SMITH FOR CHRIST

TEACHING THE WORD · WATCHING THE TIMES



DEEP DIVE

Romans

Chapter Eight, Verses 1–39

No Condemnation, No Separation — life in the Spirit, from the verdict of verse 1 to the love of verse 39

NASB 1995 | VERSE BY VERSE | FOUR VOICES | WITH DIAGRAMS

The chapter opens with a verdict no one can reverse and closes with a love nothing can break; between them the Spirit leads, adopts, groans and intercedes, and the golden chain runs unbroken from foreknowledge to glory. Read through four teachers — **David Guzik**, **R.C. Sproul**, **C.H. Spurgeon** and **Matthew Henry** — with the Greek behind Paul's key words.

THE PASSAGE

Romans 8:1–39

verdict · Spirit · groans · chain · love

THE METHOD

Verse by Verse

Color-coded by teacher

WHAT'S INSIDE

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Six movements from "no condemnation" to "nothing will separate us"

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"What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who is against us?" — Romans 8:31

SECTION I · THE PASSAGE

Romans 8:1–39

No Condemnation, No Separation — No condemnation at the start, no separation at the end — and the Spirit of God in every step between

† How to Read This Study

This study walks Romans 8 in 6 movements, in Paul's own order. Each movement opens with the full NASB 1995 text of those verses, marked with the Berean colors and shapes; then the Greek behind the key words; then the teachers, each in his own color — **David Guzik**, the pastor who walks the text verse by verse; **R.C. Sproul**, the theologian who presses every word for its doctrine; **C.H. Spurgeon**, the preacher who turns the doctrine into a call to the heart; and **Matthew Henry**, the Puritan commentator who gathers it into plain, practical counsel. The figures draw the argument so you can see where Paul is going. Read the Scripture first; then let each voice add its angle.

DAVID GUZIK · Enduring Word
R.C. SPROUL · Ligonier · St. Andrew's
C.H. SPURGEON · Metropolitan Tabernacle
MATTHEW HENRY · Commentary · Romans completed after 1714

HOW THIS STUDY IS MARKED
God — His character & actions
Command / instruction
Key repeated word
Sin / warning
Promise / blessing
Time / place / contrast

KEY VERSE · ROMANS 8:1

"Therefore there is now ☆ no condemnation for those who are △ in Christ Jesus."

† Before the Passage

Romans 7 ended with a cry and a thanksgiving: "Wretched man that I am! Who will set me free from the body of this death? Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord!" (7:24–25). Chapter 8 is the answer spelled out. The word "therefore" in verse 1 reaches back through the whole argument — sin in chapters 1–3, justification by faith in 3–5, union with Christ in 6, the law's inability in 7 — and draws the conclusion: no condemnation. Spurgeon preached 7 and 8 as one unbroken passage; the man who struggles in chapter 7 is not condemned in chapter 8.

If chapter 7 is the chapter of the law (the word appears more than twenty times there), chapter 8 is the chapter of the Spirit. The Holy Spirit is named only a handful of times in Romans 1–7; here *pneuma* appears twenty-one times — seventeen capitalized by the NASB as the Holy Spirit, four as "spirit" (v. 10, twice in v. 15, and "our

spirit" in v. 16). The Spirit sets free (v. 2), dwells (vv. 9, 11), gives life (v. 11), leads (v. 14), adopts (v. 15), testifies (v. 16), groans and intercedes (vv. 26–27). Romans 8 is what justification looks like when it is lived.

Paul's Old Testament roots run deep. The creation "subjected to futility" (v. 20) is the ground cursed in Genesis 3:17; the "sons of God" who cry "Abba" (v. 15) are Israel's calling — "Israel is My son, My firstborn" (Exodus 4:22) — now given to every believer in Christ; the courtroom of verses 33–34 echoes Isaiah 50:8 ("Who has a case against Me?"); and Paul quotes Psalm 44:22 to show that God's people have always suffered "for Your sake." Behind verse 32 stands Abraham on Moriah, who did not withhold his son (Genesis 22:12).

Read the chapter as a staircase. It begins in the courtroom (no condemnation, vv. 1–4), moves to the battlefield (flesh and Spirit, vv. 5–13), into the family (sons and heirs, vv. 14–17), out into a groaning world (vv. 18–27), up into God's eternal purpose (vv. 28–30), and ends in a doxology of questions no one can answer (vv. 31–39). It opens with "no condemnation" and closes with "no separation," and both rest on the same words: "in Christ Jesus" (vv. 1, 39).

I
MOVEMENT

ROMANS 8:1–4

No Condemnation

The verdict reversed — God did what the Law could not do

> [1] *Therefore there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.* [2] *For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set you free from the law of sin and of death.* [3] *For what the Law could not do, weak as it was through the flesh, God did: sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and as an offering for sin, He condemned sin in the flesh,* [4] *so that the requirement of the Law might be fulfilled in us, who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the Spirit.*
>
> ROMANS 8:1–4

κατάκριμα

KATAKRIMA · "CONDEMNATION" · G2631

Not merely "blame" but the sentence that follows a verdict — the penalty passed and carried out. The word appears only three times in the New Testament, all in Romans: twice in 5:16, 18 ("condemnation" came to all through Adam) and here. Paul puts *Ouden*, "no … at all," first in the sentence for emphasis: *Ouden ara nyn katakrima* — "none, therefore, now, condemnation." Verse 3 then uses the verb *katekrinen* (G2632): God "condemned sin in the flesh." The sentence did fall — on sin, in the flesh of His Son — and therefore it does not fall on those who are in Him. KJV's added clause in verse 1 ("who walk not after the flesh…") is not in the oldest manuscripts or the SBLGNT; it is borrowed from verse 4.

