person's Obligation	
He is obliged to live after the flesh (verse 12). There is no other way that he can live. "That which is born of the flesh is flesh" (John 3:6). The person who is "in the flesh" must live in that realm. He is dominated by his sinful nature inherited from Adam.	He is obliged to mortify (put to death) the deeds of the body (verse 13). POSITIONALLY this has already been done (Gal. 5:24) but EXPERIENTIALLY this needs to be done by faith (Col. 3:5; Rom. 6:11 in view of Rom. 6:6; etc.). By faith I must reckon on what has already been done by Christ.

OBSERVATIONS: There is only one way that the unsaved person can live. He is "in the flesh" and he must live and walk "after the flesh" (Romans 8:8 and compare verse 4). He has no choice but to fulfill the lusts of the flesh. He is in total bondage to indwelling sin. This walk after the flesh is described in Ephesians 2:1-3 and Ephesians 4:17-19.

The saved person is described as being "in the Spirit" (Romans 8:9) and he is no longer in the realm of the flesh (Romans 8:9). He is indwelt by the Holy Spirit of God. His life is dominated by the Person and Presence of God the Holy Spirit, and even when he is not walking rightly the Spirit will make His grieved presence known (Ephesians 4:30).

The saved person's life in totality cannot be said to be dominated by the flesh. He may fall into sin but he will not persist in sin (1 John chapter 3). By the Spirit's **conviction**, by **confession** and if needed by **chastening** (1 Cor. 11:31-32) he is brought back to the path of obedience. The believer at any given time may manifest any of the works of the flesh (Galatians 5:19-21) but his life will not be dominated by the works of the flesh because "they which do (present tense--'keep on doing'; those who persist in these things) shall not inherit the kingdom of God" (Gal. 5:21 and compare 1 Cor. 6:9-11 and Ephesians 5:5).

At the same time the Bible makes it clear that the true believer can be controlled by the flesh. Romans chapter 8 does not deal with this but Romans 13:12-14 does. See also 1 Corinthians 3:1-3 and Galatians 5:16-25. It's a terrible abnormality for a believer who is "in the Spirit" to walk as the man who is "in the flesh" and for a new creature in Christ to walk as a mere, unregenerate man (1 Cor. 3:3), but sadly, it does happen.

Romans 8:5-6

Romans 8:5-6

"Mind" = set their mind upon (see this verb used in Matt. 16:23 and Col. 3:2). "After the flesh"--this refers to those who are dominated by their sinful Adam-like natures (see chart above). Verse 6 should be translated "for the minding of the flesh is death; but the minding of the Spirit is life and peace" (compare Romans 6:21-23).

Romans 8:7

"Because the carnal mind (the minding of the flesh) is enmity against God." The flesh is always against God. The flesh is God's enemy. "Subject" = submissive. The flesh is not submissive. Instead it rebels against God. It revolts against God and against God's law. An illustration of this is found in Numbers 14:9-10,27-29,40-44 (If God goes with us we won't go! If God does not go with us we will go! Whatever God says we will do the opposite!). "Neither is it able"--the flesh is unable to be submissive. It's impossible for the flesh to submit to God. Man's sinful flesh (man's sinful nature) is non-submissive.

There are five things that will never happen to the flesh:

1. **The flesh cannot be changed.** The rebellious, non-submissive flesh will never be transformed into submissive, obedient flesh. God's method of dealing with the flesh is not to change it but to **CONDEMN IT** (Rom.8:3) and **CRUCIFY IT** (Gal.5:24; 2:20 and compare Rom.6:6).
2. **The flesh cannot be reformed.** It cannot be corrected or restored to purity. That which is corrupt remains corrupt. That which is desperately wicked remains desperately wicked (Jer. 17:9). The Church was reformed (we speak of the Protestant "Reformation") and restored to some degree of purity but the flesh will never have a reformation. Two thousand years ago it did not have a REFORMATION but it had a **CRUCIFIXION!**
3. **The flesh can never be trained.** The flesh is stubborn. It refuses to change its ways. It's immutable. You can never teach the flesh how to please God. The flesh is incorrigible--incapable of being corrected or amended. The flesh refuses to change its ways. The works of the flesh always remain the same (see Galatians 5:19-21).
4. **The flesh cannot be improved.** It always remains as it is: depraved, corrupt, wicked, sinful, evil, anti-God, rebellious, stubborn, proud, etc.
5. **The flesh cannot be reconciled to God.** It is always and ever opposed to God (see Gal. 5:17). It will never be at peace with God; instead there is constant war. God can never be brought into harmony with that which is out of harmony with His holy and righteous Character.

Every child of God can rejoice in this fact: "And they that are Christ's (those who belong to Christ) have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts" (Gal. 5:24).

Romans 8:8

Romans 8:8

Because these things are true of the flesh (v.7), those who are IN THE FLESH (those who are unsaved) **CANNOT** please God (it's **impossible** for them to please God). Compare Hebrews 11:6 (those who are in the flesh are those who are without faith). For an Old Testament commentary on Romans 8:8 see Proverbs 15:8,9,26. The flesh can never, ever please God. It is very, very difficult for most people to accept the truth of this verse. It is saying that everything that I have done in my life (before coming to Christ) was unacceptable to God and was not pleasing to Him. We may have counted many things as being good and right and praiseworthy, but God was not pleased. The only way we can truly please God is "THROUGH JESUS CHRIST" (Heb.13:21).

What do verses 7-8 imply about the person who is spiritually minded? Let's take the opposite: The spiritual mind (the minding of the Spirit) is a friend of God (at peace with God, no war, no hostility), for it is submissive to the law of God (Rom.8:4), and must ever be. So then, they that are in the Spirit CAN please God! The next verse speaks about those who are in the Spirit:

Romans 8:9

"Ye" is emphatic ("YE" in contrast to those who are in the flesh). You (plural) are not in the flesh! You can please God! Every saved person is "IN THE SPIRIT" and every unsaved person is "IN THE FLESH." Every believer is "spiritual" in the sense that he HAS the Spirit (see Jude 19). "Dwell" = make his home in you. Your body is the Spirit's house or dwelling place or holy temple (1 Cor. 6:19-20).

Paul is saying here that YOU ARE IN THE SPIRIT IF THE SPIRIT IS IN YOU! If the Spirit is not in you then you are in the flesh (unsaved). "Any man" = anyone. "He is none of His" = he (this person who does not have the Spirit) is not "of Him" that is, he does not belong to Christ, he is not His, he is not a Christian, thus he is unsaved. By implication this verse clearly teaches us that every true Christian is indwelt by the Holy Spirit. If a person is saved then he is INDWELT by the Holy Spirit and he is in (the realm of) the Spirit. Every single believer in Christ receives the Holy Spirit on the one condition of faith in Christ (John 7:37-39). There is no such thing as a true believer who does not have the Holy Spirit. The true Christian is no longer "in the flesh" (in the realm of the flesh). He is not in the flesh but the flesh is in him (Rom.7:18). Note how the Holy Spirit is referred to: "Spirit" "Spirit of God" "Spirit of Christ."

Verse 9 says that the Spirit is in you.

Verse 10 says that Christ is in you (see also John 14:17,20).

Romans 8:10

Compare with Romans 8:1--Christ is in me (v.10) and I am in Christ (v.1)! Romans 8:9 teaches that I am in the Spirit and the Spirit is in me! Blessed relationships! In Romans 7:18 Paul says, "I know that in me dwelleth no good thing" but the believer can also say, "I know that in me dwelleth the living God!" If a person is really saved, then Jesus Christ is IN this person (see 2 Corinthians 13:5). Thus, what Paul is going to say in verse 10 applies to a true believer. If you are really saved then this is what is true: **the body is dead because of sin**. In what sense is it dead? You are not physically dead yet. Paul means "dead" in the sense of "mortal" (see verse 11) which means subject to death and decay and disease because of sin. The body of the believer has not yet been redeemed (but it will be in the future--Romans 8:23). The body of the believer has not yet been quickened or made alive, but it will be in the future (Rom.8:11).

"The spirit is life because of righteousness". This verse is a contrast between the believer's body and the believer's spirit. The spirit is not dead, it is LIFE. I have been quickened or made alive spiritually (Ephesians 2:1,5). My spirit was quickened and made alive the moment I was justified. The quickening of my spirit has already taken place at the moment of salvation (Rom.8:10); the quickening of my body will take place in the future at the day of resurrection (Rom.8:11).

Romans 8:11

"Him that raised up Jesus from the dead" refers to God the Father. If the Spirit of God dwells in you (and this

is so if you are saved--Romans 8:9), then God shall (in the future) quicken (make alive) your mortal bodies (your bodies which are now unredeemed and which are subject to death and decay and disease). If the Almighty God could raise up Jesus from the dead, then certainly He can take care of our bodies as well. This is a wonderful promise of the future resurrection of believers. The presence of the Spirit in you now is the guarantee of your future resurrection (Ephesians 1:13-14; 4:30).

