

Saved by God’s Gift and Acquittal (8:31-34a)

^{8:31}What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who is against us? ^{8:32}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? ^{8:33}Who will bring a charge against God’s elect? God is the one Who justifies; ^{8:34a}who is the one who condemns?

The Adversary’s Defeat (8:31)

- The rhetorical question “If God is for us, who is against us?” does not mean that no one opposes us. 8:35-39 show us that indeed the Church has adversaries. Paul is teaching us that in comparison to God, our opponents are nothing, especially since “God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose” (8:28). “All things” include “tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword... death...life...angels...principalities...things present...things to come...powers...height...depth...any other created thing” (8:35,38,39).

The Highest Blessing Includes All Blessings (8:32)

- In Genesis 22:1-19, Abraham is commanded to sacrifice his son Isaac. Isaac is spared by God, Who provides a substitution. Because of Abraham’s faithful obedience, the LORD makes this promise to him: “‘By Myself I have sworn,’ declares the LORD, ‘because you have done this thing and have not withheld your son, your only son, indeed I will greatly bless you, and I will greatly multiply your seed as the stars of the heavens and as the sand which is on the seashore; and your seed shall possess the gate of their enemies. In your seed all the nations of the earth shall be blessed, because you have obeyed My voice’” (22:16-18; this last sentence is called “the Gospel” in Galatians 3:8,16).

- Since the Person of the “Son” is named, “God” is the Father in 8:31 (see also 1:7; 15:6). The Father “did not spare His own Son,” that is, none of the Father’s wrath we deserved was held back from the Son: “...the LORD was pleased to crush Him, putting Him to grief” (Isaiah 53:10). Because the Father held nothing back, “there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus” (8:1). God is infinite in glory, therefore all sin against Him is an infinite insult, deserving an immeasurable wrath. The punishment is equal to the crime. The wrath the Son willingly received on the cross in our place would have taken us an eternity to endure. Instead, we will praise Him forever for His great grace and mercy.
- “All things” are of lesser value than the gift of Jesus Christ.¹
 - “...to live is Christ and to die is gain...having the desire to depart and be with Christ” (Philippians 1:21,23).
 - “...whatever things were gain to me, those things I have counted as loss for the sake of Christ. More than that, I count all things to be loss in view of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for Whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them but rubbish so that I may gain Christ, and may be found in Him” (Philippians 3:7-9).
 - “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, Who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ” (Ephesians 1:3).

¹ Compare this with 1 Corinthians 3:21-23.

God’s Elect Acquitted

- These rhetorical questions and Paul’s mentioning the acquittal (justification) of God’s people is an echo of Isaiah:
 - **“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.
Behold, the Lord GOD helps Me;
Who is he who condemns Me?” (Isaiah 50:8,9a).
 - **“No weapon that is formed against you will prosper;**
And every tongue that accuses you in judgment you will condemn.
This is the heritage of the servants of the LORD,
And their vindication is from Me,” declares the LORD” (Isaiah 54:17).
 - Remember: we are only justified by faith in Jesus Christ alone for our salvation.²
- **“Who will bring a charge against God’s elect? God is the one Who justifies...”** Who are **“God’s elect”**?
 - **“Elect”** describes those chosen by God to be saved by faith in His Son:
 - **“...many are called, but few are chosen**
[ἐκλεκτοί, from ἐκλεκτός]”
(Matthew 22:14).
 - **READ Colossians 3:12-17**, which introduces how believers are to act with the phrase, **“as those who have been chosen** [ἐκλεκτοί, from ἐκλεκτός] **of God.”**

² Romans 3:22-24,26; 5:1,8,9; 1 Corinthians 6:11; Galatians 2:16; 3:24; Philippians 3:9.

- **READ 2 Timothy 2:10; Titus 1:1;**
1 Peter 1:2; 2:4,9;
Revelation 17:14.
 - **“Elect”** can also be a verb, describing God’s choosing to save a people through His Son from eternity past: **“...He chose** [ἐξελέξατο, from ἐκλέγομαι] **us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we would be holy and blameless before Him”** (Ephesians 1:4).
 - God’s election will be discussed in Romans 9:11; 11:5,7.
- God justifies (acquits) those whom He has elected in eternity past. Both of these actions of God describe God’s work to save us:
 - Election occurs by **“God’s purpose according to His choice...not because of works but because of Him Who calls”** (Romans 9:11). He elected His people **“before the foundation of the world”** (Ephesians 1:4).
 - Justification happens in human history, in our lives, when we hear the Gospel and believe.³

³ The 1689 Baptist Confession (also called the Second London Confession) describes election this way:

- **“God hath decreed in Himself, from all eternity, by the most wise and holy counsel of His own will, freely and unchangeably, all things whatsoever comes to pass; yet so as thereby is God neither the author of sin nor hath fellowship with any therein; nor is violence offered to the will of the creature...”** (3.1).
- **“...by the decree of God, for the manifestation of His glory, some men...are predestinated, or foreordained, to eternal life through Jesus Christ, to the praise of His glorious grace; others being left to act in their sin to their just condemnation, to the praise of His glorious justice”** (3.3).

Fourfold Foundation of Our Comfort and Eternal Security (8:34b)

^{8:34b} *Christ Jesus is He Who died, yes, rather Who was raised, Who is at the right hand of God, Who also intercedes for us.*

He Who Died

- While Paul doesn't explicitly explain why Jesus died in this verse, he has already explained it numerous times in this letter (3:21-26; 4:25; 5:8-11; 6:4-10; 8:3,4).

