

## THE BOOK OF ROMANS

### Romans Chapter 8 (ASV)

### Comments on Romans 8

8:1-17 - Advantages and blessings of those who, in Christ, are made free from sin and death.

Who shall deliver? Christ!

These verses continue Paul's argument begun in chapter 6. Paul is still dealing with the distortion of his teaching. In this section he establishes that those who are Spirit led do not give themselves to sin (he does not argue that they do not sin). Given the relation between the saint and the Spirit, the saint is neither logically nor otherwise obligated to live in sin.

Romans 8:1 There is therefore now no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus.

v. 1 – Now, being in Christ, having been forgiven of his sins and made righteous, he is free from the condemnation that formerly rested upon him. As to whether he may or may not again come into condemnation is not the matter under consideration; and one does violence to Paul's line of reasoning to try to make his language apply to anything more than the fact that the person who has come into Christ is free from his former condemnation.

To free a person from the condemnation formerly resting upon him does not rob him of personal responsibility for his conduct in the future.

The blessing belongs to those who are “in Christ Jesus.” This is one of Paul's favorite phrases. Do a concordance search and discover the many blessings that are “in Christ Jesus.”

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

v. 2 - "For" connects this verse with the preceding verse, and assigns the reason as to why there is no condemnation in Christ Jesus. There is no condemnation in Christ Jesus, for in Christ Jesus we have been made free from that which causes condemnation -- namely, the law of sin and of death. They have been freed from a law in their members by a law that comes to from outside man.

Many descriptive titles are given to the Holy Spirit, each such title growing out of some particular work that He does or some office He fills. "It is the Spirit that giveth life." John. 6:63. Hence, the Spirit of Life. It is clear that the Christian has not been released from all law. They are subject to the law of the Spirit of life that has set them free. And there is no "if," no "and," or any "but" about it. Those who are in Christ are free from the law of sin and death.

This law of sin and death cannot be the law of Moses. Taking verses 2 and 3 together we see that the law of Moses could not do what the law of the Spirit had done. If the law of sin and death is the law of Moses, then we have Paul making the absurd statement that the law of Moses could not deliver us from the law of Moses. The law of sin and death is the law set forth in 7:23.

Law of Spirit of life makes us free - saves us. Rom. 1:16 says it is the gospel that saves us; therefore, the law of the Spirit of life is the gospel.

Formerly sin reigned as Master, and held the sinner in captivity. When a person enters Christ (is in Christ), sin as his master

is destroyed - blotted out. So far as we know, there was no way to destroy the reign of sin except through the death of Jesus Christ; but that death benefits only those who yield obedience to him as their King.

v. 3 – To what law does Paul refer? It cannot be the law of the Spirit of life because it did what Paul said this law could not do. It cannot be the law of sin and death because that law was not weak through the flesh. It must be the moral law of God however expressed. It was only weak in relationship to the flesh. Paul has established that it was righteous and holy and good. What it could not do was to empower man to live the perfect life that it required. Thus, man could not be righteous under it. He needed a help beyond himself to remove his failure.

What man needed, God provided. God sent his own son in the likeness of sinful flesh. Jesus came for sin and condemned sin in the flesh. He condemned sin by living a perfect life, as Noah condemned those of his day by his holy life. He condemned sin in the flesh when he bore the judgment pronounced upon sinful flesh.

Human flesh is not sinful in and of itself; if so the flesh of Jesus was sinful. He was a man. I Tim. 2:5. He had in his nature all that the word "man" implies. Heb. 2:14-17. If his brethren were born sinful and he was not, then he was not like them in all things. Since Jesus was made in all things like his brethren and was without sin, it shows conclusively that sin is not a part of man's nature.

3 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:

4 that the ordinance of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.

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

6 For the mind of the flesh is death; but the mind of the Spirit is life and peace:

v.4-5 – The thing that the Law required, but could not accomplish, is fulfilled in those who obey the gospel.