Romans 8:12

"Debtors" = those who have an obligation (Rom.1:14). We are not debtors to the flesh because we now live in the realm of the Spirit. We do not have any obligation to the flesh whatsoever. We don't owe the flesh anything! In fact, we have given the flesh too much already! We have spent too much time in the flesh (see 1 Peter 4:2-3) and we have already sinned too much in the flesh. Instead I am a debtor to live according to the Spirit. This is my Christian obligation.

Romans 8:13

"Live" = present tense (constantly, habitually). Death (separation from God) is at the end of a life lived after the flesh (Romans 6:21). "Mortify" = put to death (the same word is found in Romans 8:36 "killed"). How do we do this? How does a believer mortify and put to death the deeds of the body?

The Biblical doctrine of MORTIFICATION:

Notice first that we are to mortify "through the Spirit." This is something that is done by the power of the Spirit, not by our own power. There are two aspects of the believer's mortification that must be considered:

1) **POSITIONALLY** it has already been done! Galatians 5:24 says, "they that are Christ's (those who belong to Him, compare Romans 8:9) have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts." Notice that this verse does not say to do this but it says that it has already been done. It does not say "crucify the flesh" but it says, "you have crucified the flesh (already)." When did this happen? Two thousand years ago (compare Galatians 2:20)! When Christ died, I died! That's when my crucifixion took place.

2) **EXPERIENTIALLY** the believer needs to do it: "Mortify (put to death) your members which are upon the earth" (Colossians 3:5). But the key question is this: HOW IS THIS TO BE DONE? Faith is the key! Faith claims the fact that in Christ I have already died (see Colossians 3:3--"for ye died") and by faith I reckon this fact to be true. The "therefore" of Colossians 3:5 points back to the glorious truth of verse 3 that we already died with Christ and in Christ. Thus we are told to do in faith (Col. 3:5) what God has already done in fact (Galatians 5:24; Col. 3:3; Gal. 2:20). Galatians 5:24 sets forth the fact and Colossians 3:5 appeals to faith (based on the fact--Col. 3:3). The more we by faith reckon on our POSITION the more it becomes true (by the power of the Spirit) in our actual CONDITION. See Romans 6:11 and the discussion on "RECKONING."

Romans 8:14

In verse 9 we learned that a true Christian is one who is indwelt by the Holy Spirit. In this verse we have another mark of a true Christian. All those who are LED by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God. A true believer is Spirit-led. The person living after the flesh (v.12) is certainly not led by the Spirit. See John 10:26-27. What is the mark of a true sheep? A true sheep follows the true Shepherd. Christ leads and His sheep follow! So here in Romans 8:14 we learn that a true son is led by the Spirit. The verb is in the present tense: we are constantly and continually being led by the Spirit. He is ever working in our lives. He is either leading us along the right path or He is leading us back to the right path. He is either controlling us or convicting us, but He is always at work in us (He will never leave us--see Ephesians 4:30). We are either grieving Him or pleasing Him. We are in the realm of the Spirit and we can never get out of that realm. Remember, we are "in the Spirit" (Romans 8:9).

Romans 8:15

The key word in chapter 8 is "SPIRIT" (found 19 times in this chapter). The moment a person is truly saved he receives the Spirit of God, here called "the Spirit of adoption." The saved person does not enter into a legal relationship but into a LOVE RELATIONSHIP (compare Romans 7:4). We are not as a slave fearfully standing before a strict and hard master but we are like a child or a son before his father. The Aramaic word "ABBA" is explained by the next word "Father." It was a very familiar word for father, perhaps close in meaning to the English word "PAPA." We are amazed to find this very same expression used by the Lord Jesus Himself in Mark 14:36. Believers have the same kind of intimate relationship with the Heavenly Father as Christ Himself had, to the praise of His grace! No one can be nearer and dearer to the Heavenly Father than those who are "in Christ." Consider the following precious chorus:

**"Near, so very near to God, nearer I could not be.
For in the Person of God's Son, I am as near as He.**

**Dear, so very dear to God, dearer I could not be.
For in the Person of God's Son, I am as dear as He."**

The word "adoption" is made up of two parts: 1) son 2) placing. God has taken the believer (who was a child of wrath and disobedience--Eph.2:1-3) and has placed him in the position of a son, with all the rights and privileges and benefits and blessings and inheritance which comes from being a Son!

Romans 8:16

"Itself" (KJV) should be translated "Himself." The Holy Spirit is a blessed Person, not an impersonal "IT." The Holy Spirit bears witness together with our human spirit that we are the children of God. This short verse deals with the very important doctrine of ASSURANCE OF SALVATION. The Bible clearly teaches that a person can know and be assured (in this life) that he is a child of God. How can we know? This verse says that we know that we are the children of God because the Holy Spirit bears witness together with our spirit. Thus there are two witnesses that tell me that I am a child of God. The first witness is my human spirit--that part of me which (now that I am saved) is sensitive to God and sensitive to spiritual things. My spirit says, "Yes, I am a child of God. I am saved! I am justified! I have a real and right relationship to God through the Lord Jesus Christ and by His grace! I now know God as my heavenly Father and I can pray to Him, not in a mechanical and ritualistic way, but in a real and right way." The second witness is the Holy Spirit whom I received the moment I was saved. It is His presence in my life which is the basis for assurance. If He is not present in my life, then I have no basis for assurance (Romans 8:9). Compare also 1 John 4:13. He lives in me and He assures me that I belong to God. Even when I am not right with God He convicts me and causes His grieved presence to be felt (Eph. 4:30), and this too is an indication that He indwells me and I belong to Him.

When a person is saved he somehow has an awareness and a realization and a consciousness that he is a child of God (one of God's born again ones). He knows that he belongs to Christ and Christ belongs to him. At the same time the Spirit of God is giving forth His silent testimony confirming the same fact. I say from my heart, "I am His and He is mine!" and the Spirit says, "Yes, Amen, and I am in you as proof of it!" See Galatians 4:1-6 for a parallel passage. In Romans 8:15 the believer ("we") says, "ABBA FATHER." In Galatians 4:6 it is the Spirit who cries "ABBA FATHER." The Spirit bears witness together with our Spirit that we are the children of God (see Deut. 19:15 where two witnesses give their testimony). The human spirit says, "I'm a child of God, ABBA FATHER!" The Holy Spirit says, "Yes, he is a child of God, ABBA FATHER!" In the mouth of two witnesses IT'S SETTLED!

The Holy Spirit has a very important ministry of CONVINCING MEN (convicting men). He once convinced me that I was a **sinner**. He now convinces me that I am a **saint** (saved, a child of God). How does the Spirit do this work? He convicts and convinces men by using God's Word. The Spirit used the Word of God to convince us of our sinfulness. The same Spirit uses the same Word to convince us that we belong to God: **"these things are**

written that ye might KNOW that ye have eternal life" (1 John 5:13 and compare verse 10 which also speaks of an INNER WITNESS). (Note: the Gospel of John was written so that men might believe on Christ and the key word is BELIEVE--John 20:31; the book of 1 John was written so that believers might have assurance and the key word is KNOW-1 John 5:13).

See 1 John 5:10--the key is this: BELIEVE AND YOU WILL KNOW! (you will have the witness in yourself). According to Romans 8:15-16 if you believe then the Spirit will bear witness with your spirit that you are a child of God. BELIEVE AND YOU WILL KNOW. Psalm 34:8 illustrates this. How do I know if the Lord is good? TASTE AND SEE! Those who taste will know! Compare 1 Peter 2:3. How can you know how good the dessert is if you have never tasted it? How can you know the blessedness of a personal relationship to God if you have never believed?

Romans 8:17

Not only are we children of God but we are **heirs**. We have a rich inheritance! We are spiritual billionaires (Ephesians 1:3). See also 1 Peter 1:3-4. The Holy Spirit has come into our hearts 1) to tell us and assure us that we are God's children now (Rom.8:15-16); 2) to guarantee that we shall receive our inheritance later (Eph.1:13-14). Not only are we GOD'S HEIRS but we are JOINT-HEIRS (CO-HEIRS) with Christ. What belongs to Him belongs to us! What is His is mine! I share in all the riches of Christ. How rich is Christ? See Hebrews 1:2--the heir of ALL THINGS and see also 1 Corinthians 3:21-23. This is what ADOPTION is all about. God has placed me in the position of a son with all the rights and privileges and benefits and blessings and inheritance that a son of God should have. With Christ I gladly receive ALL THINGS (Rom.8:32), even though I know I deserve none of them!

