

Romans 8 Verse by Verse
Preservation/Glorification
John Hepp, Jr.
www.kingdominbible.com

As I show in my “Survey of Romans,” that Epistle consists mostly of Paul’s treatise on how and why the gospel works. The treatise first deals with Condemnation (Rom. 1:18 to 3:20), then with Salvation (3:21 to 8:39). That second division reaches a climax in chapter 8, which is the topic of this study. In it Paul ties together the strands of his argument, then leads in praise to God for the reassuring package that results. The next three chapters are Vindication (chs. 9-11), explaining why God was right in temporarily setting aside Israel. Finally, the treatise ends with Exhortation (12:1 to 15:13), showing various aspects of the Christian life.

Romans 8 concludes the subject of salvation. I give the chapter a double title: Preservation/Glorification. The latter refers to the final stage of sanctification. Romans 8 answers the implied question “How long will salvation by grace through faith hold good?” The answer is Forever! As Messiah Jesus said: “I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish” (John 10:28). Here Paul shows that nothing can thwart God’s plans for a person who through faith is in Messiah. That person is eternally secure and becoming like Messiah.

In the chart every verse is printed in the left column, with comments in the right column. There is special attention to connectives. In the headings you can read why some words are highlighted, italicized, or underlined.

The outline I will use is as follows:

- I. Victory over Sin, 8:1-11
 - A. No condemnation because the Spirit makes us holy, 8:1-4
 - B. The Spirit overcomes the body’s evil bent and guarantees its eternal life, 8:5-11
- II. Victory over Suffering, 8:12–30
 - A. Why and how we will receive eternal life and inheritance, 8:12-17
 - B. All creation will take part in the coming glory of God’s sons, 8:18-30
- III. Victory Hymn, 8:31-39

| <p>ROMANS 8 TEXT in NIV 2011 Highlighted words mostly connect clauses. <i>English words in italics</i> are added from Greek.</p> | <p>COMMENTS With special attention to the connectives. For each verse <u>the general meaning</u> is given first.</p> |
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| <p>I. Victory over Sin, 8:1–11</p> | |
| <p>A. No condemnation because the Spirit makes us holy, 8:1-4</p> | |
| <p>1 Therefore [<i>ara</i>], there is now [<i>nun</i>] no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus,</p> <p><i>Many late manuscripts add the same words here as in v. 4b “who do not live according to....” If they belonged here, they would mean the same as in 4b.</i></p> | <p><u>Announces the conclusion this chapter will give to everything said previously about Condemnation and Salvation. Everyone who has accepted God’s message of salvation by grace and is therefore in Christ, has escaped the terrible verdict of eternal death.</u></p> <p>“Now” is just for emphasis. “Condemnation” recalls 2:1, 12; 3:9, 19; 5:16, 18. “In Christ” recalls 6:3-5, 11.</p> |
| <p>2 because [<i>gar</i>] through Christ Jesus the law of the Spirit who gives life has set you free from the law of sin and death.</p> <p><i>The Greek order in 2a is “because the law of the Spirit, who gives [or, which is] life in Christ Jesus.” This better fits the background in 6:4, 10-11.</i></p> | <p><u>Begins to give the first reason why there is no condemnation for those in Christ: because being there gives victory over sin. The new covenant, “the new way of the Spirit” (7:6), actually works.</u></p> <p>God’s gift of His Spirit was first mentioned in 5:5, which verse anticipated this whole section. The Spirit produces new life in us and frees us from the deadly power of sin discussed in 7:7-25. That “sin living in [us]” (7:17, 20; cf. 23) enslaves and brings death to those trying to obey God’s law (7:9, 11, 23). But now its power is broken.</p> |
| <p>3 For [<i>gar</i>] what the law was powerless to do because [<i>en ho</i>] it was weakened by the flesh, God did by sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh to be a sin offering. And so he condemned sin in the flesh,</p> | <p><u>Specifies (in vv. 3-4) in what sense God has set us free. By His Son’s humanity and death He broke the power of the law/principle of sin in every believer. See God’s intended result in v. 4.</u></p> <p>“In the likeness of sinful flesh” does not imply that the Son merely imitated flesh or committed sin. He truly became flesh (Phil. 2:5-7), which is ordinarily sinful.</p> <p>“In contexts like this, the Greek word for flesh (<i>sarx</i>) refers to the sinful state of human beings, often presented as a power in opposition to the Spirit; also in verses 4-13.” (NIV Note)</p> |

