

Romans

Romans Chapter Eight

Romans 8:31-39

February 6, 2011

This is lesson number 76 in our exposition of the Book of Romans.

The Theme of the Letter

“For I am not ashamed of **the gospel of Christ**, for it is the **power** of God to salvation for everyone who believes, for the Jew first and also for the Greek. For in it the **righteousness of God** is **revealed** from faith to faith; as it is written, ‘The just shall live by faith.’ ” Romans 1:16-17

Title: What Shall We Say to These Things?

Some passages of Scripture are more difficult to teach because they are not easily broken down into parts. Some passages can better be explained by bringing in other texts that shed light on them. That method of interpretation is called the “Analogy of Faith” or “Comparing Scripture with Scripture.”

This is not the case with our text today. The exposition flows rather smoothly. Paul asks a series of questions by introducing them **with** a question. Depending on how you combine the phrases, there are four, five, or six questions that Paul asks. I make it to be Four Questions.

Romans 8:31-36

31 What then shall we say to these things?

If God is for us, who can be against us?

32 He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?

33 Who shall bring a charge against God's elect?

It is God who justifies.

34 Who is he who condemns?

It is Christ who died, and furthermore is also risen, who is even at the right hand of God, who also makes intercession for us.

35 Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?

Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? 36 As it is written {Psalm 44:22}:

**"For Your sake we are killed all day long;
We are accounted as sheep for the slaughter."**

Romans

The question of introduction:

31 What then shall we say to these things?

To what does Paul refer to as “these things?”

Paul is coming to the end of a major section in this letter, and before he takes up the question of God’s sovereign choice in election where he will tell us how “all Israel shall be saved.” Romans 11:26

Chapter Eight is really the end of the doctrinal part of Romans. He began at 1:16 and has dealt with how God saves sinners. Chapters One through Eight are almost all doctrine.

Chapters 9-10-11 are a separate section, almost an appendix, that answers the question, “What about the Jews?” Paul defines “Israel” and tells us how “all Israel shall be saved.”

But here at the end of Chapter Eight he is exulting in praise to God for the final and certain victory of Jesus Christ to save His brethren, who are the sons of God, or the children of God!

It is my understanding that by “these things” he means **everything** that he has written up to this point.

These things?

That the righteousness of God is in Christ Jesus and that righteousness can only be savingly known by a revelation from God.

That the just shall live by faith. And that faith itself is a gift from God.

That the wrath of God is against all men, Jew and Gentile, all men without distinction, who are not ‘in Christ.’

That justification is imputed because God justifies the ungodly.

And what I believe is the essence of understanding the Gospel, i.e., Representation in Adam and Christ.

Romans

He warns about the damning nature of antinomianism.

He has taught that the purpose of the law is to give the knowledge of sin that keeping the law cannot justify anyone nor can keeping the law sanctify anyone.

He has given us an irrefutable definition of a Christian.

He has given us the truth that genuine assurance must be based on God's eternal purpose.

We have taught about "these things" and now we can share with the Apostle in his joy in the sure and certain hope that God's eternal purpose cannot fail.

So let's examine four questions that derive from "these things."

Let's see just how certain is the security of those whom God foreknew, and predestined, and called, and justified, and glorified.

First Question:

If God is for us, who can be against us?

32 He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?

The "if" means 'since' God is for us.

What has God done for us?

The argument is from the greater to the less. If God has done the ultimate thing that He could do for His children do not think that He will not do a far lesser thing and **also freely give us all things.**

What has God done for us?

God did not spare His own Son.

Surely Paul reminds us of the great type of Substitution in the story of Abraham who was commanded to offer Isaac the son of promise. But before Abraham could

Romans

strike the fatal blow God provided a ram for the sacrifice of blood. Isaac was delivered through substitution!

Genesis 22:12

12 And He said, "Do not lay your hand on the lad, or do anything to him; for now I know that you fear God, since you have not withheld your son, your only son, from Me."

Cf. John 8:56

But God's unique Son, the only begotten of the Father who is the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world **was not spared** when He was made to be sin and went to that cruel cross as the sufficient Substitute for the sin of His people.

