

# Pentwater Bible Church

*Romans Message 32*

*January 29, 2023*



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**The Book of Romans**

**Message Thirty-Two**

Nothing Can Separate Us From God's Love

**January 29, 2023**

**Daniel E. Woodhead**

Romans 8:31–39

*<sup>31</sup>What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us? <sup>32</sup>He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things? <sup>33</sup>Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth: <sup>34</sup>who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us. <sup>35</sup>Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? <sup>36</sup>As it is written, For thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter. <sup>37</sup>Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us. <sup>38</sup>For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, <sup>39</sup>nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord (KJV).*

THE POWER OF THE UNIVERSE IS WITH US

Romans 8:31

*<sup>31</sup>What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us?*

The first question, *what then shall we say about these things?* introduces a conclusion. *These things* refers to what Paul has been saying in chapters 5–8, and in 8:12–30. Satan and those under his power are against us, but in the end, God promises the victory. No one will oppose God and His followers forever. In the great spiritual conflict mighty forces, supernatural as well as natural, are arrayed against God's promises, but through Him we overcome them all and remain irrevocably surrounded and empowered by His unchanging love. God's opponents here on the earth and the spiritual realm will meet a dreadful end which is clearly guaranteed in the Lake of Fire to burn in torment forever.

Paul explained this struggle elsewhere.

Ephesians 6:10–13

*<sup>10</sup>Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might. <sup>11</sup>Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. <sup>12</sup>For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places. <sup>13</sup>Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand (KJV).*

Paul's questions fall into three categories:

1. Will opposition from people or Satan be too great? (8:31–32)
2. Will we fail because of our tendency to sin? (8:33–34)
3. Will we be overcome by difficult times? (8:35–39)

Nothing or nobody at all, God's promises can't legitimately be contradicted. They are true and faithful sayings; they can never be made void, and of no effect, by hell or earth; nor could unbelieving hearts have anything to say against them.

Paul is encouraging specific reflection on the evidences we have that so far in the book of Romans God is for us. For example, what then shall we say in response to the fact that there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus (8:1)? Or, what then shall we say in response to the fact that the Spirit helps us in our weakness (8:26)? What then shall we say in response to the fact that in all things God works for the good of those who love him (8:28)? The other option for considering what to *say in response* is the choice Paul makes. He asks rhetorical questions, the answers to which require application of the pattern God has already established for our day-to-day experiences. So, for instance, since *God* has shown that he *is for us, who* of any real significance *can be against us? Or, since God did not spare his own Son ... how will He not also, along with Him, graciously give us all things?* (8:32). Paul wants to let believers know, in no uncertain terms, that their salvation is sure and secure. When we fully realize that God has called, justified, and glorified us, we can do nothing but fall before Him in humble gratitude.

#### GOD PROVIDED US WITH HIS ULTIMATE SACRIFICE

Romans 8:32

*<sup>32</sup> He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things (KJV)?*

Who did not retain, or keep from suffering and death *His own Son*. Who thus gave the *highest* proof of love that a father could give, and the highest demonstration of His willingness to do good to those for whom He gave Him. *But delivered Him up*. Gave Him into the hands of men, and to a cruel death. *For us all*. That is for all who would believe that God did this. Which we know as the Gospel or all Christians. The reasons for the security of *all* Christians is here derived from the fact, that God had shown equality in giving His Son for all. It was not merely for the apostles; not only for the rich, and the great; but for the most humble and obscure of the flock of Christ. For them He endured as severe pangs, and expressed as much love, as for the rich and the great that shall be redeemed. The most humble and obscure believer may derive consolation from the fact that Christ died for him, and that God has expressed the highest love for Him which we can conceive to be possible.

*How shall he not*. His giving his Son is a proof that he *will* give to us all things that we need. The argument is from the greater to the less. He that has given the greater gift will not withhold the less. His first great gift, that of His Son, was a gift bestowed freely. We see here, the privilege of being a Christian. We have the friendship of God; have been favored with the highest proofs of divine love; and have assurance that we shall receive all that we need. We have evidence that God will continue to be our Friend. He that has given *His Son* to die for His people will not withdraw the lesser mercies that may be necessary to secure our salvation. The argument of the apostle here, therefore, is one that strongly shows that God will not forsake His children, but will secure us to eternal life.