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| <p>4 in order that [<i>hina</i>] the righteous requirement of the law might be fully met in us, who do not live according to the flesh but according to the Spirit.</p> | <p><u>Gives God’s intention when He “condemned sin” through His Son. He enables us to live by the Spirit and thus fulfill what the law (given through Moses) aimed at—but which we could not do.</u></p> <p>This concludes specifying in what sense we are now free. Now we become those who “do good” (Rom. 2:7, 10; John 5:29; cf. Matt. 7:24-25), “those who obey the law who will be declared righteous” (Rom. 2:13; cf. 2:27; James 2:24-26).</p> |
| <p>B. The Spirit overcomes the body’s evil bent and guarantees its eternal life, 8:5-11</p> | |
| <p>5 Because [<i>gar</i>] Those who live according to the flesh have their minds set on what the flesh desires; but [<i>de</i>] those who live in accordance with the Spirit have their minds set on what the Spirit desires.</p> <p><i>Notice that each of verses 5, 6, 7, and 8 starts with an English word in italics. Such words are in the Greek text but were not translated by NIV.</i></p> | <p><u>Gives the reason why those who live according to the Spirit can fulfill what the law aims at. They are no longer controlled by the flesh—with its fleshly desires—but by the Spirit.</u></p> <p>“Have their minds set on” (Gr. verb <i>phronousin</i>) refers to having a given mindset/attitude/outlook. In Philippians 2:5 it applies to the attitude of Christ, which we should adopt. The cognate noun <i>phren</i> implies wise and thoughtful planning (1 Cor. 14:20).</p> |
| <p>6 for [<i>gar</i>] The mind governed by the flesh is death, but [<i>de</i>] the mind governed by the Spirit is life and peace.</p> | <p><u>Explains in what way the attitude of the Spirit within us is better than that of the flesh. The latter leads to “death” whereas the former leads to “life and peace.”</u></p> <p>“Mind governed by,” used twice in verse 6 and once in verse 7, is one word in Greek (<i>phronema</i>). It is a noun form of the verb just explained (<i>phronousin</i>) for verse 5.</p> |
| <p>7 because [<i>dioti</i>] The mind governed by the flesh is hostile to God; for [<i>gar</i>] it does not submit to God’s law, nor [<i>gar</i>] can it do so.</p> | <p><u>Gives the reason (with v. 8) why the fleshly outlook results in death, namely, because it is incapable of meeting God’s standards in the law.</u></p> <p>This hopeless condition was discussed in 7:7-25.</p> |

