

# *The* GRACE JOURNAL

*“Taking God’s Grace to the World”*

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## *Living With Hope In View*

BY RICHARD JORDAN

One reason Romans 8 is so beloved by Bible students is found in its closing verses. There Paul sets forth a tremendous argument for the security of those who are in Christ. Coming, as it does, as the conclusion of the second grand doctrinal section of Romans makes it all the more potent.

In Romans Paul lays down four foundational principles of God’s grace to us in Christ. Chapters 1-5 begin with the issue of our *justification* in Christ. Here we are grounded in the accomplishments of Christ’s death and resurrection *for us*—in what it means to be “*justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus*” (Rom. 3:24).

The next section, chapters 6-8, moves on to our *sanctification* in Christ. Now the issue is not simply Christ *for us* but it becomes Christ *as us*—the importance of our identification with Christ in His death, burial and resurrection life. When He died, He died as more than simply a payment for our sins. He also liberated us from the very thing that caused our sinning. Paul declares,

“Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin.

“For he that is dead is freed from sin.

“Now if we be dead with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with him...

“For in that he died, he died unto sin once: but in that he liveth, he liveth unto God” (Rom. 6:6-10).

Christ’s death “*for our sins*” frees us from the guilt and penalty of our failures; our death *with Christ*—His death as us—liberates us from the power and dominion of sin. Thus the *root* and source of our sinning is dealt with, as well as its *fruit*.

The great principle of the Christian life resides in the fact that in Christ we are “dead to sin” and “alive unto God.” This is how God’s grace has equipped us to live as members of the Body of Christ for His glory. He has not simply secured our salvation in eternity future (Rom. 1-5) but has equipped us to live in the “nasty-now-and-now.” This equipping is set forth in Romans 6-8 as our new

*Position* “in Christ” (Rom. 6)

*Program* under grace (Rom. 7)

*Power* through the Spirit (Rom. 8).

In Romans 6 we learn that by virtue of being “*in Christ Jesus*” we have been placed into His death, burial and resurrection. This, of course, has radically changed our personal identity and calls for us to moment-by-moment live consistent with this new identity we have in Christ.

Romans 7 then focuses on “*the newness of the Spirit*”—the new program under which God deals with us today. Having enlightened us about being made free from sin’s bondage and made alive unto God in Christ, Paul now instructs us about bringing that new position into our practice by living in the newness of the Spirit—and not the oldness of the law system. This new way God has for us to operate is called grace—we are to live consistent with His program of grace.

Romans 8 moves to the issue of walking consistently with the power of God working in us through His Spirit. The Holy Spirit is mentioned only once previously in Romans. Thus here He seems virtually to burst on the scene in a blaze of activity, appearing 19 times in this one chapter. The obvious reason for His sudden appearance and activity is found in the fact that the Spirit works through His word. Once the sound doctrine of chapters 1-7 is

fixed into our understanding, we can have “*the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus*” working through us as we walk by faith in an intelligent understanding of God’s word to us.

## WHAT SHALL WE SAY?

As he draws this portion to a close, Paul sets forth the certainty of God’s purpose being accomplished (8:28-30) and concludes with a wonderful section on the believer’s resultant security in Christ. He does this by asking a series of questions. This is done for a very specific purpose: to force us to *think for ourselves!* We need to have a personal grasp of these truths so they will have their full impact. Paul wants us to have an *intelligent understanding* of our part in the outworking of the purpose and plan of God.

In doing this, Paul calls attention to four great attributes of God that secure his purpose for us: the *power* of God is “for us” (v. 31), as are His *grace* (v. 32), *justice* (v. 33) and *love* (v. 35).

He also details specific things which seek to thwart the outworking of that purpose. Thus four questions dominate this section:

### WHO SHALL OPPOSE US?

“If God be for us, who can be against us?” (8:31).

This is our *protection*. God—that is, the Father—is “for us.” In verse 34 we find Christ to be “for us” while in verse 26 we see the Holy Spirit is “for us.” Thus the triune Godhead is “for us.” This adds up to a great conviction of *security* in life—a conviction that should settle our thoughts and keep our minds unconquerable.

