

Romans 8

Written by K B Napier
Monday, 10 August 2009 16:07

In this chapter we see the supremacy of Christ and the Father, and the unstinting help of the Holy Spirit to those who are God's. The Lord is superior to all beings, including Satan and our enemies. With our salvation came the strength of God and the protection of the Spirit.

Many miss the reality of this protection by continuing to sin. Yet, though we occasionally sin, God will help. He waits patiently at times, but He helps anyway. (Persistent sinners, however, are in danger of His wrath). All through we see that our own efforts are useless. We are predestinated, and this holds many levels of meaning for our daily lives. We sin and yet God continues to love us. We can do the worst thing imaginable, and God opens His arms to us when we repent. This is because it is not our own worthiness that saves us, but the Lord's grace and free gift.

How many live in misery because we do not understand what this means, and how we are enabled by God through the Spirit? How many fear Satan and their own anxieties, when both are subject to God's Almighty power and command? How many live in pain and inward doubt, when God is more than ready to carry them on His back to safety? How many give in to life, when real life is only in Christ and in His service?

This chapter should be properly and repeatedly read and understood, for it contains numerous helps and wondrous facts about God and how He is our benefactor.

If God be for us, who can be against us? Ever wondered what that statement really means? You will find out later, and I hope you will remember its truth when pressed down by enemies or life's problems. If you say you are saved, then prove it! You do it by repenting and believing in God's claim to love you, no matter how sinful you have been. It is true, so live it out in genuine reliance on the Lord!

Verses 1 & 2

1.

There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.

2.

Romans 8

Written by K B Napier
Monday, 10 August 2009 16:07

For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death.

Because all the previous arguments are true, says Paul, we can say with absolute conviction that no Christian stands condemned. This is a proof-text against those who teach we can lose our salvation.

Paul adds: “who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.” The same critics who say we can lose our salvation use this phrase to support their belief. But it does not. It is not about our daily walk with Christ and the way we sometimes sin. It is about our eternal condition; we are no longer slaves to sin (as Paul repeatedly said before), but we are servants of the most high God and live “after the Spirit”.

It cannot refer to our daily lives and their ups and downs, our holiness sometimes marred by sin, because God gave us repentance to rid ourselves of those sins and their effects. Otherwise, we have a ridiculous situation, in which we are condemned one moment and accepted the next. This is opposite to what God says, and makes Him out to be changeable. Some of us will sin drastically, but if we repent, God *always* forgives. This is because the basis of our salvation is Christ, and what He did. If the basis was our own selves, then we would indeed be condemned outright, not just for a single sin, but for just being alive.

Obviously, this is not an excuse for us to sin. Rather, it is an encouragement for every one of us, because each of us sins. A mark of a true Christian is not that he sins, but that when he does, his conscience is seared badly until he repents. If this did not exist, then the claim to being a Christian could be doubted. It means that our salvation, and our acceptance in Christ, is assured forever. Do not let anyone, whether cynical human, Satan, or any inward thought, rob you of this surety!

As Paul rightly says in verse two, we are “free from the law of sin and death”. That is, the ultimate penalty from God for being an unbeliever. We are no longer unbelievers, therefore the penalty does not exist for us. Yes, we must still repent when we sin, but the sin itself will never send us to hell.

Romans 8

Written by K B Napier
Monday, 10 August 2009 16:07

Sadly, it is a fact that many Christians allow their emotions and thoughts to deny them freedom in Christ and joy. Because they have sinned, they wallow in doubt and misery, thinking surely God must now cast them adrift. But, this will never happen. The fear is all in the mind, urged there by Satan in order to keep a hold on you! Do not listen. He is lying, as are your thoughts and fears. If you belong to Christ you are no longer condemned. That is a fact!

Verses 3 - 8

1.

For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh:

2.

That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.

3.

For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh; but they that are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit.

4.

For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace.

5.

Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be.

6.

So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God.

The law, as we saw in other chapters, could never save us, because the flesh is weak and

Romans 8

Written by K B Napier

Monday, 10 August 2009 16:07

always wishes to sin. So, God sent His own Son in the flesh, so that He could show us, once and for all, that the flesh and its temptations could be beaten. He lived a pure life and did not fall even once to temptation, yet alone sin. He died in the flesh, and so became our sacrifice. Sin was indeed beaten, and it could no longer hold us in condemnation.