ἐν ὁμοιώματι σαρκὸς ἁμαρτίας

EN HOMOIŌMATI SARKOS HAMARTIAS · "IN THE LIKENESS OF SINFUL FLESH" · G3667

Homoiōma is a likeness or form — real resemblance without exact identity. Paul chooses it with care (as in Philippians 2:7, "being made in the likeness of men"). Christ's flesh was real flesh, but not *sinful* flesh; He came in its likeness. Then "as an offering for sin" — *peri hamartias*, the Septuagint's regular phrase for the sin offering (Leviticus 5–6). Verse 4's "requirement" is *dikaiōma* (G1345), the Law's righteous decree, singular: all that the Law required, fulfilled *in* us — not *by* us.

DAVID GUZIK · Enduring Word

Guzik hears the "therefore" as the end of a logical argument: we are united to Christ as body to head, and the verdict on the head covers the body — "You can't acquit the head and condemn the hand." Our standing has not merely improved; it has been changed outright. Verse 1 frees us from sin's guilt and verse 2 from its power. He thinks the KJV's closing clause in verse 1 is a later scribal addition, and notes that obedience is the fruit of union with Christ, not the condition for acquittal. The Law could instruct but could not empower; so God sent His Son, and "Jesus was treated as a sinner so we can be treated as righteous." The Law's requirement, he adds, "isn't fulfilled by us, but in us."

R.C. SPROUL · Ligonier · St. Andrew's

In his June 2006 sermon at St. Andrew's, Sproul ties the "therefore" to all of chapter 7 and says the condemnation in view is the final judgment. He refuses the idea that someone can be in Christ yet keep self on the throne: "The idea of a carnal Christian is as far away from the Apostolic teaching as one can get." The Law is weak through the flesh — it cannot justify or redeem — and "There is the gospel in a nutshell: What the law cannot do, God can do." He presses the word "likeness": Christ was born without original sin, and condemned sin in the flesh at the cross, where He bore God's wrath. Our sin was accounted to Him and His righteousness to us; that imputation, for Sproul, is nonnegotiable.

C.H. SPURGEON · Metropolitan Tabernacle

Spurgeon's 1886 sermon "In Christ Not Condemnation" refuses what he calls the serpent's gospel of universal amnesty: "we are all of us in a state of present condemnation, if we are not in Christ Jesus." Union with Christ is the whole matter, entered by faith — federal headship (ch. 5), living union (ch. 6), marriage (ch. 7), substitution. He tells his hearers that the Revised New Testament leaves out the clause about walking, borrowed from verse 4, yet still affirms that believers do walk by the Spirit. And he will not let anyone fear that inner struggle disproves salvation: "Souls that sigh for holiness are not condemned to eternal death, for their sighing proves that they are in Christ Jesus." "Free pardon is a great conqueror."

MATTHEW HENRY · Commentary · Romans completed after 1714

Henry opens the chapter on "the unspeakable privilege and comfort of all those that are in Christ Jesus." Sin remains in them, but it does not ruin them: "They may be chastened of the Lord, but not condemned with the world." The Law could neither justify nor sanctify, because of the weakness of our corrupt nature. "Christ comes to do that which the law could not do." In Christ sin was condemned, so that it might not condemn us, and the righteousness the Law requires is fulfilled in those who walk after the Spirit.

II
MOVEMENT

ROMANS 8:5–13

Two Minds, Two Ends

Flesh and Spirit — what each minds, where each leads, and what we owe

5 For those who are according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who are according to the Spirit, the things of the Spirit. 6 For the mind set on the flesh is death, but the mind set on the Spirit is life and peace, 7 because the mind set on the flesh is hostile toward God; for it does not subject itself to the law of God, for it is not even able to do so, 8 and those who are in the flesh cannot please

God. [9] *However, you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you. But if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Him.* [10] *If Christ is in you, though the body is dead because of sin, yet the spirit is alive because of righteousness.* [11] *But if the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who dwells in you.* [12] *So then, brethren, we are under obligation, not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh—* [13] *for if you are living according to the flesh, you must die; but if by the Spirit you are putting to death the deeds of the body, you will live.*

ROMANS 8:5–13

FIGURE · TWO MINDS, TWO ENDS

ROMANS 8:4–13	THE MIND SET ON THE FLESH	THE MIND SET ON THE SPIRIT
WHAT IT MINDS	the things of the flesh (v5)	the things of the Spirit (v5)
WHERE IT ENDS	death (v6; "you must die," v13)	life and peace (v6; "you will live," v13)
TOWARD GOD	hostile toward God; cannot please God (vv7–8)	the Spirit of God dwells in you; you belong to Christ (v9)
GOD'S LAW	does not subject itself — is not even able to (v7)	its requirement fulfilled in us (v4)
THE BODY	its deeds rule: living according to the flesh (v13)	its deeds put to death; life to mortal bodies (vv11, 13)

Read across each row: Paul sets the mind of the flesh and the mind of the Spirit side by side on what they think about, where they end, how they stand toward God, His law, and the body.