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| <p>8 And [<i>de</i>] Those who are in the realm of the flesh cannot please God.</p> | <p><u>Concludes the thought in verse 7. Since the fleshly outlook cannot meet God’s standards, it can never lead to His approval.</u></p> <p>“In the realm of” here and twice in verse 9a represents one word in Greek, the preposition <i>en</i>, “in.”</p> |
| <p>9 You, however [<i>de</i>], are not in the realm of the flesh but [<i>alla</i>] are in the realm of the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God lives in you. And [<i>de</i>] if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, they do not belong to Christ.</p> <p><i>“They do...belong” represents singular forms in Greek, changed by NIV because of current English usage.</i></p> | <p><u>Assures Roman believers that they are better off than those just described. Like everyone else who belongs to Christ, they have the Spirit and are in the Spirit. Those without the Spirit are not in Christ.</u></p> <p>This verse prepares to announce a great change due to the Spirit’s presence in the body. Note some conditions equated in these verses: “the Spirit lives in” (vv. 9, 11) = “Christ is in” (v. 10) “in the Spirit” (v. 9) = “led by the Spirit” (v. 14)</p> |
| <p>10 But [<i>de</i>] if Christ is in you, then [<i>men</i>] even though your body is subject to death because of sin, [<i>de</i>] the Spirit gives life because of righteousness.</p> | <p><u>Verses 10-11 announce the great change for the believer’s body because the Spirit of Christ now resides there. Because sin is not eradicated, the short-term penalty is still death. But because righteousness has come, there is already life from God.</u></p> |
| <p>11 And [<i>de</i>] if the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead is living in you, he who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies because of his Spirit who lives in you.</p> | <p><u>The promise continues. This divine life in our body will survive physical death. Its source is the Spirit of the risen Jesus the Christ (Messiah). His presence in us guarantees that God will raise us bodily from the dead just as He raised Jesus.</u></p> |
| <p>II. Victory over Suffering, 8:12–30</p> | |
| <p>A. Why and how we will receive eternal life and inheritance, 8:12-17</p> | |
| <p>12 Therefore [<i>ara oun</i>], brothers and sisters, we have an obligation—but it is not to the flesh, to live according to it.</p> | <p><u>Verses 12-13 bridge to the new subject by reviewing the two choices open to everyone who hears the gospel:</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. <u>reject it and live according to the flesh (vv. 12b-13a, summarizing most of vv. 5-8)</u> b. <u>accept it and live according to the Spirit (v. 13b, summarizing vv. 2-4)</u> |

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| <p>13 For [<i>gar</i>] if you live according to the flesh, you will die; but [<i>de</i>] if by the Spirit you put to death the misdeeds of the body, you will live.</p> | <p><u>Concludes the review in verses 12-13 by giving the contrasting results of the two alternatives. Choosing the flesh leads to death; choosing the Spirit leads to eternal life.</u></p> <p>Every believer has chosen to live by the Spirit.</p> |
| <p>14 For [<i>gar</i>] those who are led by the Spirit of God are the children [<i>huioi</i>] of God.</p> | <p><u>Verses 14-17 explain why those who choose the Spirit “will live” and what that means. The basic reason, affirmed in verse 14, is that such people are now God’s children (implying heirs).</u></p> <p>Every affirmation in verses 14-17 is true of every believer. See verse 15 about this Greek word used for sonship.</p> |
| <p>15 For [<i>gar</i>] The Spirit you received does not make you slaves, so that you live in fear again; rather [<i>alla</i>], the Spirit you received brought about your adoption to sonship [<i>huiiothesia</i>]. And by him we cry, “<i>Abba</i>, Father.”</p> | <p><u>Gives immediate consequences (vv. 15-16) of this new relationship. Since the Spirit has made us God’s heirs, we no longer live in bondage and fear but with confidence.</u></p> <p>“The Greek word for adoption to sonship [<i>huiiothesia</i>, cf. <i>huioi</i> in v. 14] is a term referring to the full legal standing of an adopted male heir in Roman culture; also in verse 23.” (NIV Note)</p> |
| <p>16 The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God’s children [<i>tekna</i>].</p> | <p><u>God’s Spirit, who now dwells in us, makes us aware of being born into God’s family.</u></p> <p>In verses 16 and 17 the word for children is no longer <i>huioi</i> but <i>tekna</i>, which means “born-ones.”</p> |