By doing this, Christ fulfilled the law of God. Only He could do that, because only He is sinless and pure, a 'spotless lamb'. And because He died for all who are elect, the same holy righteousness is applied to every saved person. This is brought about by their being changed from chained to Satan, sin and the body, to being servants of God, through Jesus Christ. By association, then, we are free in Christ and no longer subject to sin, death or eternal misery in hell. Though we sometimes sin, we are not a prisoner to sin.

"They that are after the flesh" are the unsaved. Their lives are completely centred on sin and how to commit it. Even those who we might think are good people are Satan's people. Their deepest thoughts are bound to Satan. That is why, when we are regenerated, Satan is most likely to attack. He also does so when we have been sinning as Believers, and repent. He wants to bring us down by any means possible, so that we continue to sin. But, he cannot maintain that grip, because "they that are after the Spirit (do) the things of the Spirit." Maybe not always perfectly, but that is our central theme and desire. Which is why a Christian who sins feels misery of soul and spirit.

"To be carnally minded (is) death; but to be spiritually minded (is) life and peace." To be carnally minded is to live after the flesh. That is, to be a slave to sin. Thus, carnally minded is to be unsaved. We know this because Paul spent much time spelling this out in previous chapters. The 'death' referred to is thanatos – death of the body and also the miseries of hell, which are the direct result of being unsaved or 'carnally minded'.

The exact opposite is to be "spiritually minded" which leads to "life and peace". That is, saved and heading for heaven. The 'life' spoken of is zōē. It can mean the soul of any living person, but as it is connected to 'spiritually' it here means the soul and spirit of a person who is saved; such a person has fullness of life in every way, genuine, active and vigorous. At least that is what a Christian's life ought to be like.

It stands to reason, then, that an unsaved person's life is empty and useless, no matter how much fills the person's time on earth. The 'peace' is a living relationship with, and acceptance by, God, through Jesus Christ.

Romans 8

Written by K B Napier
Monday, 10 August 2009 16:07

The result of being carnally minded is death, because it is the just reward for being God's enemy. This judgment is upon all who are unsaved, even if society sees them as 'nice' and 'good'. God sees all who are unsaved as worthy of hell. Make no mistake, the 'carnal mind' or person who is unsaved, is "enmity against God". The mere fact of carnality or no salvation means it is the *cause* of enmity. In other words, a person does not even have to do anything to be God's enemy – he just has to be unsaved.

It is how God sees it, and many Christians need to understand that, instead of consorting daily with unsaved friends. They are God's enemies, so what are Christians doing befriending them? Yes, we must walk as believers in a hostile world, and of necessity we have to deal with many unbelievers on the way. But, this is not the same as actually going out of our way to be their social friends. To do so is to ignore God's view and to open ourselves up to our friends' sins and sinful thoughts.

Because a carnal person is unsaved, he or she is "not subject to the law of God". It does not mean the unsaved person can live as he pleases, or that God's law has nothing to do with him. Rather, it means an unsaved life is so opposite to what God wishes, that it has no possible connection to God. Remember – this applies to ALL unsaved people, not just the obviously wicked. This is why, in verse 8, we find that no-one who is unsaved can ever please God. It is simply not possible, because the unsaved soul is an enemy of God.

Sadly, many are deceived by humanistic strategies. As I have said before, the Alpha course is one of the biggest culprits, because it leads people along an intellectual path to understand the outward things of faith, but then pretends this to be a sign of regeneration. In many other ways, zealous 'Christians' use ungodly means to attract people 'into the Church'... something that is untenable, because only the Holy Spirit can regenerate a man's spirit. Jokes, chat and free supper do not do it!

Verses 9 - 13

1.

But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his.

2.

Romans 8

Written by K B Napier
Monday, 10 August 2009 16:07

And if Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin; but the Spirit is life because of righteousness.

3.

But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you.

4.

Therefore, brethren, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live after the flesh.

5.

For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live.

