

## A Study in the Book of Romans

# 22

## Romans 8:30-37

### Key Verse

“ What, then, shall we say in response to this?  
If God is for us, who can be against us?  
He who did not spare his own Son, but gave  
him up for us all – how will he not also, along  
with him, graciously give us all things? ”

Having held up before us, in **8:29**, the glorious vision of our ultimate destiny, Paul retraces his steps in **8:30** and gives a brief summary of the stages in God’s redemptive plan that take us there. The two sides involved in that great plan of salvation – God’s and ours – can also be clearly seen:

- ➔ **Those God foreknew** (God’s forelove, our future relationship) – God saw and loved ahead the sons who would be born by the Spirit through faith in his Son.
- ➔ **He also predestined** (God’s plan, our goal) – He planned ahead that those loved sons, born of the Spirit, would grow to become just like his own beloved Son.
- ➔ **He also called** (God’s invitation, our response) – He set in motion the first step towards the fulfillment of his ultimate plan that Jesus might be “the firstborn among many brothers.” Through the Gospel, he sent the call into the whole world – and contained within that universal call is the call upon those who respond – the individual call for sons who will fulfill his purpose.
- ➔ **He also justified** (God’s work, our cleansing) – Those who respond to that universal call, he begins to transform by the miraculous work of the indwelling Spirit – forgiving their sin and placing them in right relationship with Himself.

#### Introduction

#### The Gospel’s Three Revelations

#### The Gospel’s Three Answers

#### The Gospel’s Answer to Israel

#### The Gospel in Action

#### Conclusion

- **He also glorified** (God's ultimate purpose, our glory) – The Holy Spirit works within each believer, remolding, renewing, transforming until his ultimate purpose is finally reached – many sons in the likeness of his Son!

John describes this end goal with such a sense of awe in **1 John 3:1-2**:

“How great is the love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God! And that is what we are! The reason the world does not know us is that it did not know him. Dear friends, now we are children of God, and what we will be has not yet been made known. But we know that when he appears, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is.”

And Paul declares with wonder in **1 Corinthians 2:7-11**:

“...we speak of God's secret wisdom, a wisdom that has been hidden and that God destined for our glory before time began...as it is written: ‘No eye has seen, no ear has heard, no mind has conceived what God has prepared for those who love him’ but God has revealed it to us by his Spirit. The Spirit searches all things, even the deep things of God.”

**Read Philippians 3:20-21**

## **What, then, shall we say in response to this?**

This is the question Paul now asks in **8:31**. In view of all that he has shared concerning the glorious Gospel, how can we possibly express the wonder of all it means to us?

Paul began his discourse on the Gospel by declaring in **1:16**:

“I am not ashamed of the Gospel, because it is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes!”

In the first eight chapters of his letter, he has written in great detail of all that that glorious Gospel entails. Now, at the end of **Romans 8**, with the glorious Gospel in clear view, he exclaims: “What shall we say in response to this?”

What shall we say to the glorious truth of...

### ***Salvation from sin's penalty – in the past***

Foundational to the Gospel is the truth that we have received forgiveness of our past through:

- **Justification (3:21-4:25)** – God intervened in man's condition of total depravity and guilt (**3:9**) and made his redemption available through the Cross.
- **Reconciliation (5:1-11)** – Peace and relationship with God are now ours because of the righteousness (right-standing) he has freely given us in Christ.

**Read Psalm 103:11-12**

And what shall we say to the glorious truth of..

### ***Salvation from sin's power – in the present***

As Christians, under a new Spirit-imbued covenant, we experience joy, victory and wonderful fellowship with the Father in the present through:

- ☞ **Identification (5:12-7:6)** – We are *in Christ!* (6:8). Sin's power over us was dealt the death-blow through our death with Christ on the Cross.
- ☞ **Sanctification (7:7-8:17)** – Christ is *in us!* (8:10). A new power has been put within us, enabling us to walk in the Spirit and live a life pleasing to God.