We will share with Christ then, but we also share with Christ now. We will partake in His riches and His glory, but we shall also partake in His sufferings: "if so be that we suffer with him." The believer must expect PRESENT SUFFERING and FUTURE GLORY. When the Lord Jesus was in the world He was treated a certain way and every believer shares in this. When the Lord Jesus returned to His Father He was treated a certain way and we shall share in this also.

In the experience of Christ it was SUFFERING FIRST and GLORY LATER (Luke 24:26) and so it shall be for the believer. SUFFERING FIRST and GLORY LATER is actually the theme of the book of 1 Peter. For example see 1 Peter 1:5-6 which contrasts the glory of future salvation with the difficulties of present trials. See 1 Peter 1:11 which speaks of the sufferings of Christ which were followed by the GLORY. This is also seen in 1 Peter 3:18 (Christ's suffering) and 3:22 (Christ's glory). Thus believers will partake of Christ's sufferings NOW and we will partake of His glory LATER(1 Peter 4:13). 1 Peter 5:1 echoes the same theme. Caring for God's flock involves much present suffering and difficulty (1 Peter 5:2-3) but will involve future glory (1 Peter 5:4). Finally the theme of 1 Peter is summarized in 5:10. Notice the present suffering which is only for a while (the present suffering in light of eternity is not very long) to be followed by future glory which is forever (1 Peter 5:10).

The present suffering is to be **expected** (see John 15:18-21; 16:1-3; 16:33; 17:14; 1 Thess.3:3; 2 Timothy 3:12; 1 John 3:13). The present suffering is a **God-given privilege** (Phil. 1:29; Acts 5:41).

There are some who teach that every believer is an "heir of God" but not every believer is a "joint-heir" or "co-heir" with Christ. They understand the "joint-heirs" to be a special class of believers who are victorious and who persevere to the end even though doing so requires difficulties and suffering. This teaching reflects a serious misunderstanding of this verse. Paul is not talking about some special class of overcoming believers who qualify as joint heirs of Christ and who will reign with Him in the kingdom, in contrast to worldly, non-suffering believers who will be excluded from the millennial kingdom and will be punished in outer darkness with weeping and gnashing of teeth for a thousand years. [For an analysis of this false teaching, see the following document: [The Theology of Zane Hodges and Joseph Dillow and the Grace Evangelical Society.](#)] Though it is true that some believers suffer more than others, it is also true that all believers share in Christ's sufferings (2 Cor. 1:5; John 15:18-21; 16:33, etc.). Every believer is a joint-heir with Christ, sharing in His glory. All believers will reign with Christ in His kingdom (Matthew 13:40-43).

Are the Joint-Heirs of Christ A Special, Elite Class of Victorious, Overcoming Christians?

William Newell says the following in his commentary under Romans 8:17:

If so be that we suffer with Him, that we may be also glorified with Him---Here two schools of interpretation part company, one saying boldly that all the saints are designated, and that all shall reign with Christ; the other, that reigning with Christ depends upon voluntary choosing of a path of suffering with Him.

"That we may also be *glorified together*." This is the key to our question: WHO are to be glorified with Christ when He comes? In Chapter Five Paul says (and that of, and to, all the saints), "*We rejoice in hope of the glory of God.*" And in 2 Thessalonians 1:10 we read, "When He shall come to be glorified *in His saints*, and to be marveled at *in all them that believed.*" And again (Col. 3:4): "When Christ our life shall be manifested, then shall *ye* also [evidently all the saints!] with Him be manifested in glory." Again (1 John 3:2): "Now are *we* [all the saints] children of God . . . We know that, if He shall be manifested, *we* [all the saints] shall be like Him; for we shall see Him even as He is!" (*Romans*, pages 316-317).

Zane Hodges is among those who teach that only an elite group of believers will reign with Christ, thus dividing the body of Christ during the millennium and consigning the unfaithful, non-suffering believers to outer darkness where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth for a thousand years. Hodges teaches that all believers are "heirs of God," but that only suffering, victorious, overcoming believers are "joint heirs with Christ." But this is not what the text of Romans 8:16-17 actually says. Romans 8:16 teaches that we are the children (*tekna*) of God (and certainly this is true of all believers--John 1:12). Romans 8:17 teaches that if we are **children** (and we are!) then we are also **heirs**. As God's children, what kind of heirs are we? We are heirs in two ways: 1) We are **heirs of God**; 2) We are **joint-heirs of Christ** (see Heb. 1:2 where we learn that Christ is the great Heir).

In his excellent *Greek Grammar Beyond the Basics*, Daniel B. Wallace translates Romans 8:17 as follows: "Now if we are children, [we are] also heirs: on the one hand, heirs of God, on the other hand, fellow heirs with Christ" (p. 129).

"If so be" (**eiper**) means "if so be that." It is used six times in the New Testament. It is used by Paul in Romans in only one other place, also in this same chapter: **Romans 8:9**--"But ye are not in the flesh but in the Spirit **if so be that** the Spirit of God dwell in you." Paul makes a statement that is true of

every believer ("you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit") and then he follows this with another statement that is true of every believer ("the Spirit of God dwell(s) in you"). Paul was saying something like this: "You are a true Christian (not in the flesh but in the Spirit) because I'm assuming that the Spirit of God dwells in you."

Let's follow the same pattern in Romans 8:17. Paul makes a statement that is true of every believer ("you are heirs--heirs of God and joint-heirs of Christ") and then he follows this with another statement that is true of every believer (a true believer suffers with Christ--John 15:18-21; 1 Pet. 5:10; Phil. 1:29; etc.). Paul was saying something like this: "You are true Christians (heirs of God and joint-heirs with Christ) because I'm assuming that He is IN YOU, and if He is in you, then the world who hated Him is going to hate you because you have been so identified with Him (Col. 1:24; John 16:33). Every true believer, therefore, suffers with Him. That is, those who **share His glory then** are those who **share His sufferings now** (see 1 Peter 5:10 where Peter gives no indication whatsoever that he is talking about some elite group of suffering believers as opposed to carnal, non-suffering believers; nor does Paul in Philipians 1:29).

Another similar example of "if so be that" is found in 1 Peter 2:2-3. Here we find a similar pattern. Peter gives a command to every saved babe in Christ: "Desire the pure milk of the word." He follows this with another statement that is true of every believer: "you have tasted that the Lord is gracious." Peter was saying something like this: "You are true Christians (true babes in Christ) and you ought to desire the pure milk of the Word because I'm assuming that you have tasted that the Lord is gracious (and every believer has so tasted!). If you have truly tasted of the Lord's grace, then you are going to desire more and more and more!

When Christ was in the world, He was under constant attack from the world and from the devil. Today Christ is in His believers who are in the world, and He, in them, continues to be under constant attack. The result of this is that we share in Christ's sufferings. Paul, in writing to the sometimes very carnal Corinthians, said to them, "For as the sufferings of Christ abound in us" (2 Cor. 1:5 and compare 2 Cor. 4:16-18). In Romans 8:18 Paul speaks of "the sufferings of the present time" and what Spirit-indwelt believer is exempt from such?

Finally, Peter tells all believers to expect "fiery trial" and difficult testing, and to rejoice in it, "inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings, that, when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy" (1 Peter 4:12-13). There is not even a hint here that Peter is addressing these words to some elite group of suffering believers in contrast to other believers who are unwilling to suffer for Christ. Peter was talking about the sufferings that all believers share in and partake of.

It is certainly true that some believers suffer more than others. Likewise some believers are more faithful in serving the Lord than others. Some believers share the gospel more effectively than others. Some believers walk in the Spirit more than others. No one would doubt that there are different levels of faithfulness

displayed by God's children, and that many will suffer loss at the judgment seat of Christ. And yet we must not say that some believers are exempt from the sufferings of Christ of which we are all partakers. Christ walked down the road of suffering, and we who follow Him must do the same. Suffering is not optional for the child of God in this Christ-hating, Christ-rejecting world. God's children in this world are marked by suffering (compare Hebrews 11:36-38 where this same principle is illustrated by O.T. saints).

There is indeed the condition of suffering with Him in order that we may be glorified together; but this He makes good in all that are His.... all suffer with Him, who have the divine nature, even Himself as their life, in an evil world, which constantly wounds and tries those who have that nature.... This suffering [together] flows from possessing life in Him whilst passing through a scene where all is opposed to Him.... Hence, if this place of suffering in the world as it now is be a necessary consequence of divine life surrounded by all that is working out its way of misery, estrangement, and rebellion against Him, it is an immense privilege to suffer with Christ, cheered along the road by the prospect of sharing His glory." – William Kelly (*Notes on the Epistle of the Romans*, p.142-144).