Read Isaiah 53 and keep Romans 8:32 in mind.

32 He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?

Isaiah 53

Who has believed our report? And to whom has the arm of the LORD been revealed? 2 For He shall grow up before Him as a tender plant, And as a root out of dry ground. He has no form or comeliness; And when we see Him, There is no beauty that we should desire Him.3 He is despised and rejected by men, A Man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. And we hid, as it were, our faces from Him; He was despised, and we did not esteem Him.

4 Surely He has borne our griefs And carried our sorrows; Yet we esteemed Him stricken, Smitten by God, and afflicted.5 But He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities; The chastisement for our peace was upon Him, And by His stripes we are healed.6 All we like sheep have gone astray; We have turned, every one, to his own way; And the LORD has laid on Him the iniquity of us all.

7 He was oppressed and He was afflicted, Yet He opened not His mouth; He was led as a lamb to the slaughter, And as a sheep before its shearers is silent, So He opened not His mouth.8 He was taken from prison and from judgment, And who will declare His generation? For He was cut off from the land of the living; For the transgressions of My people He was stricken.9 And they made His grave with the wicked --But with the rich at His death, Because He had done no violence, Nor was any deceit in His mouth.

10 Yet it pleased the LORD to bruise Him; He has put Him to grief. When You make His soul an offering for sin, He shall see His seed, He shall prolong His days, And the pleasure of the LORD shall prosper in His hand.

Romans

11 He shall see the labor of His soul, and be satisfied. By His knowledge My righteous Servant shall justify many, For He shall bear their iniquities.12 Therefore I will divide Him a portion with the great, And He shall divide the spoil with the strong, Because He poured out His soul unto death, And He was numbered with the transgressors, And He bore the sin of many, And made intercession for the transgressors.

Why do you suppose that God would do such a thing?

John 3:16

For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.

Before anyone concludes that God is trying to save the entire human race and is frustrated and is unable to do it, go back to Isaiah 53:11:

He shall see the labor of His soul, and be satisfied. By His knowledge My righteous Servant shall justify many, For He shall bear their iniquities.

Then read John 17:6-11:

I have manifested Your name to the men whom You have given Me out of the world. They were Yours, You gave them to Me, and they have kept Your word.7 Now they have known that all things which You have given Me are from You.8 For I have given to them the words which You have given Me; and they have received them, and have known surely that I came forth from You; and they have believed that You sent Me.

9 "I pray for them. I do not pray for the world but for those whom You have given Me, for they are Yours.10 And all Mine are Yours, and Yours are Mine, and I am glorified in them.

He delivered Him up for us all. And the "us all" are precisely defined in this great epistle as the children of God.

Remember Romans 4:23-25

23 Now it was not written for his sake alone that it was imputed to him, 24 but also for us. It shall be imputed to us who believe in Him who raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead, 25 who was delivered up because of our offenses, and was raised because of our justification.

Romans

The answer to the first question, "**If God is for us, who can be against us?**" is that since God did not spare the Son of His eternal love but sent Him into the world to be the propitiation for sin, **who can be against us?**

If God is for us, who can be against us?

The second question has to do with our standing before God.

Second Question:

33 Who shall bring a charge against God's elect?

It is God who justifies.

My hearers, as I speak, are either condemned or justified before God. There is no neutral standing!

Now I speak to you all. If you are not a genuine Christian you are yet in the state of condemnation. The person who denies that he should be condemned does not believe that he needs a Substitute for his sins.

But the person whom God foreknew and predestined and has called is justified. When God justifies a person who can bring a charge against him?

Not that a justified person will not be charged with all manner of crimes and misdemeanors. The "accuser of the brethren," old Satan will rail against God's children but they cannot be condemned anew.

Why is that? **"Because there is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus."**

There is an Old Testament type of justification in Zechariah 3:1-5

Then he showed me Joshua the high priest standing before the Angel of the LORD, and Satan standing at his right hand to oppose him.2 And the LORD said to Satan, "The LORD rebuke you, Satan! The LORD who has chosen Jerusalem rebuke you! Is this not a brand plucked from the fire?"