These things, however, are nothing to do with the Christian, because believers “are not of the flesh”. They are “in the Spirit”. If they do not have the Spirit, then they are “none of his”. This clearly denounces the charismatic and usual Pentecostal idea that there is a second blessing, a time after salvation when the Spirit fills a person. Scripture insists that a man is filled with the Holy Spirit precisely at the point of salvation. With many, the mistake is made because they have previously lived sinfully. When they suddenly ‘give up’ and hand their whole lives over to God, the Holy Spirit can at last begin a good work in their lives. It is this sudden release of tension and loss of desire to sin that causes many to think the Holy Spirit has only just been given to them.

So, whilst the “body is dead because of sin” (which is why it must physically die), the spirit is alive because the Holy Spirit has renewed it. It has new life, removed from the taint of sin.

Even so, He Who raised up Jesus Christ will also raise up the person who believes in Him. He will also give us new bodies, which will accompany us into heaven (verse 11). Because of these amazing gifts, we can no longer be slaves to sin (because sin leads us to death and then hell), but must live entirely differently, as free from sin. As Christians we must live our daily lives as holy people, saints. As soon as we were saved we mortified (put to death) the body and our

Romans 8

Written by K B Napier
Monday, 10 August 2009 16:07

sinful slavery to Satan. Though we later sin at times, we are no longer slaves to it. So, we live.

Verses 14 - 17

1.

For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God.

2.

For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father.

3.

The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God:

4.

And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together.

Note that only those who are of the Spirit (saved) are the “sons of God”. No-one else. There is only one way to God. God does not commune with the unsaved, which is why we know the meaning of “led by” in this text. Those who are unsaved are usually afraid. Perhaps they would not admit it, but they are. Some, because of money or power, manage to hide their fear better – but it is still there.

The unsaved, as we have shown in other chapters, are in bondage to sin and therefore to Satan. They cannot stop sinning because it is their birthright given to them by their “father the devil”. Once saved, we lose this fear, because Satan no longer has a hold on us. Instead, we have “received the Spirit of adoption”. The capital ‘S’ shows that we are talking about the Holy Spirit. God has adopted us as spiritual sons and daughters, thus giving us the privileges of royal children.

Romans 8

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Monday, 10 August 2009 16:07

Because of this special relationship, we can call Him “Abba, Father”. Though this appears to a repetition of the same word, ‘Father, Father’, it is not. It was also used by Jesus. ‘Abba’, is Aramaic for ‘father’, but so is ‘Father’, a transliteration of the Greek, *patēr*. So, why repeat it?

Abba is a usual way of addressing God in prayer. In the New Testament, it is usually adjoined to the Greek form, ‘*patēr*’. Hence ‘Father, Father’. This came from the Chaldean ‘ABBA’ which slowly became used as a sacred *name* by the Hebrews. Thus, the sense of it seems to be a reference to God as absolute ruler (*abba*) but also as familial ‘*patēr*’, father, a *relationship*

. There is more to *patēr*, but sufficient is given for our present purposes.

Paul now mentions something that no unsaved person can possibly understand. Which is why they tend to accuse Christians of double-speke or circular argument. It is that “The Spirit beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God.” So, when asked how we know we are saved, we can say, “because we know”. But, comes the query, HOW do you know? We can say “Because our spirit communes with the holy Spirit”. This must be very frustrating to the unsaved, but it is a fact of spiritual life. We know because we know!

The Holy Spirit gives us a depth of assurance that cannot be shifted by any argument or accusation. Though accusers do not understand this and claim we are just deluded, we can say that if God is true, then all accusations are false. But, if God is not true, then they are right. If the proof of our argument is correct, it is given to each saved person by way of the Spirit speaking to our spirit. There is no way an unsaved person can understand or comprehend that, so argument is pointless.

You might say we really are deluded. But, think of it this way... an illustration I have used before: A man is taken away and locked in a deep dungeon without windows. There is no light and he does not see the sun or the moon for years. Can that man argue that the sun does not exist, because he does not see it? Yes, he can, but his jailor will adamantly claim the sun rises every day. Who is right?