God is “for us” in our weakness. God is “for us” in our sickness, in our moments of depression and our season of emotional distress. When we doubt, God is “for us.” When we fall, God is “for us.” There is no time, no place, no condition, no circumstance in which God is not “for us.”

May we take courage in this conviction! And how do we *know* that God is “for us”? The *objective evidence* is found in verse 32:

“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?”

What God has already done is the demonstration and proof of what He will continue to do. Everything rests on the finished work of Christ at Calvary. There God established both the *precedent* and the *proportion*. The *precedent* is in what He gave—having freely given His own beloved Son for our sins we can be confident He will hold nothing back from us. Having given Christ without reservation or measure, the *proportion* of His giving is clearly “*all things*”—“*all spiritual blessings*,” thus making us “*complete in Christ*” (Eph. 1:3, Col. 2:10).

### WHO SHALL ACCUSE US?

“Who shall lay anything to the charge of God’s elect? It is God that justifieth” (8:33).

This is our perfection. The argument here is that no one can successfully accuse the believer. First, because of who is being accused—“*God’s elect*,” a position God Himself has declared secure (vs. 29, 30). Then there is the One before whom the accusation is made. If God is the *judge*, He is also the *justifier* (3:26). He has already decided in our favor, already put us on His side and declared Himself to be “for us.”

### WHO SHALL CONDEMN US?

“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” (8:34).

This is our *vindication*. Before any flaw can be found in us, a flaw must be found in Christ Himself or in His death, resurrection, ascension and intercession at the Father’s right hand “for us.” Our security is based on and established by Christ Himself and His work in our behalf. If that isn’t sufficient, nothing ever can be.

### WHO SHALL SEPARATE US?

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

“As it is written, For thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter” (8:35,36).

This is our security. Here the question concerns our circumstances just as the previous three

concerned our character. The focus extends to the battleground of the events in our lives.

*“Who”*—the personal pronoun—is followed by seven impersonal events. This is no mistake, however, for the source of these difficulties is never impersonal, although the events may be. The “who” is clearly identified in Ephesians 6:12. And *what* the attempted separation is from thus becomes more understandable—it is *“from the love of Christ.”*

This love was objectively tested in the death of the cross and demonstrated to be something that will not yield to the pressures of oppression of life. Seven things are listed as constituting the array of weapons employed against us:

*Tribulation:* the multitude of pressures, afflictions and difficulties that are common to life, even to the Christian life.

*Distress:* the narrow “straits” of life from which there seems no way to escape.

*Persecution:* any adverse opinion or treatment of us because of our Christian testimony.

*Famine:* here the weapon becomes economic; it reaches the kitchen, the purse and bank account.

*Nakedness:* the absence of every physical luxury and sometimes even physical necessity.

*Peril:* the dangers of everyday life in a fallen world.

*Sword:* organized government opposition.

In stark words Paul declares that at any moment of life we are ready to surrender our lives for Christ: *“As it is written, For thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter”* (v. 36).

Yet in spite of the various ways difficulties and pressures can come into our lives, Paul exhorts us:

*“Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us”* (v. 37).

*“In all these things”* embraces every possible contingency. It is in these details of life that we are made *“more than conquerors through Him that loved us.”* Who we are is based on who God has made us in

Christ. This establishes for us an unchangeable identity which is then accessed by faith.

If our circumstances are adverse, as they often are, we can rest in the identity God has given us in Christ Jesus. When our feelings don’t support the divine viewpoint, our faith can rest in the reality that even then we are *“more than conquerors through Him that loved us.”*

Just what is it to be *“more than”* a conqueror? What more is there than total victory? Wellington, the English Iron Duke, understood something of this when he observed, “it is only when the victory does something for the victor that it means what it ought to mean.”

To “conquer” tribulation, for example, would be to end it. But to *“more than”* conquer it would be to use it for our own good.

General Douglas MacArthur conquered the Japanese Empire. But he did more—he became its *benefactor*. To be *“more than”* a conqueror means to use the victory for good.