The evidence that God is for us, and is the basis for our text here that says *God did not spare His own son but gave him up in behalf of us all*. The *gave him up* (*paredōken*) clause reflects an early Christian understanding of Jesus' death; it was a vicariously representative and sacrificial death. God's giving up Christ for salvation here answers God's giving up human beings expressed in chapter one even as rebellious. The *of all* is inclusive of Jews and Gentiles. The *not spare* theme is a reference to Abraham's sacrifice of Isaac in Genesis chapter 22 (the same words are used). In contemporary Judaism, Abraham's offering was important evidence of his faithfulness to God. His focus is the faithfulness of God. Precisely because God is faithful, as evidenced in the *not sparing* and *giving up* Jesus, Paul asks the third question, *how shall He not also with Him give us all things?* The *all things* (*ta panta*) refers to all created reality. God through Christ gives everything to all the sons and daughters in the family. The test of Abraham would let him know without a doubt he trusted God.

Genesis 22:1

*<sup>1</sup>And it came to pass after these things, that God did prove Abraham, and said unto him, Abraham. And he said, Here am I. (ASV, 1901)*

“*After these things*” means there is a gap of about twenty to thirty years since Isaac's birth. Josephus said Isaac was twenty-five years old, and he was a mature man, not a young boy. God was going to put Abraham to a severe test that defies our logic and reason. It is not a test He will bring upon a believer today since Christ paid the sacrifice for us, and no other sacrifice is needed. Our trust is in God, and we can see what He has done for us through the truth of scripture. This story is one of the situations that have been of benefit to those of us who believe.

The test about to be given by God to Abraham was a test of Abraham's faith. God knew what the outcome would be. It is Abraham who had to realize the outworking of his own faith, and trust completely in God. God wanted Abraham to see this in himself. God called him and he responded.

Genesis 22:2

*<sup>2</sup>And he said, Take now thy son, thine only son, whom thou lovest, even Isaac, and get thee into the land of Moriah. And offer him there for a burnt-offering upon one of the mountains which I will tell thee of. (ASV, 1901)*

God said to take his only son, whom he loved and go “*into the land of Moriah*.” This location is in Jerusalem, and is the site now known as the Temple Mount. This is the first time the word “love” is used in the Bible. God tells him to offer Isaac as a burnt offering on a yet to be revealed mountain. This would be Mount Moriah, or the location where Solomon built the Temple many years later in about 973 B.C. (II Chronicles 3:1). Mount Moriah later became Mount Zion.

Genesis 22:3–5

*<sup>3</sup>And Abraham rose early in the morning, and saddled his ass, and took two of his young men with him, and Isaac his son. And he clave the wood for the burnt-offering, and rose up, and went unto the place of which God had told him. <sup>4</sup>On the third day Abraham lifted up his eyes, and saw the place afar off. <sup>5</sup>And Abraham said unto his young men, Abide ye here with the ass, and I and the lad will go yonder; and we will worship, and come again to you. (ASV, 1901)*

Abraham had to trust God immensely, due to the fact He told him earlier that the covenant would go down to his son and be fulfilled through him and his progeny. Abraham had to realize that if God wanted to sacrifice Isaac, He must intend to bring him back from the dead to continue the Abrahamic Covenant. Abraham had witnessed so many wonders from God that by now he knew God's power and love for him. The text tells us explicitly each step of Abraham's preparation and execution of the command in order to emphasize the sequence of Abraham's obedience. He travelled three days with Isaac and two young men. He reached a spot at the end of three days where he could see the place "still far off" where he must go. He then told the young men to stay with the donkey while Isaac and he go worship. Notice that he said "we" would return, again illustrating that he has put his full trust in God to keep Isaac alive, or bring him back from the dead.

#### *Genesis 22:6–9*

*<sup>6</sup>And Abraham took the wood of the burnt-offering, and laid it upon Isaac his son. And he took in his hand the fire and the knife. And they went both of them together. <sup>7</sup>And Isaac spake unto Abraham his father, and said, My father. And he said, Here am I, my son. And he said, Behold, the fire and the wood. But where is the lamb for a burnt-offering? <sup>8</sup>And Abraham said, God will provide himself the lamb for a burnt-offering, my son. So they went both of them together. <sup>9</sup>And they came to the place which God had told him of. And Abraham built the altar there, and laid the wood in order, and bound Isaac his son, and laid him on the altar, upon the wood. (ASV, 1901)*

Abraham then had Isaac carry the wood for the fire while he carried the fire ignition and the knife. Isaac asked his father where was the lamb for a burnt offering? The next statement is a strong prophetic verse, indicating the sacrifice of Messiah, who would also carry his own wood (cross) to His sacrifice many years later. Abraham says to Isaac "God will provide himself the lamb for a burnt offering." Abraham and Isaac continue to the place, where he bound Isaac, and laid him on the wood of the altar. The Hebrew word for binding is *Akeidah*, and this has become the name of this event. Isaac, being a full-grown man, could have easily resisted if he wanted to do that, for by now his father was about 130 years old.