This life of victory over sin was made possible by our three “death and resurrection” experiences in Christ's own death and resurrection:

- ☞ Dead to sin – alive to God (**Romans 6**)
- ☞ Dead to the Law – married to Christ (**Romans 7**).
- ☞ Dead to the flesh – walking in the Spirit (**Romans 8**).

And what shall we say to the glorious truth of...

### ***Salvation from sin's presence – in the future***

Through the Cross, we have not only been delivered from sin's inward *power*, but also from sin's outward *presence*. This is our glorious hope in the future through:

- ☞ **Public adoption (8:18-27)** – At the return of Christ, there will come the wonderful day when our physical bodies will be transformed and all creation will publicly acknowledge the sons of God.
- ☞ **Glorification (8:28-30)** – At that time, the fullness of his glory will be revealed in us! We will be like the Lord Jesus in character, power, authority and glory!

What shall we say in response to all that God has done for us? All we can do is lift our hearts in wonder and praise him, echoing perhaps the words of **Jude 24-25**:

“To him who is able to keep you from falling and to present you before his glorious presence without fault and with great joy – to the only God our Savior be glory, majesty, power and authority, through Jesus Christ our Lord, before all ages, now and forevermore! Amen.”

## **The Triumph of the Gospel**

After asking the question – “What shall we say in response to this?” – Paul proceeds to answer his question with five more questions, each containing within it the unspoken but perfectly understood triumphant answer:

- ☞ If God is for us, who can be against us? (**8:31**)
- ☞ He who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all – how will he not also, along with him, graciously give us all things? (**8:32**)

- Who will bring any charge against those whom God has chosen? (8:33)
- Who is he that condemns? (8:34)
- Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? (8:35)

And then, in 8:37, Paul declares his triumphant answer to them all:

“No, in all these things, we are *more than conquerors* through him who loved us!”

Within each of these rhetorical questions is contained the triumphant outworking in our lives of all that Paul has been declaring. In each question, Paul is expressing the glorious results of the full salvation accomplished for us by God himself – triumphant results in the face of all our opponents.

## **If God is For Us...**

At the beginning of his letter (1:18), Paul had revealed how God’s anger was against sinful man. Now, having brought us through all the experiences of the wonderful Gospel, he proclaims that the opposite is now true. God is for us! And, according to the essential meaning of Paul’s question in 8:31, who can possibly succeed in opposing us when God is on our side? One can almost hear Paul adding, “What a ridiculous thought!”

**Psalm 118:6-7** expresses it beautifully:

“The Lord is with me; I will not be afraid. What can man do to me? The Lord is with me; he is my helper. I will look in triumph on my enemies.”

Everything Paul has written of the Gospel has revealed the extent to which God is for us.

- If he has forgiven us...Satan has no grounds of accusation.
- If he has declared us righteous...Satan cannot condemn us.
- If he has released us into the law of the Spirit of life...Satan cannot hold us to the law of sin and death.
- If he has given us the power of his Spirit within...Satan’s power cannot overcome us.
- If he has made us children...Satan cannot block our access into his presence.
- If he has made us his heirs...Satan cannot keep us from enjoying all that rightfully belongs to us.
- If he has predestined us to glory...Satan cannot frustrate God’s ultimate plan for our lives.

Through the Gospel, in every area, God is now on our side! As our Creator, he is now rejoicing over us. As our Judge, he is now satisfied. As our Lord, he now blesses us. As our King, he now shares his realm with us. As our Father, he now shares his very Self with us.

## Who Will Bring Any Charge?

Look at the extreme to which God went in dismissing all the charges against us! In view of this, Paul asks: “Who would dare bring any charge against those God has pardoned – those whom he has adopted as his children?” Paul challenges the ludicrousness of the very thought, for he is totally confident that not one person will be able to rise in answer. The crowning revelation to all he has thus far said is this: The believer’s position in Christ is indisputable! As he writes in **Colossians 3:3**:

“For you died, and your life is now hidden with Christ in God.”