φρόνημα

PHRONĒMA · "MIND SET" · G5427

Not the intellect alone but the whole bent of a life — what a man thinks about, wants and aims at. The noun occurs four times in the New Testament, all in this chapter: "the mind set on the flesh" and "the mind set on the Spirit" (v. 6), the fleshly mind again (v. 7), and "the mind of the Spirit" (v. 27). Verse 5 uses the verb *phroneō*: they "set their minds on" the things of the flesh. Verse 7 calls the fleshly mind *echthra* (G2189) — not "hostile" as an adjective but "enmity," a noun: it does not merely have hostility; it *is* hostility toward God. The KJV's "carnally minded … spiritually minded" (v. 6) renders the same two phrases.

θανατοῦτε

THANATOUTE · "YOU ARE PUTTING TO DEATH" · G2289

From *thanatoō*, "to put to death, execute." It is present tense — an ongoing practice, not a single crisis — and it is something "you" do, yet only "by the Spirit" (*pneumati*). The KJV's "mortify" is the Latin for the same thing: make dead. Verse 12's "under obligation" is *opheiletai*, "debtors": we owe the flesh nothing. Paul never finishes the sentence ("not to the flesh …"); the reader supplies the other creditor — the Spirit.

DAVID GUZIK · Enduring Word

Guzik calls the mind "the strategic battleground where the flesh and the Spirit fight," and he is careful that "flesh" here means our sinful rebellion against God, not the ordinary needs of the body. The carnal mind cannot please God; he leans on Spurgeon, who said the mind is not only hostile but "enmity itself." On verse 9 he is blunt: "This means every believer has the Holy Spirit." He warns against splitting Christians into Spirit-filled and not, while keeping Paul's ongoing command to be filled (Ephesians 5:18), and he offers four tests: has the Spirit led you to Jesus, given you a desire to honor Him, begun making you like Him, and is He at work in your heart? We owe the flesh nothing; sin is put to death by the Spirit.

R.C. SPROUL · Ligonier · St. Andrew's

Sproul makes the mindset a test: where your treasure is, your thoughts go, and in a hundred years everyone will be in perdition or in glory. The carnal mind is not neutral toward God but hostile; he once told university atheists their problem was moral, not intellectual. The fleshly mind is not subject to God's law, "nor can it be" — natural moral inability, the fruit of original sin. Then comes his favorite word in the Bible, "but" (v. 9): the condition is simply that the Spirit dwells in you. "Every person the Spirit regenerates, the Spirit enters and indwells." In the next sermon he adds that believers owe the flesh nothing and, by the Spirit, put its deeds to death — though Paul goes on, because that alone would give little assurance.

C.H. SPURGEON · Metropolitan Tabernacle

Spurgeon preached verse 7 under the title "A Traitor Suspected and Convicted" (1885), aiming at quiet, respectable people who think they bear God no ill will. He exposes the enmity by a servant who works for everyone but his rightful master, a son who never reads his father's letters, a subject who spurns the king's free pardon. "It is enmity in essence: altogether and always enmity against God." "It is a solid block of aversion to God, and animosity against him." "The minding of the flesh sours the soul against God." Only the Holy Spirit can change such a heart, only the blood of Christ remove its guilt — and "your enmity will depart by a sense of God's love to you."

MATTHEW HENRY · Commentary · Romans completed after 1714

Henry tests every man by what he minds: "The mind is the forge of thoughts." To mind the flesh is spiritual death now and the certain way to eternal death; to mind the Spirit is life and peace. Of the carnal mind he writes, "It is not only an enemy, but enmity itself," and "An enemy may be reconciled, but enmity cannot." The Spirit's dwelling in us is the evidence that we belong to Christ. Where Christ is, the body still dies because of sin, but the soul lives, and the same Spirit will raise the body. So we are not debtors to the flesh: we must either mortify the deeds of the body or destroy the soul.

III
MOVEMENT

ROMANS 8:14–17

Sons, Not Slaves

The Spirit of adoption — "Abba! Father!" — and an inheritance shared with Christ

14 *For all who are being led by the* ⟲ *Spirit of God, these are sons of God.* 15 *For you have not received a* ⟲ *spirit of slavery leading to fear again, but you have received a* ⟲ *spirit of adoption as sons by which we cry out,* "☆ *Abba! Father!*" 16 *The* ⟲ *Spirit Himself* △ *testifies with our spirit that we are children of God,* 17 *and if children, heirs also, heirs of God and* ☆ *fellow heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him so that we may also be glorified with Him.*

ROMANS 8:14–17

υἱοθεσία

HUIOTHESIA · "ADOPTION AS SONS" · G5206

Literally "son-placing" (*huios*, son + *thesis*, a placing). Only Paul uses it — five times: Romans 8:15, 8:23, 9:4; Galatians 4:5; Ephesians 1:5. In Roman law an adopted son received a new father, a new name, a new inheritance — and, many writers add, his old debts were cancelled. Verse 15 has it as a present possession ("you have received"); verse 23 as a future completion ("waiting eagerly for our adoption as sons, the redemption of our body"). We are adopted now, and we will be adopted in full. *Abba* (G5) is the Aramaic word a child used for his father, kept untranslated beside the Greek *ho patēr* — as Jesus prayed in Gethsemane (Mark 14:36).