3 Now Joshua was clothed with filthy garments, and was standing before the Angel.

4 Then He answered and spoke to those who stood before Him, saying, "Take away the filthy garments from him." And to him He said, "See, I have removed your iniquity from you, and I will clothe you with rich robes." 5 And I said, "Let them put a clean turban on his head."

So they put a clean turban on his head, and they put the clothes on him. And the Angel of the LORD stood by.

Romans

Not to get too involved in the interpretation of this passage, but 'Joshua' and 'Jerusalem' represent the elect of God. Joshua is in the filthy garments of sin and Satan is his accuser, but the Angel of the LORD declares that Joshua is justified and is 'clean.'

The answer then to the second question, "**Who shall bring a charge against God's elect?**," is that when God justifies a person it is for keeps!

Who shall bring a charge against God's elect? It is God who justifies.

The opposite of justification is always **condemnation**. As I said, every person is either condemned or justified before God.

So the first two questions:

[1] If God is for us, who can be against us?

32 He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?

[2] 33 Who shall bring a charge against God's elect?

It is God who justifies.

Remember that justification [being declared not guilty] is always the opposite of condemnation [guilty]. Having asked and answered the matter of who it is that justifies [**It is God who justifies**] Paul asks the next logical question.

Third Question:

[3] 34 Who is he who condemns?

It is Christ who died, and furthermore is also risen, who is even at the right hand of God, who also makes intercession for us.

We have often commented on how Paul refers to the prophet Isaiah.

Remember that the Gospel is based on the OT Scriptures concerning Jesus of Nazareth, who is the Christ.

Romans

Does Isaiah 50:8-9a sound like what Paul says in verse 34?

Isaiah 50:8-9a

8 He is near who justifies Me;

Who will contend with Me?

Let us stand together.

Who is My adversary?

Let him come near Me.

9 Surely the Lord GOD will help Me;

Who is he who will condemn Me?

Who is he who condemns?

Since Christ died for us, and God the Father justifies us, and God the Holy Spirit bears witness with our spirit that we are the children of God, who in the created rational universe can condemn us?

Accuse us? Yes. Condemn us? No!

Christ is risen from the grave and has ascended into heaven and is now at the right hand of God. The 'right hand of God' is an expression of absolute authority and power and it is Christ Himself who makes **intercession** for us.

Before we continue with the intercession of Christ for "the us," we need to have a clear understanding of the **nature** of His intercession.

I have heard some really awful sermons that portray Jesus, the Son, pleading with God the Father not to condemn those for whom He is making intercession.

Some misguided preachers have said that God the Father wills to condemn us. That, they say, is what the wrath of God means. But God the Son, they say, is pleading with God the Father to **change His mind**.

That is utter nonsense!

No, it is worse than nonsense, it is blasphemy!

Jesus is not making intercession in an attempt to change the mind of God the Father! The Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit are always in perfect harmony and unity.

Did not Jesus say, "I always do the will of Him who sent Me?"

Romans

Did not Jesus say, "I and the Father are One?"

There is **always** perfect harmony and unity in the Holy Trinity.

There is **only one** perfect will of God.

The apostle has already said that God is for us!

What then is the intercession of Christ for us?

The intercession of Christ is the constant surety that all who belong to Christ are safe from the assaults of Satan, the accuser of the brethren.

It is more than that, but it is that.

Luke 22:31-32

And the Lord said, "Simon, Simon! Indeed, Satan has asked for you, that he may sift you as wheat.³² But I have prayed for you, that your faith should not fail; and when you have returned to Me, strengthen your brethren."

So the intercession of Christ is in the purpose of God to **preserve** His children while they **persevere** through many dangers, trials, and tears.

Preservation is God's sovereignty.

Perseverance is man's responsibility.

Philippians 2:12-13

Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling [perseverance – man's responsibility]; 13 for it is God who works in you both to will and to do for His good pleasure [preservation – God's sovereignty].

There is another **important truth** that verse 34 brings out and that is **particularity is demanded**.

If Christ here is praying for the entire human race then there is no hell.

Whoever Christ is praying for belong to Him and Christ is not a frustrated and disappointed Savior.