#### *Genesis 22:10–14*

*<sup>10</sup>And Abraham stretched forth his hand, and took the knife to slay his son. <sup>11</sup>And the angel of Jehovah called unto him out of heaven, and said, Abraham, Abraham. And he said, Here I am. <sup>12</sup>And he said, Lay not thy hand upon the lad, neither do thou anything unto him. For now I know that thou fearest God, seeing thou hast not withheld thy son, thine only son, from me. <sup>13</sup>And Abraham lifted up his eyes, and looked, and behold, behind him a ram caught in the thicket by his horns. And Abraham went and took the ram, and offered him up for a burnt-offering in the stead of his son. <sup>14</sup>And Abraham called the name of that place Jehovah-Jireh. As it is said to this day, In the mount of Jehovah it shall be provided. (ASV, 1901)*

Abraham stretched forth his hand with the knife to slay Isaac when "the angel of Jehovah" (the preincarnate Jesus) called out to him from heaven to stop. "The angel of the Jehovah" let Abraham know he passed the test. God provided a ram caught in a thicket for the necessary sacrifice. This is truly divine intervention and substitutionary atonement presented in a very realistic manner. Accordingly, God did not spare His own Son.

Romans 8: 32

*<sup>32</sup>He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely he not with him also freely give us all things. (KJV)*

Finally, Abraham called the name of the place “*Jehovah-Jireh*,” which means “*God provides*.”

GOD MAKES INTERCESSION FOR US

Romans 8:33–34

*<sup>33</sup> Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God’s elect? It is God that justifieth: <sup>34</sup> who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us (KJV).*

*Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God’s elect?* Paul’s next question is; Who can press charges or accuse us? One object is Satan because he is our accuser. He is alive and well. He accused Job.

Job 1:6–12

*<sup>6</sup> Now there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the LORD, and Satan came also among them. <sup>7</sup> And the LORD said unto Satan, Whence comest thou? Then Satan answered the LORD, and said, From going to and fro in the earth, and from walking up and down in it. <sup>8</sup> And the LORD said unto Satan, Hast thou considered my servant Job, that there is none like him in the earth, a perfect and an upright man, one that feareth God, and escheweth evil? <sup>9</sup> Then Satan answered the LORD, and said, Doth Job fear God for nought? <sup>10</sup> Hast not thou made a hedge about him, and about his house, and about all that he hath on every side? thou hast blessed the work of his hands, and his substance is increased in the land. <sup>11</sup> But put forth thine hand now, and touch all that he hath, and he will curse thee to thy face. <sup>12</sup> And the LORD said unto Satan, Behold, all that he hath is in thy power; only upon himself put not forth thine hand. So Satan went forth from the presence of the LORD (KJV).*

Zechariah 3:1-2

*<sup>1</sup>Then he showed me Joshua the high priest standing before the angel of the Lord, and Satan standing at his right hand to accuse him. <sup>2</sup>The Lord said to Satan, “The Lord rebuke you, Satan! Indeed, the Lord who has chosen Jerusalem rebuke you! Is this not a brand plucked from the fire (KJV)?”*

And his charges will contain truth, because despite being saved, we still will sin. But the charges won’t stick—God will throw Satan’s accusations out of court because he has chosen us. The word *chosen* (*eklekton*) has been transliterated from Greek and Latin into English as the word *elect*. In the Bible, election refers to God’s choice of an individual or group for a specific purpose or destiny (9:10–13). God is the one who chooses us, and He is also the Judge who has already declared us “not guilty.” When Satan accuses us, Jesus, the advocate for our defense, stands at God’s right hand to present our case (8:34). Thus, the result is that no one can bring a charge against God’s chosen ones. God knowing the beginning and the end sees the fact that there is coming an end of Satan’s accusing us.