συμμαρτυρεῖ

SYMMARTYREI · "TESTIFIES WITH" · G4828

A second witness standing beside the first. Paul uses the verb only in Romans (2:15; 8:16; 9:1). Two witnesses establish a matter (Deuteronomy 19:15): our own spirit cries "Abba," and the Spirit Himself testifies alongside it. Verse 17 then piles up *syn-* words: "fellow heirs" (*synklēronomoi*, G4789), "suffer with" (*sympaschomen*), "glorified with" (*syndoxasthōmen*). Everything the Son has, the sons share — the cross and the crown.

DAVID GUZIK · Enduring Word

Guzik insists on the order: being led by the Spirit is the evidence of sonship, not the condition for it — "Instead, we become sons first and then the Spirit of God leads us." He lists how the Spirit leads (by guidance, by drawing, by governing authority, with our cooperation) and where He leads: to repentance, humility, truth, love, holiness and usefulness. Following F.F. Bruce, he explains Roman adoption, in which the adopted son became a full heir. The Spirit's witness with our spirit is the Old Testament rule of two witnesses at work: "God's children know who they are." And heirs share Christ's whole inheritance — including the suffering that comes before the glory.

R.C. SPROUL · Ligonier · St. Andrew's

Sproul (June 2006) says "led by the Spirit" has been bent by modern jargon into private guidance about decisions; in Scripture it means being led into holiness, for "this is the will of God, your sanctification" (1 Thessalonians 4:3). "The Bible is not magic." From John 8 he draws the rule of sonship: "You are a child of the one whom you obey." The spirit of bondage brings fear; the Spirit of adoption lets us cry "Abba, Father" — an intimacy he warns must never become presumption. And the Spirit's witness never comes apart from Scripture: "He communicates to them by the Word, with the Word, through the Word, and never, ever against the Word."

C.H. SPURGEON · Metropolitan Tabernacle

In "The Spirit of Bondage and of Adoption" Spurgeon grants that there is a bondage the Spirit Himself brings — conviction of sin — and it does good: "This bondage, which causes fear, breaks us off from self-righteousness, and puts an end to certain sins." "Is he not the more likely to be free if he loathes his slavery?" But servile fear is meant to be outgrown, "God forbid that God's children should tremble like slaves." The Spirit of adoption brings liberty, gratitude, a child's imitation of his Father, and a new kind of prayer. Of "Abba" he says, "That was a word for freeborn children only: no man can speak with God as God's children may."

MATTHEW HENRY · Commentary · Romans completed after 1714

For Henry the Spirit of adoption gives a child's disposition — love and trust in place of dread — and enables the cry "Abba, Father." The Spirit witnesses with our spirits that we are God's children: those who are sanctified have God's Spirit bearing witness with their own. Then the inference: if children, then heirs, joint-heirs with Christ. "The saints are heirs though in this world they are heirs under age" (Galatians 4:1–2) — not yet in possession, but certain of the estate. The suffering comes first, as it did for Christ, and the glory with Him after.

IV
MOVEMENT

ROMANS 8:18–27

Groaning Toward Glory

Creation groans, we groan, the Spirit groans — and all three wait in hope

18 *For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that is to be revealed to us.* 19 *For the anxious longing of the creation waits eagerly for the revealing of the sons of God.* 20 *For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of Him who subjected it, in hope* 21 *that the creation itself also will be set free from its slavery to corruption into the freedom of the glory of the children of God.* 22 *For we know that the whole creation groans and suffers the pains of childbirth together until now.* 23 *And not only this, but also we ourselves, having the first fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting eagerly for our adoption as sons, the redemption of our body.* 24 *For in hope we have been saved, but hope that is seen is not hope; for who hopes for what he already sees?* 25 *But if we hope for what we do not see, with perseverance we wait eagerly for it.* 26 *In the same way the Spirit also helps our weakness;*

> *for we do not know how to pray as we should, but △ the Spirit Himself intercedes for us with ⇄ groanings too deep for words; [27] and He who searches the hearts knows what the mind of the ⇄ Spirit is, because He intercedes for the saints according to the will of God.*
>
> ROMANS 8:18–27

> *"... Cursed is the ground because of you; In toil you will eat of it All the days of your life."*
>
> GENESIS 3:17

FIGURE · THE THREE GROANS



Creation, the church and the Spirit all groan in Romans 8 — and all three groans lean forward toward the same revealed glory.

ἀποκαραδοκία

APOKARADOKIA · "ANXIOUS LONGING" · G603

Built from *apo* (away), *kara* (head) and *dokeō* (to watch): watching with the head stretched forward — the craned neck of someone straining to see what is coming round the bend. Only twice in the New Testament: here and Philippians 1:20, Paul's own "earnest expectation." The creation is pictured on tiptoe. What it was "subjected to" is *mataiotēs* (G3153), futility — the frustration of something that cannot reach its purpose, the Septuagint's word for Ecclesiastes' "vanity." Its pains are *synōdinei* (G4944), "suffers birth pangs together": labor, not a death rattle.