As the highest Judge, God’s verdict cannot be reversed! There is no higher court of appeal! And so, all accusing mouths must be closed and every opposing voice silenced. This is what the Law of Moses did with regard to sin (**3:19**) and this is now what the Gospel does with regard to God’s salvation!

There remain, however, three dissenting voices that may attempt to raise themselves in accusation against the child of God:

### ***Accusations of Satan***

#### **Read Revelation 12:10**

Satan concentrates his accusations in the three areas where the Gospel touches the believer’s life:

- **Our past** – In his attempt to point the finger of accusation, Satan would seek to dredge up all the old sins of the past and bring condemnation upon the believer. But the first marvelous reality of the Gospel is that God has *completely* dealt with the past on the Cross. Our old self was crucified in Christ (**Romans 6:6**). Now, instead of being still tied to the past, we are a new person with a new past (**2 Corinthians 5:17,21**) – a new creation “created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness” (**Ephesians 4:24**). Satan’s case is dismissed for lack of evidence.
- **Our present** – Satan also seeks to accuse the Christian in his day-to-day life. His aim is to make him believe that, though he is now a child of God, it is expected that he will fail. But the second marvelous area of the Gospel deals with the present: the mastery sin once had over our lives has been broken on the Cross! (**6:14; 8:1-2**). It is not God’s intention for his child to be wallowing in constant failure. However, even if a Christian does fail, there is still no accusation that the enemy can bring! As **1 John 2:1** expresses it: “My dear children, I write this to you *so that you will not sin*. But *if* anybody does sin, we have one who speaks to the Father in our defense – Jesus Christ, the Righteous One.” In other words, we have Someone acting as our defense attorney, speaking to the Father on our behalf, and challenging all accusations that the enemy would rail against us. In the Gospel, every base is covered! Satan’s voice of accusation is groundless!

- **Our future** – The third area of a believer’s life against which Satan would try to bring accusation is the destiny ahead of him – the image of God’s Son. Satan would seek to bring the believer under condemnation when his present life does not seem to measure up to that glorious destiny. But the wonderful truth that Paul has just revealed in **8:29-30** is that God’s plan for us was laid out even before the universe was created. God knows what we are like (**Psalm 103:14; Psalm 139:1-4,13-16**), yet his plans cannot be thwarted (**Job 42:2; Isaiah 14:24; 25:1; 46:10**).

**Read Philippians 1:6**

**Read 1 Thessalonians 5:23-24**

### ***Self-accusation***

Many times, the Christian’s biggest opponent is himself. Encouraged by the enemy, a believer’s mind, when faced by failure, can plunge in self-condemnation. But part of the glorious Gospel is that we now have the Spirit of God himself living inside us, performing a work of change where we can’t. That is why Paul exclaims that he is not ashamed of the Gospel – “because it is the power of God”! (**1:16**).

All self-accusation must be silenced – for who are we to contradict God’s verdict? As John declares in **1 John 3:19-20**:

“This then is how we know that we belong to the truth, and how we set our hearts at rest in his presence whenever our hearts condemn us. For God is greater than our hearts, and he knows everything.”

### ***Accusations of others***

A believer is not an isolated individual, but a person often surrounded by unbelievers with negative opinions and conflicting ideas of life. They will often speak in opposition to God’s Word, offering all sorts of opinions to a believer on what he is doing wrong, and these form a barrage of accusation against his mind.

This constant challenge to the Word of God, however, is silenced in our minds by a simple revelation of who God has made us – his children and his heirs – of which the Holy Spirit himself bears witness (**8:15-17**).

What we must realize is that all these accusations are not so much against us as against the character of God and the glorious reality of the Gospel – and thus they have to answer to God himself.

**Read Isaiah 50:7-9**

**Read Hebrews 13:5-6**

Paul boldly throws down the gauntlet:

“Who dare bring any charge against those whom God has chosen?”

A silence hangs in the air after his challenge, for the answer is no one!