Just as the writer of Hebrews teaches that those who are without chastisement are bastards (illegitimate children) and not sons (Hebrews 12:8), so Peter (1 Peter 4:12-13) and Paul (Romans 8:16-18; 2 Cor. 1:5; Phil. 1:29) would say the same: **But if ye be without suffering, of which all are partakers** (1 Pet. 4:13; 2 Cor. 1:5), **then are ye bastards and not sons**. But rejoice insomuch as you are sons and you are children and you are heirs of God and you are joint heirs with Christ (Romans 8:16-17)! You share in **His cross** and you will share in **His crown**.

Romans 8:18--SEEING OUR PRESENT SUFFERINGS IN LIGHT OF ETERNITY

Paul is here speaking of the present suffering which believers experience in their walk through time and he contrasts this with the glory that believers will experience in the future, when we are with the Lord. "**Reckon**"--this is a mathematical term meaning "I calculate, I count on this fact as being true, I know it to be a fact!" God wants us to believe this fact and count on it, being convinced it is true. The sufferings of this "now" time are not worthy of the glory that shall be revealed unto us. The word "worthy" is a weighing term and refers to scales being equal or balanced. When something is "worthy" of something else it means that they weigh the same. We are here told that the sufferings are NOT WORTHY of the glory, that is, we have a very unbalanced condition. The glory far outweighs the sufferings. You might say it this way: On the one side of the scale you have a very insignificant particle of dust which represents the sufferings of this present time. On the other side of the scale you have a huge piece of gold weighing ten tons which represents the future glory. There is no comparison! In 2 Corinthians 4:17 we have the same truth set forth. The present sufferings and afflictions are very "light" and "temporary". The glory is extremely HEAVY and ETERNAL. Of course, when we personally pass through times of suffering and trials, they seem very, very heavy to us and very, very long (as if they will never end). But this is from our very limited viewpoint. From the viewpoint of eternity the trials and suffering we endure in this life is very light.

Did Paul know what suffering was all about? In Romans 8:18 and in 2 Corinthians 4:17 Paul is telling us that his present sufferings are very "light" when compared to his future glory. We are amazed then when we read about the sufferings that Paul actually experienced in 2 Corinthians 11:23-28 (and compare Acts 9:16). Indeed, most of us would have to say this: "My sufferings are **not worthy** to be compared with those of the Apostle Paul!" But Paul knew that even his sufferings were not worthy to be compared with the future glory that would be his as a joint-heir with Christ.

ALL WILL BE WELL!

by MARY PETERS

**Though we pass through tribulation; All will be well;
Ours is such a full salvation, All, all is well;
Happy still in God confiding; Fruitful, if in Christ abiding;
Holy, thro' the Spirit's guiding, All must be well.**

**We expect a bright tomorrow; All will be well;
Faith can sing thro' days of sorrow, All, all is well.
On our Father's love relying, Jesus every need supplying;
Or in living, or in dying All must be well.**

Romans 8:19

This verse and the verses to follow are speaking about God's creation, both animate (animals, plants) and inanimate (rocks, hills, etc.). We could use the term "nature." Nature is here personified in an interesting way. Nature, or the creature is eagerly expecting something, eagerly waiting for something. The beasts and the birds, the rocks and the rivers--they are all saying, "I can't wait for this to happen!" God's creation is under the terrible curse and bondage of sin. Evidences that we live in a sin-cursed, chaotic world abound (animals attacking animals, animals eating animals, violent storms, tornadoes, hurricanes, floods, etc.). Such has not always been the case. Prior to the fall of man God's creation was in peaceful harmony (Genesis 1-2). At a future time this harmony will once again be restored (see Isaiah 11:6-9). Creation will be delivered from the curse and this will take place at the "manifestation (revelation, unveiling) of the sons of God." When the Lord Jesus Christ is revealed at His second coming (2 Thess. 1:7) it is then that the "sons of God" will be revealed with Him (see Rev. 19:14 and compare Rev. 19:7-8).

Romans 8:20

"Vanity" = emptiness, frustration, disappointment. Creation (nature) became subject to vanity after man's fall into sin when God cursed the earth. The whole universe felt the effects of Adam's sin.

"Not willingly"-the world of nature did not choose to be under this curse. The animals did not hold a convention and all decide that they would voluntarily place themselves under a divine curse. It was Adam who made the choice and God who brought the curse. "Him" refers to God who pronounced the curse and subjected the earth. It does not refer to Adam. But even though all nature has been brought to this state of vanity, there is hope! The future brings a promise of hope. The curse will not last forever.

Romans 8:21

Here is the promise of hope! Nature will be delivered and set free. **Bondage**=slavery. Today nature is bound in a state of corruption--it is subject to decay, disease, death, destruction (compare the second law of thermodynamics which science can observe but only the Bible can explain). It's interesting that the condition and state of man is reflected in nature. When man is under the curse, nature reflects this. When redeemed men are finally delivered, nature will reflect this.

Romans 8:22

Romans 8:22

"The whole creation=all of nature. "Groans" = utters a deep moan indicative of pain and suffering. Once again nature is personified. It is here depicted as a mother going through the pains of childbirth. A mother in travail has hope. She knows that there will be a birth and the suffering will not continue forever. After the sorrow and pain comes the joy of a new existence. So also the world of nature has the promise of liberty and a new existence to be fulfilled in the millennium reign of Christ and ultimately in the new heavens and new earth.

Romans 8:23

God's creation (nature) is not the only one groaning. Believers are groaning also. We too are eagerly awaiting a future event. This event is called "the adoption" and here refers to future adoption when our sonship will be fully realized. The "adoption" is here described as "the redemption of our body." This is the final and future redemption which will be fulfilled when Christ comes for His church. There is a present aspect of redemption noted in such verses as Ephesians 1:7; Colossian 1:14; 1 Corinthians 1:30; 1 Peter 1:18-19, but there is also a future aspect of redemption (when our salvation will be completed) as set forth in Ephesians 1:14 and 4:30 and also here in Romans 8:23. Likewise there is an aspect of adoption which is true of believers now (Rom.8:15) and there is also a future aspect of adoption which awaits future fulfillment (Rom.8:23). The "firstfruits" is the earnest or guarantee that our salvation will be completed, and here the "firstfruits" is none other than the Person and Presence of God the Holy Spirit in the life of the believer. What does firstfruits mean? When you pick the first tomatoes from your garden, this is an indication that there are many more to come. Many more tomatoes will follow. Many more blessings from the garden will be enjoyed. The moment a person trusts Christ he receives the Holy Spirit who Himself is the ERNEST (down payment, guarantee--Eph. 1:13-14) that there is much more to follow (a new body, an eternal inheritance, a home in heaven, future glorification-v.18, etc.).

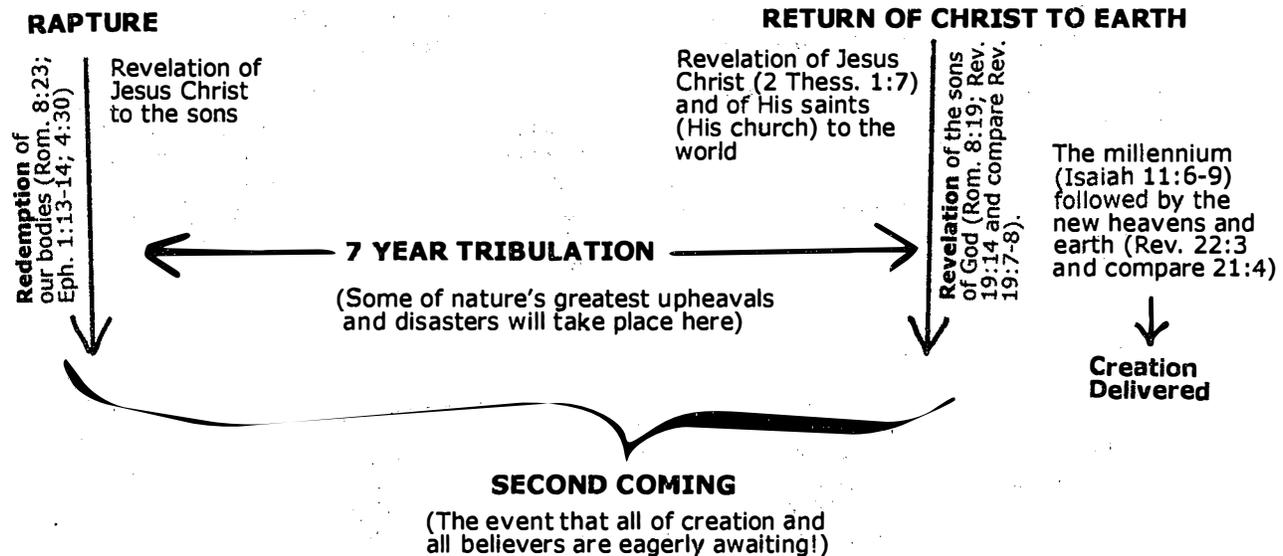
Romans 8:24-25

"For we have been saved in hope" (William Kelly's translation). When we were saved we were not saved in the final and complete sense of that word. We are still in these unredeemed bodies, we still struggle with sin and temptation and we groan and eagerly await that day when we shall be delivered from even the very presence of sin. The saved person has that **confident expectancy (hope)** that his salvation will someday be completed (see Philippians 1:6--God will complete and finish what He has begun). When the farmer picks his firstfruits this does not mean that he has finished harvesting the whole crop. No, he has just begun, but he has the hope and the promise that some day the entire crop will come in. But he must wait for it!