Ὑπερεντυγχάνει στεναγμοῖς ἀλαλήτοις

HYPERENTYNCHANEI STENAGMOIS ALALĒTOIS · "INTERCEDES … WITH GROANINGS TOO DEEP FOR WORDS" · G5241, G4726, G215

Hyperentynchanō appears only here in the New Testament — "to intercede *over*, on behalf of." *Stenagmos* (G4726) appears only twice: here and Acts 7:34, Israel's groaning in Egypt that God heard. *Alalētos* (G215) is "unspoken, wordless." The three groans of the chapter use one root: creation *systenazei* (v. 22, G4959), "groans together"; we *stenazomen* (v. 23); the Spirit intercedes with *stenagmois* (v. 26). Verse 23's "first fruits" is *aparchē* (G536), the first sheaf that pledged the whole harvest (Leviticus 23:10).

DAVID GUZIK · Enduring Word

Guzik notes that Paul is no armchair theorist: few men suffered more, and he still judged present sufferings unworthy of comparison with the coming glory — a glory already placed within believers, waiting to be revealed. Creation was subjected to futility because of man's sin and longs for its release, the restored world of Isaiah 11. "Creation is not undergoing death pangs… but birth pangs." He has no patience for groups who claim creation is waiting for them as a spiritual elite. We groan too, having the firstfruits, and wait with perseverance. The Spirit's wordless intercession may include tongues, he allows, but is not limited to it — and tongues prove no one superior.

R.C. SPROUL · Ligonier · St. Andrew's

Sproul opens on the violence in the news and on John Stuart Mill's objection, and he locates evil's source in human sin, not in any lack of goodness in God; because of sin the whole creation is ruined. Paul does not deny suffering — "Paul is not a practitioner of Christian Science." Creation was subjected to futility by God's decree: "It was not by vote." Against Marx's "opiate," he holds that God's promises are certain: "The hope concept in the New Testament is descriptive of a situation in which the future is absolutely certain." And verses 26–27 teach that "Prayer is a Trinitarian activity" — to the Father, through the Son who intercedes, helped by the Spirit, who brings our requests into line with God's will.

C.H. SPURGEON · Metropolitan Tabernacle

Spurgeon's "Creation's Groans and the Saints' Sighs" (1868) begins with a world still beautiful but groaning under the curse. Believers already have "the first works of the Spirit in our souls" — repentance, faith, hope, love — "This is called the first-fruit because it comes first," a pledge of the harvest. "Having received something, we desire more." What is still lacking? The body's deliverance — it is "redeemed by price," not yet by power — the public manifestation of our adoption, full liberty, and the glory. So the saints groan "within themselves," not from impatience or greed, and wait in hope.

MATTHEW HENRY · Commentary · Romans completed after 1714

Henry weighs the two scales: on the sufferings of this present time Paul "writes tekel, weighed in the balance and found light." "There is a general outcry of the whole creation against the sin of man," and creation waits for its deliverance from corruption. Believers wait too, for the redemption of the body, and hope sustains them: "Grace is the first-fruits of glory, it is glory begun." When we do not know what to pray, the Spirit helps our weakness, and His intercession always agrees with the will of God: "Christ intercedes for us in heaven, the Spirit intercedes for us in our hearts."

V
MOVEMENT

ROMANS 8:28–30

The Golden Chain

All things work together — from foreknowledge to glory, God does every verb

> 28 *And we know that* △ *God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose.* 29 *For those whom He foreknew, He also* ⟲ *predestined to become* ☆ *conformed to the image of His Son, so that He would be the firstborn among many brethren;* 30 *and these whom He* ⟲ *predestined, He also called; and these whom He called, He also justified; and these whom He justified,* ◷ *He also glorified.*
>
> ROMANS 8:28–30

FIGURE · THE GOLDEN CHAIN

GOD IS THE SUBJECT OF EVERY VERB · ROMANS 8:29–30

FOREKNEW	PREDESTINED	CALLED	JUSTIFIED	GLORIFIED
set His love on them beforehand (v29)	marked out to be conformed to the image of His Son	summoned — "called according to His purpose"	declared righteous; no charge stands (v33)	past tense — so sure it is as good as done

"Those whom … these whom … these whom … these whom" — the same people at every link.

No one drops out between foreknown and glorified (Henry: "a golden chain, which cannot be broken").

Five verbs, one Subject, the same people at every link — and the last link is already written in the past tense.

συνεργεῖ

SYNERGEI · "WORK TOGETHER" · G4903

Our word "synergy": things working together that could not produce the result alone. It does not say each thing is good, but that all things are worked together *eis agathon*, "toward good." Some early manuscripts read "God works all things together"; the SBLGNT reads *panta synergei*, "all things work together," with God the implied worker. Either way, NASB95's "God causes" states the sense. The promise has its address: "to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose" — and "good" is defined by the next verse: being conformed to the image of His Son.

προέγνω … προώρισεν

PROEGNŌ … PROŌRISEN · "HE FOREKNEW … HE PREDESTINED" · G4267, G4309

Proginōskō occurs five times in the New Testament; with God as subject it is used of His people (Romans 8:29; 11:2 — "His people whom He foreknew") and of Christ (1 Peter 1:20). The object is persons — "those whom" — not facts about them; in the Old Testament "know" is often covenant love (Amos 3:2). *Proorizō*, "to mark out the boundary beforehand," appears six times (Acts 4:28; Romans 8:29, 30; 1 Corinthians 2:7; Ephesians 1:5, 11). The goal is *symmorphous* (G4832), "conformed" — shaped to the same form as the Son, the *prōtotokos* (G4416), firstborn among many brethren. All five verbs are aorist, glorified (*edoxasen*, G1392) included.

