

Romans Study Part 7: The Assurance of Future Glory (8)

Covenant Presbyterian Church

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“The eighth chapter of Romans is an outburst of humble triumph on the Apostle’s part, on realizing that the conflict of the Christian life as depicted in the seventh chapter issues in victory, through the indwelling of the Holy Ghost.” - B.B. Warfield

I. Context

- A. In many respects Romans 8 is Paul’s answer to the question he raised in 7:24 “Who will deliver me from this body of death?”
- B. While 7:25 is an answer to this question, of sorts, chapter 8 fleshes this out in great detail.
 - 1. “The work of sanctification that Paul has earlier outlined is an imperfect one in the believer’s present experience. That imperfection is a constant reminder to ground our assurance of future glory in the justifying work of Christ. Paul returns to that work in Romans 8:1”¹
- C. Much of Romans 8 builds on what Paul has said about justification in chs. 3 & 5.

II. The Law of the Spirit of Life (vv.1-17)

- A. There is no condemnation for those in Christ Jesus (v.1)
 - 1. What a fantastic declaration!
- B. By virtue of our union with Christ we have been taken out of the realm of sin and death and placed into the realm of the Spirit (v.2).
 - 1. “Law” in v.2 is being used as a “governing principle” that constantly moves us to action.²
 - 2. In other words, we now live under the governance of the Holy Spirit
 - a) This brings countless blessings, which Paul highlights in vv.4-17
- C. God did what the Law could not do (v.3)
 - 1. The law reveals sin as sin. The law condemns us. It cannot redeem us (cf. Rom 3:20).
 - 2. But in Christ God has fulfilled the righteous requirements of the law on our behalf, so that this obedience might be counted as ours.
 - a) The “wondrous exchange” (cf. Rom 3:26)
 - 3. Here, Paul points to the fact that it is the Holy Spirit that applies the work of Christ to us.

¹ Guy Prentiss Waters, “Romans,” in *A Biblical-Theological Introduction to the New Testament: The Gospel Realized*, ed. by Michael J. Kruger (Wheaton: Crossway, 2016), 188.

² See Kelly Kapic and Justin Taylor, *Overcoming sin and temptation: Three classic works by John Owen*, (Wheaton: Crossway, 2006), 233-235.

D. Life according to the flesh vs. life according to the Spirit (vv.7-11)

Life according to the flesh	Life according to the Spirit
Preoccupied with seeking after that which belongs to the flesh (Gal. 5:19-21) (v.5)	Preoccupied with seeking after that which belongs to the Spirit (Gal. 5:22-23)
Is hostile to God (v.7)	Is at peace with God (v.6)
Do not and cannot submit to God's law (v.7)	Can and does submit to God's law (v.4)
Cannot please God (v.8)	Is pleasing to God (by contrast, v.8)
Does not belong to Christ (v.9)	Belongs to Christ (by contrast, v.9)
Is actually death (v.6)	Is life in abundance (v.6, 11)

E. Adoption (vv.12-17)

1. Q. 74. What is adoption?

A. Adoption is an act of the free grace of God, in and for his only Son Jesus Christ, whereby all those that are justified are received into the number of his children, have his name put upon them, the Spirit of his Son given to them, are under his fatherly care and dispensations, admitted to all the liberties and privileges of the sons of God, made heirs of all the promises, and fellow heirs with Christ in glory. (WLC)

2. All those that are justified, God vouchsafeth, in and for his only Son Jesus Christ, to make partakers of the grace of adoption, by which they are taken into the number, and enjoy the liberties and privileges of the children of God, have his name put upon them, receive the Spirit of adoption, have access to the throne of grace with boldness, are enabled to cry, Abba, Father, are pitied, protected, provided for, and chastened by him, as by a father: yet never cast off, but sealed to the day of redemption; and inherit the promises, as heirs of everlasting salvation. (WCF, 12.1)

3. Adoption grants us all rights and privileges of children of God

a) It makes us heirs of the Kingdom; co-heirs with Christ

b) Thus, it is closely associated with the doctrine of Assurance

(1) The Spirit, testifying to the fact that we have been adopted as children of God, is one of the means by which we have assurance:

(2) "This certainty is not a bare conjectural and probable persuasion grounded upon a fallible hope; but an infallible assurance of faith founded upon the divine truth of the promises of salvation, the inward evidence of those graces unto which these promises are made, the testimony of the

Spirit of adoption witnessing with our spirits that we are the children of God, which Spirit is the earnest of our inheritance, whereby we are sealed to the day of redemption.” (WCF, 18.2)

4. It guarantees our ultimate redemption, which is yet to come (glorification)
 - a) We are children of God, according to his eternal decree. Nothing can change, alter, or undo this.
 - b) Thus, it is closely associated with the doctrine of Perseverance

III. Glory Assured (vv.18-39)

A. Present suffering in right context (vv.18-25)

1. Paul reminds us of our future in order to reorient how we view the present
 - a) The present is not the be all and end all. We are assured a future that will be inexpressibly wondrous.
2. Our suffering is not the result of random, meaningless chance.
 - a) Human history is moving in a definite direction: towards victory, redemption, and vindication for the sons of God
 - b) Thus, even our suffering is directed for our good (v.28)
(1) Cf. Romans 5:1-5 and James 1:2-4

B. The Holy Spirit's Intercession (vv.26-28)

1. Though we know our story (and The Story) ends in triumph over sin, suffering, and death. But we don't know what lies on the road from here to there. We don't know what's necessary to bring us from this moment to that glorious day. So, left to our own we don't know how or what to pray for (v.26).
2. But the Holy Spirit intercedes for us
 - a) Intercession = acting on behalf of another; praying for another
3. “When we do not know what to pray for - yes, even when we pray for things that are not best for us - we need not despair, for we can depend on the Spirit's ministry of perfect intercession “on our behalf.” Here is one potent source of that “patient fortitude” with which we are to await our glory (v.25); that our failure to understand God's purposes and plans, to see “the beginning from the end,” does not mean that effective, powerful prayer for our specific needs is absent.”³

C. Golden chain of salvation”(vv.29-30)

1. A definite progression
 - a) ALL who are foreknown are predestined
 - b) ALL who are predestined are called
 - c) ALL who are called are justified
 - d) ALL who are justified are glorified
2. No one is lost along the way; no one slips through the cracks

³ Douglas Moo, *The Epistle to the Romans*, (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1996), 524.

a) Because our salvation is rooted in the immutable decree of God, it cannot be changed, revoked, forgotten, or lost (Phil 1:6)

b) Perseverance of the Saints

(1) "They, whom God hath accepted in his Beloved, effectually called, and sanctified by his Spirit, can neither totally nor finally fall away from the state of grace, but shall certainly persevere therein to the end, and be eternally saved."

(WCF, 17.1)

3. Ordo Salutis (Order of Salvation)

a) Predestination

b) Union with Christ

c) Calling

d) Regeneration

e) Faith and Repentance

f) Justification

g) Adoption

h) Sanctification

i) Perseverance

j) Glorification

D. If God is for us, who can be against us? (vv.31-39)

1. A fitting conclusion to this glorious chapter

2. We are a prized people, bought at the greatest price. Nothing and no one can separate us from the love of God that he shows us in Christ.

3. Who can bring a charge against the elect? Who can condemn? (vv.33-34)

a) No one! (back to v.1)

b) God Almighty, the creator and sustainer of all things, has chosen, according to his unchanging will, to love us. That's all that matters.