The word hope as most often used in the New Testament does not carry with it the idea of doubt or uncertainty (as the English word often does in common usage). Rather it speaks of a **CERTAIN EXPECTANCY** and can be translated this way. Hope is something in the future which has not been realized or received as yet, but it is absolutely certain because God has promised it. An example of this would be the hope of the Lord's coming (compare Titus2:13--"the blessed hope" or **HAPPY EXPECTATION**). The only thing uncertain about it is the **TIME** (we know not when) but the fact of it is certain because we have the Lord's promise (John 14:3; etc.). It's a future hope which has not been fulfilled as yet and we are eagerly expecting and looking for Him to come. Because it is certain that God's promise will be fulfilled, we can patiently await its fulfillment. Just as the expectant mother can patiently bare the pains and sorrow of childbirth because the hope of a birth is her expectancy, so also the believer can patiently abide under the difficult trials of life knowing that our future is as bright as the promises of God (compare 1 Thess.1:3--"patience of hope").

Summary and chart of Romans 8:19-25

Creation (all of nature) is eagerly awaiting the revelation of the sons of God (v.19). The sons of God are eagerly awaiting the redemption of the body (v.23). Both of these events are connected with the second coming of Christ. If the second coming of Christ is viewed as one general event, then these two aspects can be seen together. The following distinctions can be made:



Note: The rapture is a revelation (1 Cor.1:7; 1 Pet. 1:7; 1:13; 4:13) but it is not the sons (believers) being revealed to the world but rather Christ in all His glory being revealed to the sons.

Romans 8:26-27

Note the **three groanings** in this chapter:

- Verse 22--all of creation groans
- Verse 23--all believers groan
- Verse 26--God the Holy Spirit groans.

"**Infirmities**" = weaknesses, being without strength (pointing to our frailty and feebleness). "**Itself**" = should be translated "Himself" (the Holy Spirit is a Person, the blessed Third Person of the Trinity). The strong believer is the one who recognizes how weak he really is (2 Cor.12:10). Even in prayer (which is a coming to God the Father in complete dependence) we need to know our weakness (we don't know how to pray and we don't know what to pray). But in the middle of our weakness we have a great HELPER, even, God the Holy Spirit (compare the word "Comforter," which means One called alongside to help, a Helper). The Holy Spirit is our Helper in prayer. "What a Friend We Have in Jesus!" What a friend we have in the Holy Spirit!

Illustration from Church History: Saint Augustine had been a very wicked man in his youth, but later was converted. His godly mother, Monica, had a heavy burden for her son. She learned that he was leaving home and going to Italy, so she prayed that God would not let him go there because she feared he would only get into worse and deeper sin. She did not know how to pray as she ought. God did not answer her prayer as she wanted. God allowed Augustine to go to Italy and it was there that he was gloriously converted. God did not answer her special request in order that He might answer her true heart request, the salvation of her son.

God the Holy Spirit takes our feeble and frail and faulty prayer requests and brings them before God the Father, translating them into that which is acceptable to God and in harmony with God's will. There is an awesome communication between God the Holy Spirit and God the Father which we are told about here but which we little understand (yet how thankful we should be for it!) We don't know how to pray...so He prays for us! HE KNOWS HOW TO PRAY!

The intercession of the Holy Spirit is a little recognized and little appreciated work of God. Notice that in this same chapter mention is made of the intercession of the Son of God (v.34). The Spirit intercedes for the saints (v.27) and so does Christ (v.34). Both pray and plead on our behalf, but in different ways. Both plead to God the Father for us! Both ministries are essential

The "groanings which cannot be uttered (inexpressible groanings)" is a reference to that blessed communication between God the Spirit and God the Father. This is not a reference to the gift of tongues (the gift of tongues is mentioned in only one of Paul's epistles, 1 Corinthians, and even there it is dealt with because it was such a problem). The reasons that this does not refer to the gift of tongues are as follows:

1. It is the Spirit doing the groaning, not the believer.
2. If you were to describe tongues in terms of groanings you would have to say that the gift of tongues consists of groanings which can be uttered (compare the expression "ecstatic UTTERANCES" which is often used to describe the modern charismatic phenonema). Here we have groanings which cannot be uttered by any human tongue.
3. The gift of tongues was something that could be heard (though not understood) by men. These groanings are heard only by God the Father.
4. The gift of tongues was a grace-gift (Greek term "charisma") given to only some believers, not all (1 Cor. 12:29-30). In contrast to this, the intercessory ministry of the Spirit is for all saints.

See our detailed study entitled, [God's Gift of Tongues](#).

Romans 8:28

Notice the heart-warming contrast: Verse 26-"**we know not**"; Verse 27-"**we know**." We don't know how to pray as we ought, but our God knows what He is doing and we are confident that He will work all things together for His glory and for the good of His children. Verse 28 is one of the most comforting verses in the Bible for the person who loves God (the true believer). The comforting truth of this verse is based especially on one attribute of God--HIS SOVEREIGNTY. If all things work together for good (all events, all circumstances, all trials, all happenings, etc.), then it follows that God must be over and must control all things. This is not fearful fatalism and determinism. This is the wonderful fact that an ALL-WISE, ALL-LOVING, JUST GOD is in complete control of all things!

God's sovereign working is declared in Ephesians 1:11 and implied in Ephesians 5:20 (we can give thanks for all things, not because all things are good but because our trust is in a sovereign God who works all things together for His glory and our good). Romans 8:28 is a statement of fact that we need to KNOW and count on, but this wonderful truth cannot be claimed by everyone. It is only for "them that love God" which is a description of those who are true believers (see 1 Cor.2:9; 8:3). We love Him because He first loved us (1 John 4:19). Paul is not speaking here of a special class of believers who love God in contrast to other believers who do not love God. While it is certainly true that some believers love the Saviour more than others, and demonstrate this by their faithful obedience to His Word, yet it is also true that there is a sense in which all believers love Christ. Love for Christ is demonstrated by obedience to His Word (John 14:21-24), and those who refuse to keep His commandments are liars if they claim to know Christ (1 John 2:3-5 and compare John 17:3). As God's children, our lives should be characterized by obedience (1 Peter 1:14). We obey because we love our Heavenly Father. How can we do anything less?

Those who do not love Him are unsaved and under God's curse (1 Cor. 16:22). If a person says, "I don't love Christ, no, not at all," then how could such a person possibly claim to be a believer in Him? On the other hand, there are those who claim to love God, but by their actions prove that they don't really love Him at all (1 John 4:20). In Romans 8:28 Paul is not speaking of a special group of Christians who love God in contrast to other saved people who do not love God. The ones who love God (v.28) are identified as the called ones (v.28), and the ones who are CALLED are identified as the ones who have been foreknown, predestinated, justified and glorified (verses 29-30). These are facts that are true of each and every believer. That there should be some believers who have not been foreknown, predestinated, called, justified and glorified is unthinkable.

The verse does not say that "all things are good" but "all things work together for good." **Cake illustration:** There

are many ingredients that go in to making a cake, and many of these if taken by themselves are not good tasting (not everyone enjoys eating raw eggs, or flour or shortening, etc.) but if you put all of the ingredients together they all work together to make a great tasting cake (the end product). So God takes both the bitter and sweet, the hard and easy, the bad and the good, and works them all together for good.

The truth of Romans 8:28 is so important that God has set apart nine chapters in the book of Genesis (the Joseph account) to illustrate it. Some very terrible and evil things happened to Joseph--his brothers hated him, tried to kill him, sold him into slavery, etc. (Genesis 37) and later Joseph was falsely accused by a wicked woman and thrown into prison (Genesis 39). But God had a plan and purpose for Joseph, a man who loved God. Joseph's father did not understand the truth of Romans 8:28 (see Genesis 42:36--"all these things are against me") but Joseph did (see **Genesis 50:20** and see also Genesis 45:5,7 "God sent me"). The terrible things that happened to Joseph were actually used by God to be the means by which he would save the children of Israel from famine and death.