• “Those of mankind that are predestinated to life, God, before the foundation of the world was laid, according to His eternal and immutable purpose, and the secret counsel and good pleasure of His will, hath chosen in Christ unto everlasting glory, out of His mere free grace and love, without any other thing in the creature as a condition or cause moving Him thereunto” (3:5).

• “As God hath appointed the elect unto glory, so He hath, by the eternal and most free purpose of His will, foreordained all the means thereunto; wherefore they who are elected, being fallen in Adam, are redeemed by Christ, are effectually called unto faith in Christ, by His Spirit working in due season, are justified, adopted, sanctified, and kept by His power through faith unto salvation; neither are any other redeemed by Christ, or effectually called, justified, adopted, sanctified, and saved, but the elect only” (3.6).

I quote the 1689 a lot in my notes because it is one of our earliest and greatest Baptist confessions (and therefore is our spiritual inheritance and heritage), and it describes my personal theological understanding of what the Bible teaches. Nothing in it disagrees with the *Baptist Faith & Message (2000)*, the confession of the Southern Baptist Convention, Baptist Convention of New Mexico, and our own beloved fellowship, Indian Hills Baptist Church.

He Who Was Raised

- Since the believers to whom Paul is writing are themselves facing death (8:35,36,38), the resurrection of Christ from the dead is a source of comfort to those who believe. (4:25; 6:4,5; 8:11).

He Who Is At the Right Hand of God

- The “*right hand of God*” is a place of highest dominion, power, and glory.⁴
- Since God is omnipresent (present in all places), and the Son is eternally and fully God, the divine nature of the Son is not located in any one place.⁵ When conceived in the womb of the virgin Mary by the Holy Spirit, however, He voluntarily added a real human nature to His divinity. He remains fully human in heaven, and therefore is located in a place.

⁴ Matthew 26:64; Mark 14:62; Acts 2:33; 5:31; 7:55,56; Ephesians 1:20; Colossians 3:1; Hebrews 1:3; 8:1; 10:12; 12:2; 1 Peter 3:22.

⁵ “...*I am with you always, even to the end of the age*” (Matthew 28:20; see also Matthew 18:20). Hercules Collins, a 17th century Baptist pastor, gave his congregation a teaching on the Son's omnipresence. After speaking of Christ's ascension into heaven, pastor Collins writes: “Q. 46. Is not Christ with us then until the end of the world, as He has promised? A. Christ is true God, and true man, and so according to His manhood is not now on earth, but according to His Godhead, His majesty, His grace and Spirit is at no time apart from us. Q. 47. Are not by this means the two natures in Christ pulled apart, if His humanity be not wherever His divinity? A. No. Seeing His divinity is incomprehensible, and everywhere present, it follows necessarily that the same [the Son's divine nature] is without the bounds of His human nature which He took to Himself, and yet is nevertheless in it, and abides personally united to it” (Orthodox Catechism, 1680).

He Who Intercedes for Us

- God’s intercession in prayer has already been mentioned by the apostle, who spoke of the Holy Spirit’s intercession: “...*the Spirit also helps our weakness; for we do not know how to pray as we should, but the Spirit Himself intercedes for us*” (8:26). The Spirit, Who is fully God, dwells within all believers and helps our inability to pray by Himself praying.
- Now we are told that in addition to God (the Holy Spirit) praying in us, God (the Son) prays for us “*at the right hand of God*” (8:34) in heaven. I love these verses that speak of Christ’s intercession:
 - “...*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).
 - “*My little children, I am writing these things to you so that you may not sin. And if anyone sins, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous*” (1 John 2:1).
 - “*He Himself bore the sin of many, and interceded for the transgressors*” (Isaiah 53:12).

Inseparably United to He Who Is Love (8:35-39)

^{8:35}*Who will separate us from the love of Christ? Will tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?* ^{8:36}*Just as it is written [in Psalm 44:22],*
“*For Your sake we are being put to death all day long;*
We were considered as sheep to be slaughtered.”
^{8:37}*But in all these things we overwhelmingly conquer through Him Who loved us.* ^{8:38}*For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, ^{8:39}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.*

- “...*the love of Christ*” (8:33), “*Him Who loved us*” (8:37), “*the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord*” (8:39).
 - Love is not something God does; it is Who He is (1 John 4:8). It is an eternal, unchanging attribute of His being.⁶
 - We experience the love of God through Christ Jesus by the indwelling of the Holy Spirit in us, which causes us to rejoice even in difficulty: “...*having been justified by faith, we have peace with God [the Father] through our Lord Jesus Christ [the Son]...the love of God [the Father] has been poured out within our hearts through the Holy Spirit Who was given to us*” (5:1-5).
- Visible circumstances appear to show a defeated people who are just animals to be slaughtered. This passage is a bridge to Christian experience as described in the Revelation. Just as Paul describes believers as those who overwhelmingly “conquer” (ὑπερνικάω), Revelation describes believers as those who “overcome” (νικάω, 2:7,11,17,26; 3:5,12,21; 12:11; 21:7) – even as they are being persecuted by the world.

**Being bound to the love of God in Christ Jesus
is a comfort and assurance to believers,
no matter what is happening to us in this world.**

⁶ He was eternally love, even before there was a single human being to love. Since He is Trinity, the one God is eternally love in the unity of the three Persons. The Father and Son loved each other in eternity past (John 17:24), and the Holy Spirit is the Person of God’s love (Romans 5:5; Galatians 5:22). READ Ephesians 3:14-19. The power of the Holy Spirit in believers is our divine and eternal binding to the Son (Ephesians 1:13,14; 2 Corinthians 1:21,22), Who is at the right hand of the Father (1:20; 2:6); this communion with the God Who is Trinity brings us into a love “*which surpasses knowledge,*” and, since God’s love is one with His eternal being, is “*all the fullness of God.*”