The Christian claims God is real and that he knows he is saved. The unsaved reject this. But rejection of a claim does not negate the reality of a truth. Sadly, most people will reject God until it is too late, and they stand before Him on judgment day. Then all their fine arguments will be as dust. The unsaved man will likewise claim that it is we who are deluded and we will find that out when we die and nothing happens (in reality, if this were true, we would not know anyway!).

Romans 8

Written by K B Napier
Monday, 10 August 2009 16:07

For those of us who are saved, this is nonsense, so we maintain our faith. But, remember this: when we die it is too late to change our minds! For myself, the Spirit speaks to my spirit, and that is that. Is this how you see it? It is how scripture speaks of it.

Because we are God's adopted children we are also heirs of His kingdom, and so are *royal* children. We share the relationship with Christ, Who is God's Son. What greater status can anyone ever have, than to be a child of Almighty God, the Creator? If we have suffered with Christ we will also rise to glory with Him. This does not mean our lives must necessarily be horrendous or that we must be crucified. It means we must suffer evils just as Christ did. And all true believers will suffer for their faith, in some way. Why? Because the world, via Satan, hates all believers in God, who remind them of the God Who will one day judge them.

Look at what happens to Christians who are genuine: because they speak the truth and oppose sin, others want to silence, ridicule, or harm them. It is a reality of life for those who obey God. Some will suffer because of their political views; some will be put to death because of them. They, too, will suffer. But, they have no access to God and no entry to heaven. So, there are different forms of suffering.

Verses 18 - 21

1.

For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.

2.

For the earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God.

3.

For the creature was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of him who hath subjected the same in hope,

4.

Because the creature itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God.

Romans 8

Written by K B Napier
Monday, 10 August 2009 16:07

Do any of us suffer? Do we think our sufferings are anything? In terms of frail humanity, perhaps. But, they are nothing in comparison to what we shall become. What constitutes 'suffering' varies in the minds of the people. Some think a cold is 'suffering', or mild pain. Others think they suffer if their income goes lower than usual, or if they cannot have holidays. None of this is suffering. They are, at best, minor discomforts or annoyances. Few Christians in the West know what real suffering is.

The 'suffering' in this text, *pathēma*, is a misfortune or calamity of great magnitude, an evil, a genuine affliction. It is shown on the same level as the suffering of Christ... how many can say their 'sufferings' are equal to those of Christ? The interpretation also includes the sufferings some Christians endure for their stand for Christ. How many make such a stand? Overall, this 'suffering' is far greater than the supposed 'suffering' claimed by many Christians today.

The things we often call 'sufferings', then, are counted as "not worthy" – having no weight or value, unlike true suffering. As Paul says, what we consider to be 'sufferings' are not worthy to be compared to real suffering, and have no true value when compared to what we will know in heaven. Indeed, such claims to 'suffering' are inconsequential when we think of the amazing benefits given to us in heaven, even if we lost our lives for Christ's sake.

Any true sufferings some of us might endure are as nothing, because they will only last for our time on earth. And, if they are true sufferings, we will endure them anyway, as marks of our allegiance to Christ and suffering with Him. This is because God helps those who have true suffering, by giving them strength and inner quiet. Only those whose sufferings are little, or are nothing, will make sure everyone knows about them! Just as real heroes never talk about their heroism, or people in real pain do not talk about it, so genuine sufferers will make little of their suffering, because they know Christ endured far more.

Yes, many have ailments, persecution, and other problems, but they will end. Heaven will blot them all out. And that is what Paul is saying. If we were able to put our earthly suffering on one scale, with heavenly pleasures on the other scale, the suffering scale will not show any significant weight!

Romans 8

Written by K B Napier
Monday, 10 August 2009 16:07

We wait expectantly for this heavenly 'balance of the scales'. (Do we?). We wait for "the manifestation of the sons of God." (verse 19). The idea given is that of people stretching their necks to watch for something expected. It is coming! We, the "sons of God", are waiting for the apokalypsis, the disclosure of something we do not yet have knowledge of, heaven. And we should wait like children on a train platform, excitedly watching for the steam train coming into view before we go on holiday! Only the 'holiday' will be permanent, immortal joy!