Romans

Find Isaiah 53 in your Bible:

Isaiah 53:10-12

**10 Yet it pleased the LORD to bruise Him; [delivered Him up]
He has put Him to grief. [determinate council]
When You make His soul an offering for sin, [propitiation]
He shall see His seed, He shall prolong His days,
And the pleasure of the LORD shall prosper in His hand. [purpose]
11 He shall see the labor of His soul, and be satisfied. [particularity]
By His knowledge My righteous Servant shall
justify many, [whom He foreknew]
For He shall bear their iniquities. [substitution]
12 Therefore I will divide Him a portion with the great,
And He shall divide the spoil with the strong, [joint-heirs with Christ]
Because He poured out His soul unto death,
[Father into Thy hands I commit My spirit]
And He was numbered with the transgressors, [between two thieves]
And He bore the sin of many,
[chosen in Christ before the foundation of the world]
And made intercession for the transgressors. [sinners saved by grace]**

Hebrews 7:25

Therefore He is also able to save to the uttermost those who come to God through Him, since He always lives to make intercession for them.

Find Psalm 2 in your Bible:

Psalm 2:12

**Kiss the Son, lest He be angry,
And you perish in the way,
When His wrath is kindled but a little.
Blessed are all those who put their trust in Him.**

Fascinating verse: “If the Son shall make you free you will be free indeed.”
But what if the Son is angry with you?

But doesn't Jesus love everyone the same way?
Doesn't God hate the sin and love the sinner?

Tell me how God will put the sin in hell and not the sinner?
But we are not condemned!

Romans

So child of God do not be anxious anymore about anyone, even Satan, bringing an effective charge against you. As weak as we are, God is able and Jesus is making intercession for us.

34 Who is he who condemns?

It is Christ who died, and furthermore is also risen, who is even at the right hand of God, who also makes intercession for us.

The **Fourth Question:**

35 Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?

Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?

Is “the love of Christ” our love for Him or His love for us? The immediate context demands the interpretation that it is Christ’s love for us, Cf. 37.

Ephesians 5:25-28

25 Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her, 26 that He might sanctify and cleanse her with the washing of water by the word, 27 that He might present her to Himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that she should be holy and without blemish.

Paul lists **seven circumstances** that might be thought of as being possible to separate us from the love of Christ.

Can a Christian ever be separated from the love of Christ?

We have all known people who appeared to be strong Christians but when unpleasant circumstances came into their life they quit God.

All I can say is that based on this text and many other Scriptures, a true believer cannot quit God.

Romans

Seven circumstances:

- a. & b. **Tribulation** {affliction}
 Anguish, burdened, persecution, tribulation, trouble.

and **Distress**. Narrowness of room, i.e. (figuratively) calamity:

These two go together but there is a distinction.
Affliction is outward and distress is inward.

- c. **Persecution.**

Matthew 5:10-12

**10 Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake,
For theirs is the kingdom of heaven.**

**11 "Blessed are you when they revile and persecute you, and say all kinds of evil
against you falsely for My sake. 12 Rejoice and be exceedingly glad, for great is your
reward in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you.**

- d. **Famine.** This is hunger.
 The idea of destitution; a scarcity of food:

- e. **Nakedness.**
 Nudity (absolute or comparative):
 This means to need clothing, more than a one-time event.

- f. **Peril** Danger of death.

- g. **Sword**
 A knife, i.e. figuratively, war, **judicial punishment:**

Romans 13:1-4

**Let every soul be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority
except from God, and the authorities that exist are appointed by God. 2 Therefore
whoever resists the authority resists the ordinance of God, and those who resist will
bring judgment on themselves. 3 For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to
evil. Do you want to be unafraid of the authority? Do what is good, and you will
have praise from the same. 4 For he is God's minister to you for good. But if you do
evil, be afraid; for he does not bear the sword in vain;**

In naming these seven circumstances Paul is not writing from a mere intellectual grasp.

Romans

In my own case about the closest thing to any of these circumstances is some small degree of ridicule about my being a Christian. I have suffered some distress because of lies that were told about me.