What is the “ordinance (righteous requirement) of the law,” how is it fulfilled in us, and what does that have to do with Paul’s argument? Recall that Paul is arguing that his teaching does not logically lead to the conclusion that one should live a life of sin so that God would be glorified. The requirement of the law was perfection. The law demanded that people live a perfect life in glory to God. What the law condemned was condemned in Christ. Not only did Christ achieve a perfect life, by it he secured what the sinner could not secure – what the law required. Does then Paul’s teaching encourage one to sin? Hardly. How can one who has submitted to the Holy Spirit and to the things of the Spirit give himself over to sin?

NOTE: No "if" in the second clause of v. 4. It is descriptive of those in whom the righteousness of the law is fulfilled. Walk refers to manner of life. Those who walk after the flesh are looking to themselves; those who walk after the Spirit depend on the finished work of Christ.

v. 6 - The mind of the flesh does not just tend to death; it is death. The one who thus lives is dead to God. This does not mean that man has two minds, one of the flesh and one of the Spirit. If so, the flesh would always be dead to God and the spirit would always be alive to God, whether in righteousness or sin. The spirit would never need conversion and the flesh could never

be converted. The mind of the Spirit wants what the law wanted. The mind of the Spirit is pleasing to God. Those who have the mind of the Spirit have life and peace. They are no longer at war with God and life (Christ) has replaced death (Adam).

vv. 7-8 – Verse 7 states the reason for v. 6. The mind of the flesh is death because it is enmity against God. Those who minimize sin speak contrary to God’s will. It is impossible for one who wars against God to be on his side. While devoted to the flesh a person is not subject to the will of God, and in that state he cannot be, for such a life is in direct conflict with God’s will. It does not mean that a person who lives a worldly life cannot turn from it and himself become subject to the law of God; it does mean that a person cannot live for the things of this life and at the same time be subject to God.

vv. 9-10 – Christians are not in the flesh as Paul uses that term. The flesh has been crucified. Gal. 5:24. This does not mean that they do not sin. They live with the struggle, but they do not live in the flesh.

Some consider that “the body is dead because of sin” refers to physical death as descended from Adam. That is possibly correct. However, that was true of the believer’s body before union with Christ. Here, Paul’s statement (the body is dead because of sin) is true IF Christ dwells in the individual. While this may not be conclusive, it does indicate that the body of flesh, the means by which a person carries out the ways of the flesh, is reckoned dead unto sin but alive unto God. Rom. 6:9-11.

7 because the mind of the flesh is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can it be:

8 and they that are in the flesh cannot please God.

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

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

Like Christ, they committed themselves to death because of sin with the result that they were dead unto sin but alive unto God. This fits the context because nowhere does Paul hint that he is about to make mention of physical death.

The Spirit is life because of righteousness. Some suggest that this must be the human spirit since it contrasts with the body of flesh. That may be, but it is not necessarily so. You cannot tell from the original Greek since at the time the N.T. was written it was all capital letters. We have already talked about the Spirit of life (8:2, 6, and see vv. 11 and 13). In the context Paul speaks of Christ in you and the Spirit in you. V. 11 definitely refers to the Holy Spirit. It is reasonable to understand that since the body has been committed to death because of sin, the Spirit, who dwells in you, is the source of life because you have been made righteous.

Notice the interchange of the Spirit of God and the Spirit of Christ. That Spirit has taken up its residence in the Christian. V. 10 adds that Christ is in the Christian. Is it logical to believe that one who is so indwelt can give himself or herself over to sin?

v. 11 - The making alive of our mortal bodies depends on the Spirit dwelling in us. Acts. 2:38. The statement is prompted by Paul's comments that the body is dead because of sin. Does this refer to the resurrection? Does our resurrection from the dead depend on the Spirit's dwelling in us? Again, it is conditioned, this time on the Spirit's indwelling. The Scripture

11 But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwelleth in you, he that raised up Christ Jesus from the dead shall give life also to your mortal bodies through his Spirit that dwelleth in you.

teaches plainly that both the wicked and the righteous will be raised. The resurrection from the dead is not under discussion here. He had just stated that the body was dead because of sin. That means that it is no longer active in sin - no longer an instrument of sin. But is it to remain altogether inactive? Is it not to be brought into any kind of activity in the life of the Christian? If the Spirit of God dwells in you, He will make your bodies alive to righteousness. The only life that is conditioned on the Spirit's indwelling is the Christian life in the here and now.