Perhaps the greatest illustration of Romans 8:28 is found in the life of Christ Himself. Many terrible and evil things were done to the innocent, sinless Son of God. He was denied, betrayed, falsely accused, wrongly tried, found guilty though innocent, scourged, beaten, mocked, spit upon, and finally CRUCIFIED. Could any good come out of this? Indeed, THE GREATEST GOOD OF ALL, even the salvation of man! The crucifixion of Christ worked together for the **provisional** salvation of all men (1 Timothy 4:10--His death provided salvation for all) and the **actual** salvation of all those who trust Him and Him only for the saving of their soul (1 Timothy 4:10--"especially those who believe"). Yes, even in the most sinful deed ever carried out by men, God had a purpose and a plan that He was accomplishing. This is seen in the following passages: Acts 2:23; 3:13-18; 4:26-28 and compare Luke 22:22 (in these verses note the delicate balance between man's responsibility and God's sovereignty--men carried out their wicked deeds and were fully accountable for what they did, but God used what they did to carry out His plan for the salvation of men!). See **God's Sovereignty and Man's Responsibility**

"To them who are the called according to His purpose"--God has a purpose, plan and design for those who are true believers (and the next two verses explain what this purpose is). God's purpose will not fail. God has a design for each believer and this design will be carried out according to God's unfailing plan. God's purpose will never fail (see Romans 9:11; Isaiah 14:27; 46:10-11.) The plan of God will never be thwarted!

Romans 8:29-30 -- God's plan for every true believer!

Notice the series here: 1) foreknowledge 2) predestination 3) calling 4) justification 5) glorification. It's helpful here to think of a chain containing five very strong links. We could call this GOD'S SALVATION CHAIN, beginning with foreknowledge and ending with glorification. This chain extends from eternity past to eternity future. No link on this chain can ever be broken (as we shall see). The believer is eternally secure!

Notice in these verses that the emphasis is on the work of God--"He did foreknow, ...He did predestinate, etc." It is all the work of God, not man. God foreknew the believer, God predestinated him, God called him, God justified him and God glorified him! This is what God did! Salvation is of the Lord (compare Jonah 2:9). Salvation begins and ends with God. God gets all of the credit and all of the glory for our salvation (1 Cor.1:29,31). Man cannot boast (Eph.2:8-9) and say, "Look what I have done!" No, salvation is "OF GOD" (1 Cor.1:30; John 1:13). We don't thank ourselves, but we say, "THANK YOU LORD FOR SAVING MY SOUL!" God does all the saving. This does not take away man's responsibility. Man must do the believing (John 3:16-18; Acts 16:31) and man is blamed for not doing so (2 Thess.2:10-12; John 5:40; compare Matthew 23:37), but God and God alone must do the saving. God does it all according to His wonderful grace and His sovereign purpose (see 2 Timothy 1:9 and compare 2 Thess.2:13-14; Eph.1:3-14).

Now let's take a look at the different links of God's salvation chain:

1) CHAIN LINK #1-- "WHOM HE DID FOREKNOW"

The pronoun "WHOM" refers back to the same group mentioned in verse 28--"them that love God, who are the called according to His purpose." He is referring to true believers. It is this group that God did foreknow. The

word "foreknow" simply means "to know beforehand." In eternity past, before the world ever was, God knew His true believers (compare 2 Timothy 2:19--"The Lord knoweth them that are His").

Note carefully what the verse says and what the verse does not say. It says "**WHOM** He did foreknow"; it does not say "**WHAT** He did foreknow." It says GOD FOREKNEW YOU. It does not say God foreknew what you would do. Many people understand foreknowledge in this sense: In eternity past God, who knows all things, knew which people would believe on His Son and which people would not believe. This certainly is true and is taught in the Word of God (see John 6:64 and see verses 70-71), but this is not what Romans 8:29 is teaching. This verse is not talking about God knowing in advance that you would believe. It is talking about God knowing in advance YOU! God foreknew you! It is PERSONS who are foreknown according to this verse. It also doesn't say that God foreknew everybody (even though God certainly knew about everybody in advance). But this verse teaches that God foreknew those who are the called according to His purpose (which excludes all those who persist in their unbelief and who are thus never saved). What does this mean?

Other passages in the Bible shed light on God's foreknowledge. Consider Amos 3:2--"You (the children of Israel v.1) only **have I known** of all the families of the earth." What does this mean? Certainly God knew all about the Egyptians and the other nations as well. It must mean more than merely knowing about them. God knew all about every nation and every person on earth. But God entered into a special relationship with Israel that was not true of the other nations: "The LORD thy God hath chosen thee to be a special people unto Himself, above all people that are upon the face of the earth. The LORD...set His love upon you" (Deut. 7:6-7).

Matthew 7:23 is also instructive. The Lord Jesus will say to some: "I never knew you!" As God He knew all about them, but what He is saying is this: "I never had a personal relationship with you. You never really belonged to Me. You are not Mine!" Thus to be "known of God" (see 1 Cor. 8:3) means that you have a personal relationship with Him, you really belong to Him and you are HIS! Compare John 10:14--"I know My sheep!" It's a wonderful thing to be "known of God," loved by God (John 13:1) and "chosen in Him before the foundation of the world" (Ephesians 1:4).

Before I ever knew God (John 17:3), HE KNEW ME (compare Matthew 25:34). We should never forget that God is **THE GREAT INITIATOR** when it comes to salvation. I love Him because He first loved me (1 John 4:19). I sought Him because He first sought me (Luke 19:10). I chose Him because He first chose me (John 15:16). I came to Him because He first drew me (John 6:44,65). I saw and understood because He first gave me sight (Matthew 16:16-17; Acts 16:14). As the Hymn says,

**Before I loved Him, He loved me
Before I found Him, He found me
Before I sought Him, He sought for me
Yes, Jesus cares for me**

-- Ron Hamilton

Yes, long before the creation of the universe, I EXISTED! I existed in the mind and purpose and plan of God. He knew me! Compare Jeremiah 1:5.

2) CHAIN LINK #2-- "HE ALSO DID PREDESTINATE"

Not only did God foreknow the true believer, He also did predestinate him to be conformed to the image of His Son! (Rom. 8:29). The word "predestination" scares many people. Actually it's a wonderful doctrine which should bring much comfort and encouragement and thankfulness to every believing heart. The word is made up of two words: **PRO**=before; **HORIZO**=boundary or limit (from which we get the English word "HORIZON," which is God's boundary between earth and heaven). Hence, to predestinate means "to mark out beforehand the limits or boundaries; to predetermine the boundaries of something." When used of a person, as in this verse, it means "to predetermine the destiny or the future of that person." Thus predestination simply means that GOD

HAS MARKED OUT A GLORIOUS FUTURE FOR THOSE WHO LOVE HIM, namely, to be conformed to the image of His Son! (to be like Christ).

Woodchuck illustration: In the summer of 1978 a ground hog (woodchuck) went into a drain pipe by the church building. We put a rock in front of the opening of the pipe so it was trapped. We wanted to catch the woodchuck so we had a plan! We wanted the woodchuck to end up in a box so that we could carry him off away from the church property and, away from the children. Thus we rigged up a cardboard tube, connected it to the opening of the drain pipe and connected the other end to the cardboard box. The boundaries were all marked out. We had a future marked out for that woodchuck and all we had to do was wait. He was predestinated to be dropped into the cardboard box, and this is what happened and it all worked together for his good, though the woodchuck did not think so at the time (better to be carried away to a new home than shot as an unwanted varmint!). God has a plan and purpose for those who belong to Him and our future is already marked out and determined in advance. It's a good future! It's a glorious future!

