

Romans 8

The Reign of God's Sovereign Grace: Romans 8:1-39

1 *There* is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in [union with] Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.

8:1 The last part of verse one, “*who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit*”, is an interpolation and belongs properly in verse 4. The concept of there being no condemnation or judgment to them which are in union with Christ Jesus needs no qualifying clause. The apostle is continuing his teaching set forth in Romans 7:25 that spiritual freedom from the power of sin and death is found in the person and work of Jesus Christ with blessed results, the first of which is a sense of security for the soul in order to enjoy sanctification.

2 For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death.

8:2 The Spirit's law, which is life in Christ Jesus, stands in stark contrast with sin's law, which only produces moral defeat and spiritual death. As long as a believer struggles in the flesh to be free from the law of sin and death there will be moral failure in the life. However, when the fact of freedom from the tyranny of the law of sin and death is appropriated by faith, victory will be found. Victory comes by turning from self to the Savior.

*“Free from the law,
Oh happy condition.
Jesus has bless and there is remission.”*

3 For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh:

4 That the righteousness [ordinance] of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.

8:3-4 According to the provision of the new covenant God has promised to write His law on the heart, a tablet of flesh in contrast to the table of stone at Mt. Sinai (Jer. 31:31; Heb. 8:8-10). Because God keeps His word the believer longs to do what is right. The Christian wants to keep the moral law of God. However, he finds he cannot keep the law. Why? Because the law of sin and death is found in his members and must be dealt with. Unfortunately, the tendency is to deal with the law of sin and death by fleshly means, but the flesh cannot prevail against the strength of the law. The principle of sin is too strong for the saint. How then is the law to be fulfilled in the believer? How is the moral law to be honored? The answer is this. By faith the Christian embraces the fact of a new relationship in Christ. Because this relationship is based on free grace it is secure and so the fear of a future condemnation is removed. With the promise of no condemnation in his heart the believer has freedom to walk, not after the flesh but after the Spirit. No longer is there a fleshly striving to be good as the religious non-Christian strives to be good.

Rather, there is a faith-rest by which the Christian depends on the Holy Spirit to sanctify the heart.

5 For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh; but they that are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit.

6 For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded *is* life and peace.

7 Because the carnal mind *is* enmity [hostile] against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be.

8 So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God.

8:5-5 As long as the Christian tries to struggle against sin by fleshly means – as unconverted religious people also do – God will not be pleased and for good reason. The flesh is ultimately concerned only with fleshly matters just as the Spirit is concerned about matters of the Spirit. The flesh and the Spirit have nothing in common. Because of this the flesh and the Spirit are openly hostile to one another even unto death.

9 But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be [since] that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his.

8:9 The professing Christian must examine himself to see if he is truly born of God (2 Cor. 13:5). If the answer is yes then by faith the indwelling presence of the Spirit is to be relied upon to perform righteous deeds thereby keeping the law of God and pleasing Him.

10 And if Christ *be* in you, the body *is* dead because of sin; but the Spirit *is* life because of righteousness.

8:10 The body, used by the flesh as an instrument against the law of God and the Spirit of God is dead to sin when Jesus comes (John 14:18) and the Holy Spirit indwells the heart (1 Cor. 6:19). Joseph fled from the luring attraction of Potiphar's wife because he was dead to sin for Christ dwelt in him (Gen. 39:1-20).

11 But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken [make alive] your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you.

8:11 Because of Calvary the body will not be used in time as an instrument of unrighteousness; in eternity the body will know complete redemption and life through the resurrection by the same Spirit that raised up Jesus from the dead (John 5:28-29; 1 Cor 15:51-58).

12 Therefore, brethren, we are debtors [in debt], not to the flesh, to live after the flesh.

8:12 No Christian owes the flesh anything. Sin may present to the mind a sense of obligation to linger in an unrighteous relationship or fulfill an unholy vow. Remember Lot's wife (Luke 17:32). Then remember that Jesus taught sin must be dealt with radically. *"And if thy right eye offend thee, pluck it out, and cast it from thee: for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not that thy whole body should be cast into hell. 30 And if thy right hand offend thee, cut it off, and cast it from thee: for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not that thy whole body should be cast into hell"* (Matt 5:29-30).

13 For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify [put to death] the deeds of the body, ye shall live.

8:13 Belief in the security of the believer and confidence in the promises of God that there is no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus does not give individuals a license to sin. The language of *Scripture* is very plain. Anyone, without exception or distinction, who lives after the flesh shall die. Only those who actually put to death the deeds of the body shall live. This teaching does not revert back to a works salvation for the life that is lived in holiness is the life that is dependent upon the Spirit so that it can be said, *"Salvation is of the Lord"* (Jonah 2:9). It is all of grace.

14 For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God.

15 For ye have not received the spirit of bondage [slavery] again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father.

8:15 Having been set free from the tyranny of the law of sin and death the believer can be and will be led by the Spirit of God. There will be no more rebellion for Christ is submitted to as Lord. Recognition of the Lordship of Christ precedes salvation (Luke 6:46; Titus 1:4; 2 Peter 1:11; 2:20; 3:2; 3:18). The Christian values the Spirit that has adopted or placed him into the family of God. There is a natural desire to cry, *"Abba {Papa}, Father"* as Jesus did in the Garden of Gethsemane (Mark 14:36).

16 The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God:

8:16 The test the professing Christian is to use to examine himself and see if he is within the sphere of saving grace is the witness of the Holy Spirit. As the mind meditates upon spiritual matters there will be a consciousness that the heart believes or disbelieves the essential elements of the gospel message – *"that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; 4 And that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures"* (1 Cor 15:3-4). Judas knew what Jesus knew; he was a thief, a deceiver and a traitor (John 6:64). There was no Holy Spirit bearing witness with the spirit of Judas that he was a son of God.