DAVID GUZIK · Enduring Word

Guzik stresses that God works *all* things, not some, and that the promise reaches into present suffering — but it belongs to those who love God and are called according to His purpose. The chain of foreknowledge, predestination, calling, justification and glorification shows God's sovereign work from beginning to end, and its goal is that we be made like Jesus; he notes that God works this with our cooperation. He quotes Chuck Smith's plain confession of security in it: "He wouldn't bring me this far and then dump me."

R.C. SPROUL · Ligonier · St. Andrew's

Sproul spent two sermons here (July 2006). On verse 28 he distinguishes evil acts from the good God brings through them — "You meant evil against me, but God meant it for good" (Genesis 50:20) — and concludes, "But in the ultimate sense, there are no tragedies for the Christian." On the chain he rejects the view that election rests on God foreseeing our faith: "Scripture nowhere says that predestination is based upon foreknowledge." *Proegnō* is personal, loving knowledge — those whom He "fore-loved"; "God does not predestine a nameless, faceless group of elect people." The call is the Spirit's effectual inward call, and no one drops out: "If you are saved now, you are saved forever and ever."

C.H. SPURGEON · Metropolitan Tabernacle

Spurgeon's "Predestination and Calling" begins, "The book of God's decrees is closed against the curiosity of man" — but its marks are written in the Word. There are two callings: a general call to all who hear the gospel, and an effectual call, "one that is heard and obeyed." So the question is not "Am I elect?" but "Am I called?" and the test is practical: "If you are living in sin, you are not called." Yet the comfort is strong: "If I am called, then I am predestinated, there is no doubt about it." He compares salvation to the chain at a horse-ferry — both ends fixed, the middle under the water; calling is the part we can see.

MATTHEW HENRY · Commentary · Romans completed after 1714

Henry reads verse 28 as the providences of God all working for the good of those who love Him — and good is what does the soul good, even when it does not please the flesh. Foreknowledge is God's loving choice, and predestination aims at holiness: "Holiness consists in our conformity to the image of Christ." The verses lay out "the order of the causes of our salvation, a golden chain, which cannot be broken." God is the sole author at every link, so none can know their election except by their conformity to Christ, and none who are called and justified will fail of glory.

VI
MOVEMENT

ROMANS 8:31–39

More Than Conquerors

Five questions no one can answer — and nothing that can separate us

31 *What then shall we say to these things? △ If God is for us, who is against us?* 32 *He who △ did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him over for us all, how will He not also with Him freely give us all things?* 33 *Who will bring a charge against God's elect? △ God is the one who justifies;* 34 *who is the one who condemns? Christ Jesus is He who died, yes, rather who was raised, who is at the right hand of God, △ who also intercedes for us.* 35 *Who will ⟲ separate us from the love of Christ? Will tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?* 36 *Just as it is written, "FOR YOUR SAKE WE ARE BEING PUT TO DEATH ALL DAY LONG; WE WERE CONSIDERED AS SHEEP TO BE SLAUGHTERED."* 37 *But in all these things we ☆ overwhelmingly conquer through Him who loved us.* 38 *For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers,* 39 *nor height, nor depth, nor any other created thing, will be able to ⟲ separate us from ☆ the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.*

ROMANS 8:31–39

"But for Your sake we are killed all day long; We are considered as sheep to be slaughtered."

PSALM 44:22

"He said, "Do not stretch out your hand against the lad, and do nothing to him; for now I know that you fear God, since you have not withheld your son, your only son, from Me.""

GENESIS 22:12

FIGURE · FIVE QUESTIONS AND SEVENTEEN THINGS THAT CANNOT SEPARATE

FIVE QUESTIONS NO ONE CAN ANSWER AGAINST US · ROMANS 8:31–35

1	If God is for us, who is against us?	v31	no one who can prevail
2	How will He not … freely give us all things?	v32	He already gave His own Son
3	Who will bring a charge against God's elect?	v33	God is the one who justifies
4	Who is the one who condemns?	v34	Christ died, rose, reigns, intercedes
5	Who will separate us from the love of Christ?	v35	nothing — see below (vv38–39)

SEVEN TROUBLES (v35)

- tribulation
- distress
- persecution
- famine
- nakedness
- peril
- sword

TEN POWERS (vv38–39)

- death
- life
- angels
- principalities
- things present
- things to come
- powers
- height
- depth
- nor any other created thing

None of them "will be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord" (v39).

Each of Paul's questions has the same answer — Christ — and every trouble and power he can name is listed only to be shut out.

Ὑπερνικῶμεν

HYPERNIKŌMEN · "WE OVERWHELMINGLY CONQUER" · G5245

Nikaō is "to conquer" (the root of the name Nike); *hyper* pushes it past the limit — "super-conquer." Used only here in the New Testament, present tense: we are going on winning — "in all these things," not by escaping them. And not by our strength: "through Him who loved us" (an aorist — the love shown once for all at the cross). Verse 32's "did not spare" is *pheidomai* (G5339), the very verb of the Septuagint at Genesis 22:12 and 16: Abraham did not spare his son; God did not spare His.