Compare these circumstances named with what Paul says about himself. He had already suffered six of the seven circumstances and was facing the seventh, the sword of death by the Government of Rome.

2 Corinthians 11:22-29

Are they Hebrews? So am I. Are they Israelites? So am I. Are they the seed of Abraham? So am I. 23 Are they ministers of Christ? -- I speak as a fool -- I am more: in labors more abundant, in stripes above measure, in prisons more frequently, in deaths often. 24 From the Jews five times I received forty stripes minus one. 25 three times I was beaten with rods; once I was stoned; three times I was shipwrecked; a night and a day I have been in the deep; 26 in journeys often, in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils of my own countrymen, in perils of the Gentiles, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren; 27 in weariness and toil, in sleeplessness often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness --28 besides the other things, what comes upon me daily: my deep concern for all the churches. 29 Who is weak, and I am not weak? Who is made to stumble, and I do not burn with indignation?

So believer in Christ, not only will suffering **not separate you** from the love of Christ, it will **draw you closer** to Him.

Philippians 1:29

For to you it has been granted on behalf of Christ, not only to believe in Him, but also to suffer for His sake,

Paul then quotes Psalm 44:22

36 As it is written:

**"For Your sake we are killed all day long;
We are accounted as sheep for the slaughter."**

By quoting Psalm 44:22 Paul shows that there is nothing strange or unexpected about the saints of God suffering for the Lord's sake.

These kinds of circumstances are given as examples to prepare us for glory.

Romans

But Satan knows where we are the most vulnerable to attack. When the fiery trials come keep 'these things' in mind and memorize these Four Questions and be ready to give an answer for the hope that is in you.

If God is for us, who can be against us?

Who shall bring a charge against God's elect?

Who is he who condemns?

Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?

If you can't answer your doubts with this kind of assurance don't just ignore what may be the drawing of the Father and the wooing of the Holy Spirit to show you the beauty of the Son.

37 Yet in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us. 38 For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities nor powers, nor things present nor things to come, 39 nor height nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Remember back in 5:20-21 where Paul wrote:

20 Moreover the law entered that the offense might abound. But where sin abounded, grace abounded much more, 21 so that as sin reigned in death, even so grace might reign through righteousness to eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

The reign of Grace 'superabounds' over the reign of sin.
Even so, we are 'superconquerers' over suffering.

Cf. verse 28 and verse 37:

28 And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose.

37 Yet in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us.

38 For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities, nor powers, angels are evil angels because the good angels could never be against us.

Principalities and powers are the devil and all of his forces.

Ephesians 6:11-13

Romans

11 Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the Wiles of the devil. 12 For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places. 13 Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand.

nor things present nor things to come,

[the present age and the age to come]

39 nor height nor depth,

Philippians 2:9-11

9 Therefore God also has highly exalted Him and given Him the name which is above every name, 10 that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those in heaven, and of those on earth, and of those under the earth, 11 and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

Nothing above Christ!

Ephesians 4:8-10

8 Therefore He says:

**"When He ascended on high,
He led captivity captive,
And gave gifts to men."**

9 (Now this, "He ascended" -- what does it mean but that He also first descended into the lower parts of the earth? 10 He who descended is also the one who ascended far above all the heavens, that He might fill all things.)

Cf. Eph 4:9 & Psalm 119:15 [refers to the Incarnation of Christ into the womb of the virgin]

... nor any other created thing, [since everything except God is a created thing....]

... shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

We come to the end of this most wonderful chapter of Holy Scripture.

Chapter Eight is God's Word on assurance and the final perseverance of the saints. "Salvation is of the Lord" from beginning to end and that is why it is sure and certain!

Jude 24-25

Romans

Now to Him who is able to keep you from stumbling,
And to present you faultless
Before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy,
25 To God our Savior, Who alone is wise, Be glory and majesty,
Dominion and power, Both now and forever. Amen.

“For I am persuaded,” says Paul. Are you persuaded?

“How firm a foundation, ye saints of the Lord, Is laid for your faith in His excellent Word! What more can He say than to you He hath said, You who unto Jesus for refuge have fled?”