USAGE OF THE WORD "PREDESTINATION"

1. **Acts 4:28**--"determined before" (see the preceding verses in the context of Acts 4:28). What these men did ended up to be exactly what God had planned and purposed and pre-determined! Little did they realize that when they were crucifying Christ they were fulfilling God's eternal purpose. Compare Acts 2:23 (the word "determinate" is the word for predestination only without the prefix which means "before"). Man is guilty and responsible for his wicked deeds but God's purpose is fulfilled. Compare Luke 22:22--"determined"--it had already been marked out and determined in God's plan that His Son should go to the cross and be betrayed into the hands of sinful men, YET JUDAS WAS FULLY RESPONSIBLE FOR HIS WICKED DEED! God's WOE is upon him! In Acts 4:27-28 we see that the deed performed by the enemies of Christ fell within the boundaries and limits of God's perfect plan which centered in the crucifixion of Christ. In eternity past God determined that Jesus Christ would die on the cross for the salvation of sinful men and this plan was fulfilled to the letter. God used the evil acts of sinful men to accomplish His purpose.
2. **1 Corinthians 2:7**--before the world (ages) God ordained the wisdom of God unto our glory. The "wisdom of God" as defined in this context refers to CHRIST CRUCIFIED (see 1 Cor.1:23-24; 2:2; 2:8). Thus we can substitute this meaning: "before the ages God ordained Christ crucified for our glory." In eternity past God in His infinite wisdom determined that Christ would be crucified resulting in the believer's glory. Hence, 1) God's eternal plan is according to His wisdom; 2) God's eternal plan centers in the cross-work of His Son; 3) God's eternal plan is unalterable--it was determined in eternity past ("before the ages"); 4) God's eternal plan involves the glorification of believers ("unto our glory"). Compare Romans 8:30--"them also he glorified."
3. **Ephesians 1:4-5**. God has marked out a glorious future for the believer. Our glorious future is described by the word "ADOPTION" (we studied this in Romans 8:23). Believers will have all the rights and privileges and benefits and blessings and inheritance which come from being placed as God's sons!) Compare Ephesians 1:11-12.
4. **Romans 8:29**--our future destiny is guaranteed: "to be conformed to the image of His Son." The PROCESS is taking place each day (2 Cor.3:18), but the full realization of this awaits future fulfillment (1 John 3:1-4). WE SHALL BE LIKE HIM! That is the goal of the Christian life. Predestination is the guarantee that this goal will be reached! God will get me to where I need to be! "Then we shall be where we would be, then we shall be what we should be; things that are not now, nor could be, soon shall be our own." This truly is the wisdom of God--we who so perfectly reflected Adam (in his fallen, sinful state), will someday perfectly reflect Christ!

Note: The word "predestination" is never used in the Bible in the following ways: 1) God has predestined certain people to believe on Christ; 2) God has predestined certain people to hell.

In Romans 8:29 the word "firstborn" refers to Christ and it means "the one highest in rank or position." Christ is the Supreme Son, the preeminent One (compare John 3:16--"the only begotten" or the UNIQUE, one of a kind, SON). Christ stands as Head and Chief among and over that countless multitude who through Him are made the sons of God. Christ is THE SON, but He will bring "many sons unto glory" (Heb. 2:10).

3) CHAIN LINK #3--"THEM HE ALSO CALLED"

The next link in the chain of God's eternal purpose: CALLED! We saw this in verse 28-"the called according to His purpose." Who are the CALLED ONES? Not all men, because in verse 28 they are said to be those who "love God" (true believers, those who belong to God, those who have been foreknown, etc.). Of course, there is a general sense in which ALL MEN are called unto salvation and all men are invited to come to Christ. This universal, general call or invitation to salvation is seen in passages such as Romans 10:9-13; Matthew 11:28; John 3:16; John 7:37-38; Rev. 22:17; etc. But there is a special sense in which God only calls those who truly respond to the general gospel call (those who come to Christ and truly belong to Him). Thus in a passage such as 1 Corinthians 1:24-27 the expression "the called" refers to God's chosen ones, those who are truly saved. Not many are called (1 Cor.1:26) but some are. See 2 Timothy 1:9; 1 Peter 1:15; 2:9; 5:10; 2 Pet. 1:3; 1:10; Rev. 17:14 "called, chosen, and faithful". Notice that all of these verses are talking about true believers, not all men in general. God has called us unto HIMSELF (1 Cor.1:9) that we might belong to Him. As the hymnwriter has put it, *"He called me long before I heard, before my sinful heart was stirred, But when I took Him at His word, forgiven He lifted me!"* (Charles Gabriel).

4) CHAIN LINK #4-- "THEM HE ALSO JUSTIFIED"

God has declared me righteous in His righteous Son. We have studied the doctrine of justification in detail previously in the book of Romans (see Romans 3:24-5:1). See also Acts 13:39.

5) CHAIN LINK #5--"THEM ALSO HE GLORIFIED."

The glorification of the believer is a future event. It has not happened yet (see discussion under Romans 8:17-18). We are not in heaven yet! Our salvation is not complete yet! We are not "LIKE CHRIST" yet as we shall be. We do not have our new glorified bodies yet. We are not sinless yet! But in this verse God say, YES YOU ARE! I HAVE GLORIFIED YOU! IT'S DONE! The past tense is used! From the believer's point of view it has not yet happened. But in the mind and purpose of God, it is already done! It has already happened! This glorification is a future event so certain that it is written in the past tense as if it has already happened. It is a done deal, even though from our perspective it has not yet happened.

Let's review and re-state these five links of the chain:

1. **FOREKNOWLEDGE**--Before the world ever was God knew me and God knew that I would belong to Him. This involves a special, loving relationship.
2. **PREDESTINATION**--In eternity past God marked out a wonderful future for me, that I should be like His Son.
3. **CALLING**--God brought me to Himself in a wonderful way, out of my darkness, into His marvelous light.
4. **JUSTIFICATION**--God declared me to be perfectly righteous in His righteous Son, based upon the cross-work of the Lord Jesus Christ.
5. **GLORIFICATION**--God will complete my salvation and in the mind and plan of God, it is as good as done!

We should note that these five things are true of every believer. You can't have just one of these five things. It's impossible for a person to be foreknown but not justified. It's impossible for a person to be justified but not glorified (hence, it's impossible for a person to lose his salvation!) It's impossible for a person to be called and not justified: "whom he called, them he also justified." Can only three of the five be true of a person? No, they all must be true. It's either all or none! A person is either saved or not, and *if saved, then all five of these things are true*. We should also note that NONE OF THESE THINGS are true of those who never become believers. Judas was never foreknown, predestinated, called, justified or glorified.

Note: We should be careful of a popular gospel tract which begins: "God loves you and has a wonderful plan for your life." That which God has for those who reject His Son is not wonderful (see John 3:18; 3:36; 2 Thess.1:8-9 etc.). God's wonderful plan is for those who love God, for those who are the called according to His purpose (Rom.8:28). Once a person gives good evidence of saving faith, then we can encourage him to claim the wonderful truths found in Romans 8:28-30, but we should never carelessly apply such passages to those who may not be saved at all. In fact, all of the great truths of Romans chapter 8 are only for those who are truly "IN CHRIST" (Romans 8:1). On the other hand, we must never forget that God desires all men to be saved and to come to the full knowledge of the truth (1 Tim. 3:3-4).

Romans 8:31

What can we say then to these things? If God has done all of this (Rom.8:28-30), then what can I say? Let's begin by simply and unceasingly saying, "THANK YOU LORD!" If God be for us (on our side), who can be against us? The obvious answer: NO ONE! Many people can be against us and believers can have many enemies, but if God is for us, it doesn't matter who is against us! It's God and me against anyone! God with the believer is a majority anytime, anywhere! See Psalm 118:6 and Hebrews 13:6. The following verses show how God is FOR US. In verse 32 we see how He died FOR US and in verse 34 we see how He lives FOR US!

Romans 8:32

We are reminded of the account in Genesis 22 when Abraham spared his son at the last moment. In contrast to this God did not spare His beloved Son. The story is told of a man who worked on a drawbridge. The bridge would be drawn so the ships could pass underneath and the bridge would be put back in place so the trains could safely pass across the river. One day just before a train was scheduled to arrive the man noticed that his son was playing around the huge gears and his clothing had actually become caught in the gears. The man must quickly make a choice: 1) I can save my son which will mean that scores of people will plunge to their death as the train falls into the river below; or 2) I can save the train which will mean that my son will be mauled and crushed and killed in the huge gears. Out of love for the people on the train the man decided to sacrifice his son whom he greatly loved. This is just a human illustration but perhaps in a very small way helps us to appreciate what God did for us in "not sparing His Son."

Who was really responsible for putting Christ on the cross? Notice the word "delivered" in Romans 8:32. This word means "delivered over, handed over." It is sometimes translated "betrayed" (given over). Note the following usages of this word:

In Matthew 20:18 Judas delivers Christ over to the Jewish leaders.
 In Matthew 20:19 the Jewish leaders deliver Christ over to the Romans.
 In Matthew 27:2 the Jewish leaders deliver Christ over to Pilate, the governor.
 In Matthew 27:3 Judas delivers Christ over to the Jewish leaders (same idea as in Matt. 20:18).

Who then was responsible for putting Christ on the cross? Judas betrayed Him. The Jewish leaders condemned Him and delivered Him to the Romans. Pilate gave Him over to the Roman soldiers. The Roman soldiers nailed Him to the cross. THEY ALL HAD A PART, but ultimately and finally it was **GOD HIMSELF** who delivered

Him over: It was God who "**DELIVERED HIM UP FOR US ALL**" (Romans 8:32). It was God who "**GAVE HIS ONLY BEGOTTEN SON**" (John 3:16) to die on the cross. "It pleased the Lord to **BRUISE HIM**" (Isaiah 53:10). Why did God do this? **IT WAS FOR US!** It was for our sins that He suffered and bled and died! He "**WAS DELIVERED FOR OUR OFFENCES**" (Rom.4:25). Each one of us was responsible for the death of Christ because He died in our place as our Substitute. He was paid the wages that we earned (Romans 6:23). He died the death that was due unto us!