ἐγκαλέσει … χωρίσει

ENKALESEI … CHŌRISEI · "BRING A CHARGE … SEPARATE" · G1458, G5563

Enkaleō (G1458) is a courtroom word, to file a formal accusation — six of its seven New Testament uses are in Acts (19:38, 40; 23:28–29; 26:2, 7), most of them the charges against Paul; this is the seventh. The questions run like a trial: the charge (v. 33), the sentence ("who is the one who condemns?" *katakrinōn*, v. 34 — the word of 8:1 again), and the final attempt to divide (*chōrizō*, G5563, vv. 35, 39), the word Jesus used of marriage: "what God has joined together, let no man separate" (Matthew 19:6).

DAVID GUZIK · Enduring Word

Guzik notes that "If God is for us" is guarded by an "if": many assume God is on their side who are not reconciled to Him through Christ. For those who are, "One person plus God makes an unconquerable majority." The gift of the Son guarantees every lesser gift. No charge can stand when God is the one who justifies, and Christ — who died, rose and intercedes — is our advocate. On the list he notices that the sword is "the only item on the list that Paul had not yet personally experienced"; the rest he had already lived through. Nothing in creation — neither what looks good nor what looks evil — can separate us from God's love.

R.C. SPROUL · Ligonier · St. Andrew's

Sproul (August 2006) calls this *Deus pro nobis*, God for us — a premise, not a wish. He links verse 32 to Abraham and Isaac on Moriah and to the Father who did not spare the Son in Gethsemane. Here he states his Reformed reading openly: Christ was delivered up for the elect — "I do not believe for a moment that this was for all mankind" — a point on which Arminian readers of this chapter differ. "Satan never ceases accusing the brethren," but the accusation is futile: "The verdict is in." "There is no higher court of appeal than the verdict rendered by the sovereign judge of all the earth." Against the fear of losing salvation, nothing on Paul's representative list can separate.

C.H. SPURGEON · Metropolitan Tabernacle

Spurgeon's "More than Conquerors" surveys the victories already won: tribulation, famine and sword have not broken the church — "The Church has been the anvil, but she has broken many hammers." He warns that prosperity may be the greater danger: "If you cannot be torn in pieces by the roaring lion, you may be hugged to death by the bear." Why "more than" conquerors? "The power by which he overcomes is nobler far," the motive unselfish, the loss nothing that matters, and enemies are won by good done to them. The key to the whole text, he says, is "through Him that loved us."

MATTHEW HENRY · Commentary · Romans completed after 1714

Henry turns verse 33 into a courtroom where every charge has already been answered: "The book is crossed, the bond cancelled, the judgment vacated, the attainder reversed." Christ's death, resurrection, session and intercession secure the believer against all accusation. In suffering, too, believers are "not only conquerors, but more than conquerors, that is, triumphers" — they lose only the dross and gain glory, honour and peace. Nothing can separate us from God's love, because it rests on Christ, "the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever."

VII
THEME

CROSS-REFERENCES

The Passage in the Whole Bible

From the cursed ground to the face of Christ — where Romans 8 reaches back and forward

> *"He who vindicates Me is near; Who will contend with Me? Let us stand up to each other; Who has a case against Me? Let him draw near to Me."*
>
> ISAIAH 50:8

> *"He made Him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him."*
>
> 2 CORINTHIANS 5:21

> *"Because you are sons, God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into our hearts, crying, "Abba! Father!""*
>
> GALATIANS 4:6

> *"who also sealed us and gave us the Spirit in our hearts as a pledge."*
>
> 2 CORINTHIANS 1:22

> *"and I give eternal life to them, and they will never perish; and no one will snatch them out of My hand."*
>
> JOHN 10:28

> *"Therefore He is able also to save forever those who draw near to God through Him, since He always lives to make intercession for them."*
>
> HEBREWS 7:25

> *"Beloved, now we are children of God, and it has not appeared as yet what we will be. We know that when He appears, we will be like Him, because we will see Him just as He is."*
>
> 1 JOHN 3:2

DAVID GUZIK · Enduring Word

Guzik reads creation's longing (vv. 19–22) beside Isaiah 11, where the wolf dwells with the lamb: the world under the curse of Genesis 3 is in labor, and its delivery is the restored creation the prophets saw.

R.C. SPROUL · Ligonier · St. Andrew's

Sproul reads verse 32 through Genesis 22 — Abraham offering "the son whom he loved, Isaac, on the altar at Mount Moriah" — and through Gethsemane, where the Father did not spare His own Son.

SECTION II · STUDY HELPS

At a Glance

Four voices, one chapter

Four teachers, one chapter. Guzik walks the text and its tests; Sproul presses the doctrine — imputation, inability, effectual calling, perseverance; Spurgeon turns each truth into a plea to the heart; Henry gathers it into Puritan counsel. All four are Reformed or close to it on this chapter, so read their agreement on the golden chain as a tradition's voice, not a consensus of every Christian reader.