There is an unreal notion, often expressed in our churches, that Christians look forward eagerly to dying, so that they can enter heaven. Personally, I find this unrealistic because few actually wish to die! We are not put on this earth just to sit miserably, like patients in a dentist's waiting room. No, we have been given this earth to enjoy, as far as possible. Yes, we can look forward to heaven, but knowing that it is next, not a tantalizing object of desire we should have now whilst still alive on earth!

Do you honestly think God would place us on this earth as a kind of misery, whilst dangling a future joy in front of us? I do not think so. There is nothing wrong with enjoying this life in holy anticipation. No-one, in their heart of hearts, wants to die – because this earth is all we know. It is why Paul refers to heaven as a "glory which shall be revealed to us", something we have no idea about yet, but which, according to expectations, will be amazing and spectacular.

To illustrate this in a very small way: I remember watching the 'River Dance' when it was first performed. Because I never knew dancing could be so amazing, I literally sat on the edge of my seat, with my jaw dropped, all the way through the performance! Of course, in no way am I drawing a parallel between heaven and an earthly dance, but I am trying to give an inadequate illustration of the principles involved.

When I think that entering heaven will not just be jaw-dropping, but filled with continual joy and amazement, how joyful will that situation really be? Until I saw 'River Dance' I was only used to dance as I then knew it. Then, along came the actual performance. Nowadays, watching River Dance is not the same, because I have seen it before... but heaven will not be like that – it will be *continual* in its joys. Until that time, I am to live out my life on this earth, and will enjoy everything legitimate that it has to offer, in all its fallen beauty, knowing I will soon be in something far better, though, as yet, unknown. Can you see what I am getting at? We *already*

have the glory "in us"; when we reach heaven we shall see it openly displayed. There is an escapism in wanting to be in the future, when we are now in the present, however poor the quality may be.

Romans 8

Written by K B Napier
Monday, 10 August 2009 16:07

As it is, we are “made subject to vanity”; our created nature has been subverted to sin and worthless expectations. Satan does not wish us to know truth or to expect anything better, yet hope is within us, through Christ.

Though presently subjected to sin and hurt, we will soon know freedom from sin and suffering, “glorious liberty”. Adam’s sin caused all of creation to be tainted. How? I speak now as myself: God cannot tolerate sin in His Presence. That is why He cast Adam and Eve out of the Garden of Eden. By becoming sinful, Adam brought God’s judgment upon himself, but his presence in the world caused the whole world to be tainted and unacceptable to God in the eternal sense. Somehow, sin spreads like a virus.

Very often, after a war, the victors will destroy all evidence of a dictator’s life, including his home. Not because the home, an inanimate object, can ‘sin’, but because it was lived in by a wicked man. The same principle seems to be behind the idea that all of creation is tainted by man’s sin. Just as an inanimate house has to be fumigated against a terrible disease, so the world has to be finally eradicated to ‘kill’ the taint of sin.

Verses 22 - 25

1.

For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now.

2.

And not only they, but ourselves also, which have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body.

3.

For we are saved by hope: but hope that is seen is not hope: for what a man seeth, why doth he yet hope for?

4.

But if we hope for that we see not, then do we with patience wait for it.

Romans 8

Written by K B Napier
Monday, 10 August 2009 16:07

This probably explains why “the whole creation groaneth” until the end of time. Obviously, this groaning and pain is not known to the creation itself, but is a symbol of the thorough-going effect of sin upon everything created.

Formerly sinners without hope, we are now saved by hope. Hope is an expectation. “I hope to go to America”, or “I hope to be relieved of this illness”. It means we do not yet have what we wish to have, but expect to have it at some time. As believers we hope for a place in heaven. It does not mean it is negotiable, or that there is a possibility of not having it, because the thing we hope for is certain, but it is in the future. As Paul says, if we already have what we wish for, then there is no point in wishing for it! Why should I wish to see a lovely view if I am standing before it? If, however, we look forward to something we really wish for, our minds and hearts are filled with the thought of finally getting it; it is an encouragement for what is to come.

Verses 26 - 30

1.

Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered.

2.

And he that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because he maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God.

3.

And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.

4.

For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren.

Romans 8

Written by K B Napier
Monday, 10 August 2009 16:07

5.

Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified.

In the same way, the Holy Spirit “helpeth our infirmities”. What does this mean? It means that just as we can look forward to entering heaven and finally having what has been promised us, so God will help us in our current problems (‘infirmities’, astheneia: weakness and frailty of the body, or lack of understanding of the soul, together with its tendency to be corrupt. It also refers to trials and troubles).

The Spirit helps us with these things, even though we may not know what to pray for. This is important, especially if we sometimes think God does not hear us or come to us. All along, He is aware of our needs and will help us, though we do not know it. It is like that remarkable popular poem, ‘The Footprints’, in which we groan that God is not with us in our troubles. Looking back in the sand, and seeing only one set of footprints, we complain that God was not with us. He tells us that the footprints we see are His, as He was carrying us on his back.

God will literally carry us through problems, though we mistakenly think He is far away. We are so wrapped up in our selves that we fail to see the obvious – that a loving Father does not let His children down. We only see the troubles, pain and suffering, but do not see Him holding us in His hand.

At times when a saved person has troubles, is the time the Spirit communes with the Father. He knows that on such occasions our human frailty can fail to speak to God, because we only see what we wish to see, the problem. He is busy talking with the Father, on our behalf, though we have no idea He is doing it. That is why, all of a sudden, we find the trouble gone, or, we have been given strength to endure it.

It is a fact that, as saved human beings, we rarely understand this to be happening, because we can only see what is human. We cannot see the way out, though the Red Sea is there as an example. The Hebrews could never have dreamt how to be saved from the Egyptian army, yet God came up with an answer that was above all reason. And that is how He deals with us

Romans 8

Written by K B Napier

Monday, 10 August 2009 16:07

today. Let us have faith in the same God Who saved the Hebrews, because the Spirit speaks with the same Father, when we are too weak to realize the Lord's full potential and power.

When we know troubles, we should simply hand them over to God to deal with, instead of struggling to deal with them in our own strength. Then, we will see His answers and our anxieties flee in the face of His greatness and power.

This is able to occur because the Father knows our minds and hearts, and knows the mind of the Spirit. This is because the Spirit knows the will of God and presents us to the Father for His help, which is in His will. These things go on completely separate from ourselves, when we do not know it. So, never think you are alone as a believer, and never think your troubles are too great to be dealt with. The Spirit knows, and He tells the Father on your behalf!

And, as Paul reminds us, "all things work together for good to them that love God." Do YOU love God? If you do, you will know this truth, and will rest in the work of the Holy Spirit, Who, knowing your frailty, will speak to the Father for you, when you seem too weak to muster even the smallest sign of faith. You have been saved for a purpose and are a child of God. There is no way He will let you down... only YOU can let YOURSELF down, by seeking answers outside of His will and by not having hope before you.

The Lord knew all about you before He created everything. And in that eternity, He predestinated you to salvation: "conformed to the image of His Son", Who is the first of a family who will enter heaven. He arrived there first, to ensure that the rest of us will follow in His path (as Paul told us previously).

He did not just write our names in a Book of Life to be saved, He took the next step, and called us. That is, He *destined* us to be saved, and then He *enabled* us to be saved. This is why I always teach that a person who is predestinated will be saved regardless of anything else that happens. It is not possible to either reject or accept salvation, because God has already chosen us. The only way we 'accept' salvation is in gratitude for something already effected by God.

Because He saved us, we are justified – accepted by the Father. And, because He has accepted us, He has also glorified us: making us excellent in His sight, giving us dignity and worth. Not because of who we are, but because of Who Christ is, and what He did.

Romans 8

Written by K B Napier
Monday, 10 August 2009 16:07

Verses 31 - 36

1.

What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us?

2.

He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?

3.

Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth.

4.

Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us.

5.

Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?

6.

As it is written, For thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter.

Because all this is so, says Paul, who can be against us if God is for us? It is obvious in our everyday lives, as well as in history, that wicked men and unbelieving peoples often attack and denigrate Christians. So, what does it mean: "If God be for us, who can be against us?" We should know one thing: it is absolutely true, whether or not we fully understand what it means. Now, let us see if we can interpret its meaning.