## Who is He That Condemns?

In the previous verse Paul put forth the challenge: “Who dare accuse God’s elect?” In the face of the truth of the Gospel, all accusing voices are silenced. Now he takes it the obvious stage further. If no one can raise an accusing finger before the court of heaven at those in Christ, how can anyone pronounce a judgment of “guilty” on them? In other words, if there are no grounds to bring them to trial, how can there be grounds for them to be sentenced? “Who,” asks Paul, “is he that condemns?”

### Is it Christ?

In answer to his question, Paul makes the statement: “Christ Jesus is He who died!” (NASB). In other words, the Lord Jesus – who is the only one who has the right to condemn us – is the one who died for us.

Do you remember the account of the woman who was caught in adultery? (**John 8:2-11**). The Pharisees, wanting to trap Jesus, asked: “In the Law, Moses commanded us to stone such women. Now what do you say?” Jesus’ reply is very significant: “If any one of you is without sin, let him be the first to throw a stone at her.” What Jesus was saying is that the only one who qualified to act as judge is the one without sin. The account then tells us how, one by one, they began to leave – from the oldest to the youngest – until only Jesus was left! Jesus was the only one without sin! He was the only one qualified to cast a stone at her. Only he had the right to judge. And the verdict he passed upon her was: “Neither do I condemn you. Go now and leave your life of sin.”

This is a picture of what Jesus has done for all those who believe in him. The only true Judge is God himself, for he is the only one who fulfills the standards and requirements to act as judge. And, as the righteous Judge, instead of condemning us, Jesus Christ fulfilled the demands of his own justice by taking the sentence upon himself, thereby setting us free. He has already, in Christ, pronounced the verdict: “Not guilty!”

### Is it Satan?

If the only one who can act as judge is the one without sin what right, then, has Satan to preside as judge over our lives? He is sin personified! His very attempt to bring condemnation upon us is expressing his continuous desire to usurp the authority of God. His original fall from his heavenly position as Lucifer, the “covering cherub” (**Ezekiel 28:12-17**), was caused through his desire to be as God and sit in his position of power and authority (**Isaiah 14:12-15**). Pride – the very fountainhead of sin – motivated his original rebellion (note **1 Timothy 3:6**)

So, Satan has no right to condemn us because:

- He is full of sin
- No such authority belongs to him

In fact, his audacity in attempting to condemn the Christian – the one God has declared “not guilty!” – is the epitome of his rebellion against God.

## **Beyond Condemnation**

“Who can condemn us?” asks Paul. No one! For God, the only true Judge, has forgiven us in Christ and declared us righteous. Paul now gives four reasons why no one can condemn the believer:

### ***Christ’s death***

Our faith in the death of Christ as our substitute for sin is our protection against any condemnation of the enemy – for all our judgment has been met in that death. The debt has been paid in full! The demands of justice have been met! In Christ’s death, I, the guilty party, received due punishment and died. Case closed!

### ***Christ’s resurrection***

But even more than that, says Paul, his resurrection nullifies the enemy’s accusations – for he was raised for our justification (**4:25**). In other words, the resurrection was the evidence of our acceptance before God. And we were raised in Christ a new creation – a totally new person (**2 Corinthians 5:17**).

### ***Christ’s ascension***

Christ’s return to heaven to be seated once again on the throne at the right hand of his Father meant tremendous victory for those who believe in him – for two reasons:

- **He has universal dominion!** Seated on the throne of the Firstborn, he is in the supreme position above all powers (**Ephesians 1:19-22; Philippians 2:9-11**) and his word is the final authority. He has declared us righteous – who dare speak above his word and condemn us?
- **He has seated us together with him!** We were not only raised with Christ, but we also ascended to the throne in him! He has given us authority over the enemy (**Luke 10:18-19**). And in the age to come, says Paul in **1 Corinthians 6:2-3**, this authority will have its fullest expression – we shall judge the world and angels!