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| <p>17 Now [<i>de</i>] if we are children [<i>tekna</i>], then [<i>kai</i>] we are heirs—[<i>men</i>] heirs of God and [<i>de</i>] co-heirs with Christ, if indeed [<i>eiper</i>] we share in his sufferings in order that [<i>hina</i>] we may also share in his glory.</p> | <p><u>Reiterates why we “will live”—all God’s children inherit—and affirms that before we inherit glory with Christ we must suffer as He did.</u></p> <p>Both Jesus and the apostles warned that no true follower can avoid suffering with Him (John 15:18-21; Acts 14:22; 2 Tim. 3:12). But after that, they will all inherit glory with Him (2 Tim. 2:11-13; 1 Peter 4:13). The clause “if indeed we share in his sufferings” is tantamount to “if we are His true followers.” Our suffering is discussed in the next part.</p> |
| <p>B. All creation will take part in the coming glory of God’s sons, 8:18-30</p> | |
| <p>18 For [<i>gar</i>] I consider that our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us.</p> <p><i>“In us” probably means “in regard to us.”</i></p> | <p><u>Introduces the contrast between our present sufferings as believers and our far greater future glory (vv. 18-30; cf. 2 Cor. 4:16-18; 1 Peter 1:3-13).</u></p> |
| <p>19 For [<i>gar</i>] the creation waits in eager expectation for the children of God to be revealed.</p> | <p><u>Verses 19-22 illustrate how great our future glory will be by picturing the material creation as groaning for it. This will continue until the true nature of God’s children (<i>huioi</i>) is finally revealed.</u></p> <p>“Children” is again <i>huioi</i> because the future time of inheriting is being discussed.</p> |
| <p>20 For [<i>gar</i>] the creation was subjected to frustration, not by its own choice, but [<i>alla</i>] by the will of the one who subjected it,</p> | <p><u>Verses 20-21 explain that the material creation did not bring on itself the curse that keeps it from reaching its goal (<i>mataioteti</i>). Instead, God Himself decreed that curse as a temporary measure.</u></p> |
| <p>in hope 21 that [<i>eph elpidi hoti</i>] the creation itself will be liberated from its bondage to decay and brought into the freedom and glory of the children of God.</p> | <p><u>Assures us that according to His plan God will free creation from its curse and make it share in the coming glory of His heirs.</u></p> <p>As usual in the Bible, “hope” is not wishful thinking but confident assurance.</p> |

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| <p>22 For [<i>gar</i>] We know that the whole creation has been groaning as in the pains of childbirth right up to the present time.</p> | <p>Verses 22-30 show that creation (v. 22) and God's heirs (vv. 23-30) both "groan" under the curse. <u>But as in childbirth, that groaning does not anticipate the end but the coming new world.</u></p> |
| <p>23 Not only so, but [<i>alla</i>] we ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for our adoption to sonship, the redemption of our bodies.</p> | <p><u>Begins discussing our own groaning. When God gave us the Spirit as firstfruits, He thus guaranteed a divine harvest. That will be the final "adoption" (<i>huiiothesian</i>, see v. 15), when He gives us glorified bodies in the resurrection.</u></p> |
| <p>24 For [<i>gar</i>] in this hope we were saved. But [<i>de</i>] hope that is seen is no hope at all. For [<i>gar</i>] Who hopes for what they already have?</p> | <p><u>Verses 24-25 explain that this assurance of our future resurrection was part of our original faith (cf. 1 Cor. 15:12-20). Christian faith always involves seeing invisible things (Heb. 11:1, 3; 2 Cor. 4:18).</u></p> |
| <p>25 But [<i>de</i>] if we hope for what we do not yet have, we wait for it patiently.</p> | <p>(see v. 24)</p> |
| <p>26 But [<i>de</i>] In the same way, the Spirit helps us in our weakness. For [<i>gar</i>] We do not know what we ought to pray for, but [<i>alla</i>] the Spirit himself intercedes for us through wordless groans.</p> | <p><u>Assures us that for us who are incomplete and imperfect, there is divine help in suffering. The Spirit even prays for us, asking God for what we cannot know or understand.</u></p> <p>Verses 26-30 show that there is divine purpose in suffering.</p> |
| <p>27 And [<i>de</i>] he who searches our hearts knows the mind of the Spirit, because [<i>hoti</i>] the Spirit intercedes for God's people in accordance with the will of God.</p> | <p><u>Continues the assurance based on the Spirit's ministry. Continually aware of everything about us, God knows the Spirit's prayers, which perfectly match God's plans.</u></p> <p>"Searches our hearts" implies active interest. The heart is the control center—more the will and intellect than the emotions (Prov. 4:23; Exod. 7:3, 13, 14, 22, 23; Mark 4:15).</p> |