The argument of verse 32 should thrill every believer's heart: If God delivered up His Son for us, will He not **WITH HIM** freely give us all things? If God gave us the most costly gift of all, will He not give us less costly gifts? The One who has given the greater gift certainly will not withhold the lesser gifts. If God has given us His most precious possession, will he not give us the lesser things that we need? If a father spends hundreds of dollars constructing a full length basketball court in the back yard for his son, will he not also give his son a basketball? God has given us His best! God has given us His Son! If we have Christ we have all that we need (Heb. 13:5).

Romans 8:33

Who shall bring an accusation against God's elect? God's elect are those described in Romans 8:29-30. They are God's chosen ones, those who have been called according to God's purpose in Christ. God has justified you! You have been tried in the highest court in the universe and found **NOT GUILTY!** Your case has been settled in the supreme court of the universe, and there is no higher court that can condemn you. If God the righteous Judge has justified you, then what greater judge can condemn you? If the Judge of all the earth is **ON OUR SIDE**, then we have absolutely nothing to fear.

Romans 8:34

Who will condemn me? Certainly not Christ because He died for me! My condemnation fell upon Him (Rom. 8:3)! He not only died for me but He lives for me. Satan may accuse me and his accusations against me may even be true, but the Lord Jesus Christ lives to make intercession for me (to plead and pray for me). See these important passages: 1 John 2:1-2; Hebrews 7:25; 9:24. See the words of Charles Wesley's hymn **ARISE, MY SOUL, ARISE!**

MY ADVOCATE

I sinned. And straightway, post-haste, Satan flew
 Before the presence of the Most High God,
 And made a the railing accusation there.
 He said, "This soul, this thing of clay and sod,
 Has sinned. 'Tis true that he has named Thy name,
 But I demand death, for Thou hast said,
 'The soul that sinneth, it shall die.' Shall not
 Thy sentence be fulfilled? Is justice dead?
 Send now this wretched sinner to his doom.
 What other thing can righteous ruler do?"

And thus he did accuse me day and night,
 And every word he spoke, O God, was true!

Then quickly One rose up from God's right hand,
 Before whose glory angels veiled their eyes.

He spoke, "Each jot and tittle of the law
Must be fulfilled: the guilty sinner dies!
But wait Suppose his guilt were all transferred
To ME and that I paid his penalty!
Behold My hands, My side, My feet! One day
I was made sin for him, and died that he
Might be presented faultless, at Thy throne!"

And Satan fled away. Full well he knew
That he could not prevail against such love,
For every word my dear Lord spoke was true!

--MARTHA SNELL NICHOLSON

In the context, notice the following: The Holy Spirit is **for us** (Romans 8:26); God the Father is **for us** (Romans 8:31); God the Son is **for us** (Romans 8:34). Yes, the triune God is on our side!

Romans 8:35

"**The love of Christ**" refers to the love which Christ has for us. No one (v.35) and nothing (v.39) shall be able to separate us from that love! We are safe and secure forever in the love of Christ! Let's consider some of these words that are used in this verse:

TRIBULATION = pressure, affliction, distress brought about by outward circumstances and difficulties;

DISTRESS = difficulty, distress, anguish, crushing difficulties (2 Cor.4:8);

PERSECUTION = chasing after believers to hurt and to harm (see 2 Tim. 3:12; 2 Cor.4:9);

FAMINE = believers in the first century knew what famine was (see Acts 11:28 "dearth" is the same word for famine); not even natural disasters can separate us from Christ's love;

NAKEDNESS = destitute condition, lack of sufficient clothing, extreme poverty;

PERIL = jeopardy, danger (see 1 Cor.15:30);

WORD = death by the sword (see Acts 12:2--James the brother of John was certainly thankful for the truth of Romans 8:35).

Romans 8:36

"**Killed**" = put to death. It is in the present tense: "We are constantly being put to death all the day." The expression is a hyperbole (exaggeration for effect) meaning that we are constantly in danger of death (1

Cor.15:30). Notice the treatment of God's people as described in Hebrews 11:36-38.

Romans 8:37

In verse 36 we are as slaughtered sheep! In verse 37 we are MORE THAN CONQUERORS! What a contrast!

"We are (v.37)"--right now this is true! "In all these things"--in the midst of all the difficulties we triumph. "More than conquerors" = hyper-conquerors, super-conquerors, super victors, super overcomers. It refers to one who gains a surpassing or an overwhelming victory, the one who wins a most glorious victory. We are not just overcomers, we are more than overcomers. We are not just victors, we are more than victors!

It is the Greek word **hupernikao** (from "**huper**"--compare the English words "hyper" and "super" and the verb "**nikao**"--to overcome, to have the victory (same word used for overcomers in Revelation 2-3). We are not just overcomers, we are more than overcomers! We are not just victors, we are more than victors! How could anyone say, in light of this, that some believers are not overcomers? [As some partial rapturists teach, as do others]. No believer is less than an overcomer, all believers are "more than overcomers"! Ours is an overwhelming victory! [See our study entitled, Who Is the Overcomer?]

"All these things" = the things mentioned in verse 35.

Who is the One who loved us? See Romans 8:35--Christ Himself. Through Christ we are more than conquerors. Compare 2 Corinthians 2:14 (in our own SELF we fail but in Christ we triumph).

Romans 8:38-39

In these glorious verses Paul is going to search the entire universe to see if there is anything that could possibly separate us from the love of Christ. Death is mentioned first because it is man's greatest fear (Hebrews 2:15--death is the "king of fears"). God does not say that He will keep believers from physical death but He does say that physical death will never separate us from Him! In fact, for the believer in Christ, death is actually the doorway into the very presence of God where we will know His love more and more:

Philippians 1:21,23--"For to me to live is Christ and to die is gain...having a desire to depart and to be with Christ which is far better"

2 Corinthians 5:8--"Willing (desirous) rather to be absent from the body and present with the Lord"

God does not remove physical death (with the exception of those who are alive when Christ comes for His church--1 Cor.15:51-52), but He removes the sting of death (1 Cor.15:55). Death without its sting is nothing to be feared (just as a giant bee without its stinger is nothing but a harmless fuzz ball).

"Life"--no circumstances of life, no matter how difficult or trying, will be able to separate me from Christ's love.

"Principalities" -- this refers to ruling angels, prince angels.

"Powers" -- powerful ruling angels. No angels nor demons nor even Satan himself are able to separate the believer from Christ's love (see 1 John 4:4).

"Things present nor things to come"-- There is nothing that you are presently going through now and there is nothing that you will ever face in the future that will be able to separate you from Christ and His love. Those who

are Christ's are joined to Him forever! Blessed union!

"**Nor height, nor depth**" (v.39)--as far up as you go or as far down, in the lowest valley or on the highest mountain you will never find anything or anyone who will separate you from Christ's love.

"**Nor any other creature**" = not anything else in all creation. Paul adds this just to make sure he did not miss anything. In the strongest words Paul assures us of our complete safety in the love of God which is found **ONLY IN THE LORD JESUS CHRIST**.

There are many people who take these final two verses of this chapter and apply them indiscriminately to all people, regardless of whether the people are really saved or not. These verses can only be applied to those who are "**IN CHRIST JESUS**" (Rom.8:1) and who "**love God and are the called according to His purpose**" (Rom.8:28). No one else has a right to these verses. Unbelievers will be separated from the love of Christ, and that separation will last for all eternity (see 2 Thessalonians 1:8-9; Matthew 25:41,46; 7:21-23; etc.)

Thus Romans chapter 8 began with **NO CONDEMNATION** and it ends with **NO SEPARATION!** The more we understand the grace of God and our so-great salvation the more we will desire to live soberly, righteously and godly in this present age (Titus 2:11-12), so that we might please the God who has done such great things for us! To Him be glory both now and unto the eternal ages!

**Notice how the great truths of Romans 8 are
found and expressed in the last stanza of
Charles Wesley's great hymn,
"AND CAN IT BE"**

No condemnation now I dread (Rom. 8:1);

Jesus, and all in Him is mine! (Rom. 8:32)

Alive in Him, my living Head (compare Rom. 8:10),

And clothed in righteousness divine (Rom. 8:30—"justified"),

Bold I approach the eternal throne (Rom. 8:15),

And claim the crown through Christ my own (Rom. 8:17-18).

AMAZING LOVE, HOW CAN IT BE (Rom. 8:38-39)

THAT THOU MY GOD SHOULDST DIE FOR ME (Rom. 8:3,32,34).