### ***Christ’s continuing intercession***

Rather than condemning us, the exact opposite is true. Christ ever lives to be our Advocate – to plead on our behalf! As we have already seen, John states this clearly in **1 John 2:1-2**:

“...we have one who speaks to the Father in our defense.”

Thus now, for the believer, there is no ground for condemnation, since Christ has taken the penalty. No law can condemn us, since we have been set free from the Law. No court can judge us, since we now stand before the throne of grace. And no judge remains to sentence us, since God Himself – the only true Judge – is our justifier!

In fact, says Paul, the Christian life is not just the absence of condemnation. It is the gracious outpouring of every blessing that God can possibly bestow. For Paul brings this answer to any accusation that Satan might bring:

“He who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all—how will he not also, along with him, graciously give us all things?”

If God gave the ultimate gift, what would stop him from bestowing all his other gifts? If God gave the ultimate sacrifice – his own Son – how can he not continue to bless us?

**Read 2 Corinthians 9:8**

## **Who Shall Separate Us...?**

In the face of the Gospel he has revealed, Paul brings his final challenge: “Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?”

### ***The daring challenge!***

**Read Romans 8:35-36**

Who shall? Shall mere physical forces? Paul begins listing all the adverse circumstances that each one of us may face. He doesn't say that Christ's love separates us from these adverse forces – but, rather, that they can do nothing to separate us from his love! Let's take a look at each of these adverse forces:

- **Trouble** – Contained within this one word is every adverse circumstance we might ever have to face. The Greek word Paul uses literally means “pressure.” In a world with pressures coming at us from all angles, nothing can separate us from Christ's love! In fact, it is during these times that his love becomes even more of a reality to us!
- **Hardship** – This word literally means “a strait place” – in other words, a restricted experience. There are times when we find ourselves in a situation where we feel restricted – like being in a spiritual “straitjacket.” At times we may even feel “distant” from the Lord because of what we are going through. Yet never does his love leave us, and that love takes us through the experience and brings us out once again to ultimate victory.
- **Persecution** – The literal word used here in the Greek means “pursuit” – times when Satan, through people, is in “pursuit” to try and destroy us. In **2 Timothy 3:10-12**, Paul states that all who want to live a godly life in Christ can expect persecution – and the Lord Jesus actually included it among the privileges belonging to believers! (**Mark 10:29-30; Acts 5:41**). Again the challenge, “Shall persecution separate us from his love?”, is met with the victorious answer “never!” Instead of causing separation, it actually results in special blessing (**Matthew 5:10-12; 2 Corinthians 12:9-10**).
- **Famine** (literally, “hunger”) **and nakedness** – No food and no clothing!

These are two of the essentials of life, but never can lack separate us from God's love. In fact, in his love he has promised to meet the needs of those who are his (**Matthew 6:25-33; Philippians 4:19**).

- ☞ **Danger** – In the face of any kind of danger, God's love remains with us, dispelling all fear “because God has said, ‘Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you.’ So we say with confidence, ‘The Lord is my helper; I will not be afraid. What can man do to me’” (**Hebrews 13:5-6**). See also **Psalms 91**.
- ☞ **Sword** – Literally, “a fighting weapon.” This is the ultimate expression of all the adverse circumstances in life – facing death itself for the sake of Christ. In **8:36**, Paul links us with all the saints of old, quoting from **Psalms 44:22**, who because of their love for God lived their lives with a willingness to face death for him (**Hebrews 11:32-40; Philippians 1:21**).

### ***The triumphant answer!***

#### **Read Romans 8:37**

None shall! In fact, Paul's answer is adamant:

“No, *in all these things* we are more than conquerors through him who loved us.”

In what things? In all the things that Paul has just listed in **8:35-36** – trouble, hardship, persecution, famine, nakedness, sword and death. It is in the midst of these things – the worst that Satan can throw against us – that we are “more than conquerors.”