The fact that Jesus was raised from the dead that we might be saved - made alive to his service - is a guarantee that even our bodies, as well as our spirits, shall be made alive to righteousness. Thus, Rom. 12:1,2. "For we who live are always delivered unto death for Jesus' sake that the life also of Jesus may be manifested in our mortal flesh." 2 Cor. 4:11.

8:1-11 balances the preceding section (7:7-25). There the inability of the law by itself to produce the higher spiritual life was shown, and the argument dealt primarily and mainly with human life as it now is. Here the whole object is to show that the gospel provides just such a power as law lacks - that is, to revive and renew the human spirit so as to enable it to mold and master the whole life. The life and death spoken of are the spiritual life and death already described; the raising is the present liberation of the spirit which affects the body also, making it, too, serve its true ends and live its true life. The raising of Jesus is

a proof both of the will and character and power of that Spirit, which operated then and operates now through the risen life communicated now to man. (cf. 6:2-11). The future resurrection is not referred to; but it is, of course, implied as a consequence of the whole relation thus described between God and man. (Cambridge Greek Testament).

vv. 12-13 – “So then” seems to refer to the argument that began in 5:12 and summarizes that argument. Paul’s purpose has not been to establish that the Christian has a dynamic or power to aid them in living as a Christian. The slander of Paul’s teaching was that it logically led to the position that one should sin that grace might abound. The summary of Paul’s argument is that his teaching logically leads to the conclusion that the Christian is not to live after the flesh, but is obligated (a debtor) to live by the Spirit. Those who live and rely on their own moral capital have no life in them, but “IF” by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live. The life is conditioned on the saint’s laying hold on the leading of the Spirit and continually fighting the struggle against sin. 1 John 1:7.

v. 14 - Nothing is said here about how the Spirit leads people, but since Paul is still developing his theme that the gospel is God's power to save, it is certain that the Spirit leads through the power of the gospel, which the Spirit revealed. It is only by the teaching of the Spirit that we can recognize something to be pleasing unto God. The Holy Spirit leads no one into sin that grace

12 So then, brethren, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live after the flesh:

13 for if ye live after the flesh, ye must die; but if by the Spirit ye put to death the deeds of the body, ye shall live.

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



may abound and God be glorified.

The airwaves and pulpits today abound with assertions that “God (Even the Spirit has taken a back seat to the presumptuous and pompous proclaimers to whom only God is good enough to speak!) spoke to me . . . .” The truth is that if the message is less than the Bible, it is too little; if it is more than the Bible, it is too much; and if it is the same as the Bible, we don’t need it because we already have the Bible. Oral Roberts proclaimed years ago that God spoke to him and told him to build a hospital in Tulsa, Oklahoma. In fund raising, Roberts even asserted that God had told him that Oral was going to be called home if sufficient money was not raised to build the hospital. God should have told him that it would go into bankruptcy a few years after it was built.

Paul includes ALL Christians in those who are led by the Spirit (as many as). He does not assert that the Spirit speaks to or leads only a special few. Every child of God is led by the Spirit; every one who is led by the Spirit is a child of God.

Those who are being led by the Spirit and in Christ Jesus (8:1), walk according to the Spirit (8:4), are in-dwelt by the Spirit (8:9, 11), and are putting to death the deeds of the body (8:13).

Being led by the Spirit does not dispense with the responsibility of the Christian – we are debtors (responsible party) not to live after the flesh, but after the Spirit. It is we who must follow every step of the Spirit’s leading. We walk every step of the way. 8:4.