Because of this, when Jesus told Judas to depart from the supper table and go do what he had to do according to his fleshly nature, Judas simply walked out of the room and embraced his own damnation without protest.

17 And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with *him*, that we may be also glorified together.

8:17 When the Holy Spirit bears witness in the heart that the soul belongs to Jesus there is the joy of remembering that a divine adoption has taken place making the believer an heir of God and joint-heir with Christ. Simply stated all that Christ is and has belongs to the believer. If that vital union includes suffering, it also includes glorification.

The Glory that is to Come: Romans 8:18-27

18 For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy *to be compared* with the glory which shall be revealed in us.

8:18 With the reign of sin issue settled according to gospel terms the apostle turns the thoughts of his readers in a new direction which is the glory which shall be revealed in the Christian.

19 For the earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God.

20 For the creature was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of him who hath subjected *the same* in hope,

21 Because the creature [creation] itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption [decay] into the glorious liberty of the children of God.

22 For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now.

23 And not only *they*, but ourselves also, which have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, *to wit*, the redemption of our body.

24 For we are saved by hope: but hope that is seen is not hope: for what a man seeth, why doth he yet hope for?

25 But if we hope for that we see not, *then* do we with patience wait for *it*.

8:20-25 According to biblical theology paradise lost shall be paradise restored, when Jesus comes (2 Peter 3:13).

26 Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered.

27 And he that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because he maketh intercession for the saints according to *the will* of God.

8:26-27 As the Holy Spirit indwells the believer and provides power to keep the moral law of God, as the Spirit gives victory over the law of sin and death, as the Holy Spirit provides assurance of salvation, so the Spirit teaches the heart what to say in prayer while making intercession with groanings that cannot be uttered. "*Once we groaned in bondage, now we groan in grace.*"

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

8:28 For those who love God there is a high level of confidence that all that happens in life is because of the Father's will (Eph. 1:11). For the believer life is not guided by cosmic chance, an evolutionary process or economic determinism. Life for the Christian has definition and meaning. The believer has been called for a grand purpose which is to be conformed into the image of Christ.

29 For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate *to be* conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren.

30 Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified.

8:29-30 To confirm that life for the believer has purpose and definition, the apostle takes the reader into eternity past. Before any soul was ever created and saved God predetermined that Christians would become fully like the blessed Lord, "*conformed to the image of God's Son,*" that He, who was from all eternity the "*only Begotten*", might be "*the Firstborn among many brethren.*" To that end individuals are called by grace divine, justified by faith sublime on the basis of a redemption accomplished and applied with a view to ultimate glorification, which is as certain as the foreknowledge of God.

A Wonderful Sense of Security for the Saint: Romans 8:31-39

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

32 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?

33 Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? *It is* God that justifieth.

34 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.

35 Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? *Shall* tribulation [trouble], or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword [war]?

36 As it is written, For thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter.

37 Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us.

38 For I am persuaded [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 creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

8:31-39 The chapter began with no condemnation and ends with no separation. What more could the heart want by way of divine reassurance that all shall be well with the soul?

*“No condemnation; blessed is the word !
No separation; forever with the Lord,
By His blood He bought us, cleansed our
every stain;
With rapture now we’ll praise Him.
The Lamb for sinners slain.”*

~*~

J. Denham Smith

Study Guide

Romans

Questions on Romans 8

1. Why cannot the flesh find a way to please God?
2. Define the word, “*mortify*.” How does the concept of mortification of sin apply to the Christian?
3. What are the links in the golden chain of salvation that binds the believer to God?
4. What do the words “*Abba, Father*” mean in context?
5. List nine entities that will not separate the believer from the love of God

Answers to Romans 8

1. By nature the flesh has only self-interest. The flesh can only be consistent with its nature just as the Spirit can only be consistent with His nature which is holiness.
2. The word “*mortify*” means to put to death or to render inoperative. The believer has a holy responsibility to put those deeds to death which are contrary to the known will of God. Only through the power of the Spirit is it possible for mortification of sin to take place.
3. “*Abba, Father*” are words of endearment and teach the believer has a wonderful privilege of being on intimate terms with God.
4. The links in the golden chain of salvation are noted.
5. **Foreknowledge.** “*For whom he did foreknow...*”
6. **Predestination.** “*He also did predestinate to be conformed to*

the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren.”

7. **Calling.** “*Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called*”.
8. **Justification.** “*And whom he called, them he also justified.*”
9. **Glorification.** “*And whom he justified, them he also glorified.*”
10. The nine entities that will not separate the believer from the love of God are noted.
 - a. Death.
 - b. Life.
 - c. Angels.
 - d. Principalities or powers (demonic angels)
 - e. Things present.
 - f. Things to come,
 - g. Height.
 - h. Depth
 - i. Any other creature.

Personal Application and Reflection

1. What are some fleshly methods by which Christian try to gain victory over sin?
2. If you are not familiar with Twelve Step Programs offered by organizations such as AA (Alcoholics Anonymous) take time to discover what they are and evaluate them. How do they compare and contrast with the teaching of Paul in Romans 7-8?
3. Write a paragraph on the difference between faith and fantasy or wishful thinking in relation to the death of the reign of sin in the life of the believer.
4. In Romans 8: 9, Paul writes, “*Now if any man have not the Spirit of*

Christ, he is none of his.” In light of this do you think it would be possible for *Old Testaments* believers not to be indwelt by the Holy Spirit? Explain.

5. Is the believer active or passive in the process of sanctification?