## Revelation 12:10

*<sup>10</sup> And I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, Now is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of his Christ: for the accuser of our brethren is cast down, which accused them before our God day and night (KJV).*

*Who is he that condemneth?* Like the last question, this one focuses on charges, but in Greek it carries a future tense: Who *will* condemn? Jesus Christ has been appointed by God to judge the world (John 5:22, 27; Acts 17:31), but Christ Jesus, who died ... is at the right hand of God, who indeed intercedes for us. This is a divine court. God has already declared us “not guilty.” Any further charges of guilt are thrown out of court. Jesus would not condemn those for whom He died. Because He was raised to life, Christ Jesus is at God’s right hand interceding for us in heaven (Psalm 110:1; Mark 12:35–37; Hebrews 4:14–16). The Spirit intercedes for us (8:27) and Christ intercedes for us. This is an abundance of advocacy from the highest levels of all of Heaven and creation. Do you ever think that because you aren’t good enough for God, he will not save you? Do you ever feel as if salvation is for everyone else but you? At those times, make verses 31–34 your constant companions. If God gave His Son for you, He isn’t going to hold back the gift of salvation! If Christ gave His life for you, He isn’t going to turn around and condemn you! Christ will not withhold anything you need in order to live for Him. The book of Romans is more than a theological explanation of God’s redeeming grace—it is a letter of comfort and confidence addressed to you.

## NOTHING CAN SEPARATE US FROM GOD’S LOVE

### Romans 8:35–39

*<sup>35</sup> Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? <sup>36</sup> As it is written, For thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter. <sup>37</sup> Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us. <sup>38</sup> For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, <sup>39</sup> nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord (KJV).*

Paul’s final questions are in verse 35: Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? The context shows that the love of Christ is His love for believers (not their love for Him; cf. 5:5). The apostle suggested seven things a believer might experience (Paul experienced all of them; II Corinthians 11:23–28) that some might think could come between a believer and Christ’s love—

1. trouble (*thilpsis*, pressure or distress; mentioned frequently by Paul in II Corinthians)
2. hardship (*stenochōria*, lit., narrowness, i.e., being pressed in, hemmed in, crowded)
3. persecution
4. famine
5. nakedness
6. danger
7. sword.

These things—stated in increasing intensity—do not separate Christians from Christ; instead, they are part of the all things (Romans 8:28) God uses to bring them to conformity to His Son. Then Paul quoted Psalm 44:22 to remind his readers that in this life the people of God must face much affliction (John 16:33) including even martyrdom for some. In the early days of the church one or more Christians were martyred

every day, or faced the possibility of it. Their persecutors valued Christians' lives as nothing more than animals to be butchered. In all these adversities (all things in Romans 8:28 and all things in v. 32 with all these things in v. 37), rather than being separated from Christ's love, believers are more than conquerors. The Greek word for conquerors is given here in the future tense, *hypernikōmen*, keep on being conquerors to a greater degree or keep on winning through Him who loved us. Jesus Christ and His love for believers enable them us to triumph (II Corinthians 2:14).

Paul then ended his discussion on believers' safety in Jesus Christ and the certainty of our sanctification with a positive statement that nothing can separate believers from the love of God. This must be seen as God's love for us, not our love for God. Paul's list of 10 items begins with death.

1. Death These elements in God's universe include the extremes of existence: death and
2. life in either death (II Corinthians 5:8–9) or life, believers are in God's presence; the extremes of created spiritual armies:
3. angels and
4. demons. Angels would not and demons could not undo God's relationship with His extremes of created spiritual armies the extremes in time.
5. the present
6. the future (nothing known now, e.g., the hardships listed in Romans 8:35, or in the unknown time to come; spiritual enemies:
7. powers (perhaps Satan and his demons; cf. Eph. 6:12; or possibly human governments); the extremes in space:
8. height and
9. depth (nothing overhead or underneath can suddenly come swooping down or up to sever believers from God's love); and believer might experience.
10. everything in the entire created realm. Absolutely nothing in His Creation can thwart His purpose for believers in Christ. What a climactic way to affirm the certainty of believers' salvation!

Paul experienced all of them; (II Corinthians 11:23–28) that some might think could come between a believer and Christ's love—trouble (*thilpsis*, pressure or distress; mentioned frequently by Paul in II Corinthians) or hardship (*stenochōria*, lit., “narrowness,” i.e., being pressed in, hemmed in, crowded) or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword. These things—stated in increasing intensity—do not separate Christians from Christ; instead, they are part of the all things (Romans 8:28) God uses to bring us to conformity to His Son (growing more Christ like).

In all these adversities rather than being separated from Christ's love, believers are more than conquerors” or “keep on winning a glorious victory” through Him who loved us. Jesus Christ and His love for believers enable them to triumph (II Corinthians 2:14).

Next week; ROMANS 9, THE NATION ISRAEL

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