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| <p>28 And [<i>de</i>] we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose.</p> | <p><u>Assures us that by such divine help God makes everything that happens to us eventually produce good results. This is because He had a plan when He called us and gave us love for Him.</u></p> |
| <p>29 For [<i>hoti</i>] those God foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might [<i>eis to</i>] be the firstborn among many brothers and sisters.</p> | <p><u>Explains why God makes everything work for our good—because of His ultimate purpose when He “foreknew” (chose) us. He planned for (“predestined”) us to be part of a whole family like His Son.</u></p> |
| <p>30 And [<i>de</i>] those he predestined, he also [<i>kai</i>] called; and [<i>kai</i>] those he called, he also [<i>kai</i>] justified; and [<i>de</i>] those he justified, he also [<i>kai</i>] glorified.</p> | <p><u>Lists the process by which God keeps everyone He chose, losing no one. He planned to transform each one, then gave him an invitation that was accepted, then declared him acceptable, then—in His mind—made him eternal ruler with Christ.</u></p> |
| <p>III. Victory Hymn, 8:31-39</p> | |
| <p>31 What, then [<i>oun</i>], shall we say in response to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us?</p> | <p><u>Verses 31-32 begins our response to such marvelous grace. God has accepted us; no one can ruin us. Much of the response is in four questions (vv. 31, 33, 34, 35) like this first one, each implying the answer “no one” or “nothing.”</u></p> |
| <p>32 He who did not spare his own Son, but [<i>alla</i>] gave him up for us all—how will he not also [<i>kai</i>], along with him, graciously give us all things?</p> | <p><u>Since God already gave us the greatest gift possible, His Son, what would He withhold from us?</u></p> <p>If God gave us the most marvelous jewel, He will not begrudge us the box it comes in. (McClain)</p> |
| <p>33 Who will bring any charge against those whom God has chosen? It is God who justifies. [or, Is it God...?]</p> | <p><u>Verses 33-34 ask who could possibly find something to condemn us for. God will not, since it is He who declared us acceptable.</u></p> <p>Each verse begins with a question, and the response may also be a question to be answered no.</p> |

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| <p>34 Who then is the one who condemns? No one. Christ Jesus, who died—more than that, who was raised to life—is at the right hand of God and is also interceding for us. [or, Is it Christ...?]</p> | <p><u>Continues asking who might condemn us. Not Christ, because He died for us when we were completely lost. God accepted His sacrifice, raising Him from death and seating Him on His throne, where He is now our Advocate.</u></p> |
| <p>35 Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall trouble or hardship or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword?</p> | <p><u>Verses 35-39 search all conditions and all powers to affirm that none of them can “separate us from the love of Christ/God” (vv. 35, 39). The conditions listed in verse 35 all make us suffer and can lead to death.</u></p> |
| <p>36 As it is written: “For your sake we face death all day long; we are considered as sheep to be slaughtered.”</p> | <p><u>(See v. 35) Suffering and death are not strange for godly people, as seen in this quotation.</u></p> |
| <p>37 No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us.</p> | <p><u>Answers no to the second question in verse 35. Not only can we endure the painful and dangerous conditions listed there. We are more than victorious because of the good produced through such evil.</u></p> |
| <p>38 For [gar] I am convinced that neither [oute] death nor [oute] life, neither [oute] angels nor [oute] demons, neither [oute] the present nor [oute] the future, nor [oute] any powers,</p> | <p>See next verse.</p> |
| <p>39 neither [oute] height nor [oute] depth, nor [oute] anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.</p> | <p><u>Verses 38-39 close by listing powers and times throughout creation, none of which can keep God in Christ from loving us and showing that love.</u></p> |