Romans 8

Written by K B Napier
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“God be for us”. The word ‘for’ is a primary preposition, with a variety of meanings. Prepositions can be problematic when not used properly, or when self-interest allows a person to choose the wrong interpretation so that it favours his own theories. Usually, this misuse of a preposition causes the interpretation of a text to be askew.

However, we can legitimately gather the meanings into a conglomerate, by saying that, in this text, it means that God stands in our stead, or acts on our behalf. It is legitimate because the conglomerate is based solidly on possible meanings allowed by the word itself (hyper). It also has the meaning of chief, or abundantly (huperballontos). Thus, “God be for us” can be interpreted as ‘God, Who is superior to all enemies, acts on our behalf, with abundant power’.

“Against us” or ‘against’, kata, is a primary article, meaning ‘against’, denoting motion from higher to the lower. The actual argument concerning this is long and complex, so we must simplify it as ‘inasmuch as’. If we put together the whole statement, we can say that we who are lower, created beings, may be oppressed, but God stands before us as superior to our enemies, giving us exceptional, divine support.

This, then, though rather technical, tells us that even when enemies attack us, God is our guide and protection. It does not say we will not be attacked, or even that we will not be injured (physically, mentally, spiritually). But it does say that God knows, is superior, and will deal with the matter. He will not necessarily remove the object causing us pain or strife, but gives us a depth of honour and faith others may not have. Many think God is with them... including terrorists and other wicked people. This is why Paul says “if” God is with us. To the question “How do I know God is with me?”, I answer “You will know”, just as any child knows his mother or father.

God the Father did not spare Jesus Christ, said Paul, but deliberately gave Him up for the sake of the elect. If the Father and Son loved us that much, do you not think He and Christ together will give us everything we need? Not just what we need, but ‘freely’ and in amazing abundance.

Furthermore, says Paul, who will accuse the elect of anything? It does not mean we do no wrong, or that we do not sin. It means that because we are justified, no man may bring charges against us, because our lives belong to God. Yes, we must be disciplined. Yes we must repent. But no human being can charge us with anything that removes our salvation. In other words, ‘Once saved, always saved’.

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Who is it that condemns us? They have no charge over us, because Christ died and rose again for our sakes, and *He* is our Master, not our accusers. He intercedes with the Father for us, putting things right if we do wrong. No human being and no accuser can bring us down when the Father is our Lord. Our human existence may be plagued by charges and accusers, but they cannot affect our spiritual existence.

Thus, no-one can remove us from Christ or from His love, despite our penchant for sin. Not even troubles, distress, persecution, starvation, lack of clothing, peril or violence, can separate us from our salvation, or from Christ!

We are “killed all day long”... that is, everyone wants to oppress and persecute Christians. It is part of the daily life of any genuine believer, even coming from those unsaved who say they are our friends. This is because, despite themselves, the unsaved are commanded by Satan, and he hates us. The world treats us like dirt. To them we are nothing but sheep ready to be slaughtered. Today, we see this going on more and more, as Christian freedoms are being taken away and active oppression is taking place.

Verses 37 - 39

1.

Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us.

2.

For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come,

3.

Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Yet, amidst all this evil against us, we are “more than conquerors”. Not in our own strength but

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in Christ Who loves us. It does not mean we will never be hurt or battered, but that no matter what happens to us, Christ is our Lord and will keep us. The more we stand firm, the more we are conquerors. The worse our enemies are towards us, if we keep faith, we will show our superiority, because Christ is superior.

Those who have yet to experience attacks, whether physical or mental, do not know what this means. Those who have already had such experience will understand. It is as if the worse things get, the higher we go... it is as if we are floating above the troubles and enemies, watching from on high; so nothing harms us inwardly.

Nothing at all can separate us from the love of God. Paul lists some of the things that can easily harm us if we let them: death, life, angels/demons, powers, things present or future, height, depth, or any animal or other creature... none of them have power over us. This is what martyrs come to know. In God's strength they can stand firm and face their enemy in the eye. God will keep them, always. Never fear mankind, who can only kill you. As Christ said, fear the one who can keep you from God's love. But, if you are saved, you need not fear Satan, nor those who would harm you; God is with you always.

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