The same love that caused God to send his Son into the world (**John 3:16**), the same love that motivated Christ to sacrifice his life upon the Cross (**Romans 5:8**), the same love that the Holy Spirit now pours into our lives (**5:5**) – this same love is now the basis of total victory in life!

### **The Final List**

#### **Read Romans 8:38-39**

Having listed all the physical forces that may come against us, Paul goes on to include the spiritual and eternal forces:

- ☞ **Neither death nor life** – Whether we live or die, nothing can separate us from Christ's love! (**Philippians 1:21; Romans 14:8**).
- ☞ **Neither angels nor demons** – None of the forces of the heavenly realm can succeed in separating us from God, who is far above all these powers (**Ephesians 1:21; 1 Peter 3:22**).
- ☞ **Neither present nor future** – Nothing in this age now, nor in the age to come has any impact whatsoever on the salvation that God has wrought for you!

- **Nor any powers** – No government or law, whether physical or spiritual, can change the love God has for you!
- **Neither height nor depth** – Nothing in any realm, no matter how far up or how far down, can affect our relationship with God. “Height” and “depth” have long been technical terms in astrology. Many in Paul’s day (as even today) were haunted by the domination that the stars supposedly had over their lives. No power, whether real or imaginary, can touch the lives of those who belong to Christ!
- **Nor anything else in all creation** – Anything else that may not have been covered in the above lists also has no power to sway the eternal destiny of the believer!

Paul’s list is now totally comprehensive. Nothing – absolutely nothing – says Paul, can separate the believer from the love of the Savior. That love is unlimited. Sin couldn’t stop it – he came and vanquished sin. The powers of darkness, death and hell couldn’t stop it – he came and conquered them all. Nothing, says Paul, in space or time – neither the most extreme changes of conditions (death and life), nor the most powerful beings in the universe (angels and demons), nor anything that could possibly be found within the boundaries of the universe – can separate the believer from the love of Christ. And that love is always expressed in action. In all the things that Paul has listed, the Lord’s love brings strength and power and provision and victory!

## Super-Conquerors

Because of the love of Christ, says Paul, we are “more than conquerors” in every adverse circumstance. A super-conqueror is one who possesses an overwhelming defeat of all opposing forces. The *New Living Translation* expresses **8:37** with these words:

“No, despite all these things, *overwhelming victory* is ours through Christ, who loved us.”

Perhaps the most beautiful translation of **8:37** is not even in English. The Chinese *Union Bible*, when translated into English, renders **8:37** in this way:

“No, in all these things, we have the victory, with plenty left over.”

As Christians, we don’t just have the victory! We have victory in excess. It is an “overwhelming victory.” It is a victory “with plenty left over.” We are more than mere conquerors. We are super-conquerors over:

- Enemies (**8:31**)
- Condemnation (**8:33-34**)
- Circumstances (**8:35-36**)
- Life and death (**8:38**)
- All powers (**8:38-39**)

After all that Paul has described about the power of the Gospel, starting in **1:16** and ending in **8:30**, these last few verses in **8:31-37** are like the closing statement in the case that Paul has presented. And what a conclusion!

*The Message*, in its incomparable style, phrases Paul's closing statement with these words:

So, what do you think? With God on our side like this, how can we lose? If God didn't hesitate to put everything on the line for us, embracing our condition and exposing himself to the worst by sending his own Son, is there anything else he wouldn't gladly and freely do for us? And who would dare tangle with God by messing with one of God's chosen? Who would dare even to point a finger? The One who died for us – who was raised to life for us! – is in the presence of God at this very moment sticking up for us. Do you think anyone is going to be able to drive a wedge between us and Christ's love for us? There is no way! Not trouble, not hard times, not hatred, not hunger, not homelessness, not bullying threats, not backstabbing, not even the worst sins listed in Scripture...None of this fazes us because Jesus loves us. I'm absolutely convinced that nothing – nothing living or dead, angelic or demonic, today or tomorrow, high or low, thinkable or unthinkable – absolutely *nothing* can get between us and God's love because of the way that Jesus our Master has embraced us."