THE MOVEMENT	GUZIK · the text	SPROUL · the doctrine	SPURGEON · the heart	HENRY · the counsel
I · No condemnation	Acquit the head, acquit the hand; the Law fulfilled in us, not by us.	No carnal Christians; what the Law cannot do, God does; imputation is nonnegotiable.	Outside Christ, present condemnation; sighing for holiness proves you are in Him.	Chastened of the Lord but not condemned with the world.
II · Flesh and Spirit	The mind is the battleground; every believer has the Spirit; four tests.	Moral inability, then his favorite word — "but" — the Spirit indwells all He regenerates.	The carnal mind is a solid block of aversion; only God's love melts it.	The mind is the forge of thoughts; not an enemy but enmity itself.
III · Sons and heirs	Sons first, then led; God's children know who they are.	Led into holiness, not hunches; a child of the one you obey; never against the Word.	Spirit-given bondage breaks self-righteousness; Abba is for freeborn children only.	Heirs under age — not yet in possession, certain of the estate.
IV · The groans	Birth pangs, not death pangs; the Spirit's help is not proof of superiority.	Evil is from sin, futility by decree; hope means a certain future; prayer is Trinitarian.	Firstfruits make us groan for more; redeemed by price, not yet by power.	Suffering weighed and found light; grace is glory begun.
V · The chain	God works all things, not some; the goal is likeness to Jesus.	Not foreseen faith but fore-love; effectual call; saved now, saved forever.	Ask "Am I called?" — the visible link of the ferry chain.	A golden chain which cannot be broken; holiness is conformity to Christ.
VI · More than conquerors	Guarded by an "if"; one person plus God is a majority.	Deus pro nobis; the verdict is in; no higher court of appeal.	The anvil breaks the hammers; beware the bear's hug of prosperity.	The bond cancelled, the judgment vacated; love rests in Christ.

ROMANS 8:1–39 · A COMPARATIVE READING

† Key Insights to Carry

- **"No condemnation" and "no separation" are bookends.** Verse 1 and verse 39 both rest on the words "in Christ Jesus." The chapter begins with a verdict and ends with a love, and nothing between them is allowed to undo either. THE TEXT
- **The Spirit is the chapter's main character.** *Pneuma* appears twenty-one times in Romans 8 — seventeen capitalized by the NASB. Chapter 7 is crowded with "law"; chapter 8 with the Spirit who does what the Law could not. THE TEXT
- **The sentence still fell — on sin, in Christ's flesh.** *Katakrima* (v. 1) and *katekrinen* (v. 3): God did not cancel the condemnation; He executed it on sin in His Son. "Jesus was treated as a sinner so we can be treated as righteous." GUZIK
- **The mind is not neutral.** *Phronēma* — the whole bent of a life — appears only in this chapter. The fleshly mind is not merely hostile; it is *echthra*, enmity. Henry: "not only an enemy, but enmity itself." THE GREEK
- **Led by the Spirit means led into holiness.** Sproul: "led by the Spirit" is not private guidance about decisions but the Spirit leading God's sons toward righteousness — and He never speaks against the Word. SPROUL

- **Adopted now, adopted in full later.** *Huiothesia* is a present gift in v. 15 and a future hope in v. 23 — "the redemption of our body." We have the name now and the inheritance later. THE GREEK
- **Three groans, one hope.** Creation groans (v. 22), we groan (v. 23), the Spirit groans (v. 26) — and the groaning is labor, not death. Spurgeon: "Having received something, we desire more." SPURGEON
- **"Glorified" is already past tense.** All five verbs of the chain are aorist. Paul speaks of the believer's glory as if it were already done, because the God who began it is the one who finishes it. THE TEXT
- **Every question has the same answer.** God for us, the Son given, God who justifies, Christ who intercedes, the love of Christ: the five questions of vv. 31–35 are answered by a Person, not by our record. THE TEXT
- **The anvil outlasts the hammers.** Spurgeon: "The Church has been the anvil, but she has broken many hammers." We conquer "in all these things," not by being spared them. SPURGEON

† Questions for the Table

1 **Where do I still live as if I were under condemnation — replaying old guilt, waiting for the sentence to fall?**

The sentence did fall — on sin, in Christ's flesh. "No condemnation" is a verdict, not a mood.

8:1-3; 2 Cor 5:21

2 **What has my mind been set on this week? If someone read my thoughts, would they say "flesh" or "Spirit"?**

The mind is the forge of thoughts; what it minds, it becomes.

8:5-6

3 **Name one deed of the body I need to put to death, by the Spirit, starting today — and who will help me keep at it.**

Present tense: an ongoing practice, never in our own strength.

8:13

4 **Many of us grew up with absent or harsh fathers. What changes when I can call God "Abba! Father!"?**

A spirit of adoption, not of slavery leading to fear again.

8:15-16; Gal 4:6

5 **What suffering am I carrying that I have never weighed against "the glory that is to be revealed"?**

Henry: weighed in the balance and found light.

8:18, 28

6 **Which of the seventeen things in vv. 35–39 do I most fear could separate me from Christ — and what does Paul say about it?**

Each is named only to be shut out.

8:35-39; John 10:28

Romans 8 begins in a courtroom where the Judge has already spoken and ends with a love that holds when everything else lets go. Between them the Spirit dwells, leads, adopts, groans and prays. If you are in Christ Jesus, there is no condemnation for you today, and there will be no separation from Him ever.

Teaching the Word. Watching the Times. — Smith For Christ

† Sources

Each teacher's section summarizes the pages below in our own words; short quotations are verbatim from them. Matthew Henry died in 1714 having reached Acts; the Romans volume of his *Commentary* was completed by his successors (John Evans) from his notes and method, and is cited under his name as it is published. Henry's Commentary and C.H. Spurgeon (1834–1892) are in the public domain; Guzik and Sproul are summarized — consult each author's own work.

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