Thus to be more than a conqueror over *“tribulation”* is to become patient through it, by making it serve in us a good purpose. Hence Paul says,

*“And not only so, but we glory in tribulations also: knowing that tribulation worketh patience”* (Rom. 5:3).

To be more than a conqueror over *“distress”* is to become master over the most pressing extremities and circumstances of life, to rise above the restrictions life may place on us and, rather, use them to our advantage (e.g., II Cor. 4:7-18).

To be more than conquerors over *“persecution”* is to become Christ-like toward our persecutor. Instead of descending to the lower levels of carnal fighting, we use the weapons which are spiritual (e.g., I Cor. 4:8-17).

To be more than a conqueror over *“famine”* and *“nakedness”* is to let economic adversity teach us to be content in the wealth of spiritual things (e.g., Phil. 4:10-13).

To be more than a conqueror over *“peril”* and *“sword”* is to have a confident dependence upon God that gives poise in the midst of impending calamity (e.g., II Cor. 1:3-10).

The completeness of our victory concludes the picture of our security:

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

“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” (vs. 38, 39).

Here is inseparable love in the midst of every conceivable enemy. It is important to recognize that there is a prescribed sphere where this inseparable love operates. It is “*the love of God IN CHRIST JESUS*.” This is no mere feeling, no simple “warm fuzzy” sentiment. Rather, “in Christ” God Himself has made us completely adequate for every circumstance and task.

In light of the evidence, like Paul we too can be “*persuaded*”—drawn into an unshakeable confidence that nothing can separate us from the love of God.

This is the place of security and peace which adds joy and blessing to our lives as we daily walk by faith in an intelligent understanding of who we are in Christ Jesus our Lord. In a world filled with uncertainty, this is a place of *maximum security*!

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## THE REAL ANSWER

The Book of Ephesians tells us in detail who we are “*in Christ*,” and what it means to be “*blessed with all spiritual blessings*”—and thus “*complete in Him*.” Our oneness with Christ is more than a cliché or theological tenet—it is the *present spiritual reality* that bestows upon every believer a totally new identity. It provides answers to the great cosmic issues of the age by providing a clear picture of the Father’s grand cosmic purpose in His Son. Consider:

People want to be loved, needed, important; to belong and to be validated. Yet they carry a deep sense of *alienation*. But as believers we have been “*chosen in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love*” (1:4). Thus resting in the spiritual accomplishments of the finished work of Christ, we are “*predestinated unto the adoption of children*” (1:5). Think of it: *chosen, and adopted!* God has set his purpose on us, all because we are “in Christ.” We are in actual possession of a genuinely important and eternally secure identity!

An inbred sense of *guilt* and a longing to be accepted and approved fills the soul with shame and fear. Frankly, unresolved guilt resides at the heart of most emotional turmoil in life. But as believers we have been “*made accepted in the Beloved*” (1:6). Through His cross, Jesus Christ has taken away the guilt and we have been “*made the righteousness of God in Him*” (II Cor. 5:21). We are “*accepted in the Beloved*”—the One in Whom the Father is “*well pleased*” (Matt. 3:17). Genuine acceptance, indeed!

The cry for *freedom* echoes from every human heart, while the sense of being *trapped*, enslaved and imprisoned crowds our thinking. The yearning for liberty is real; the sense of being entrapped is paralyzing. But the believer has found freedom: “*In whom we have redemption, through his blood*” (1:7a). At its root, redemption is the issue of *liberty and freedom*. We are no longer enslaved to sin, we’ve been “*made free*” (Rom. 6:18). We no longer have to sin; Christ has made us “free indeed.”

Look about you and you see a world filled with *anger*—at war with everyone and itself. “*There is no peace, saith the Lord, unto the wicked*” (Isa. 48:22). But for the believer we have “*the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace*” (Eph. 1:7b), and thus have found “*peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ*” (Rom. 5:1). We do not have to be angry anymore; at war with God, our neighbors or ourselves. *Peace* is ours—“*in Him*.”

And if you look closely at the world about us, you will see it *drifting aimlessly* toward it knows not what. This is the root cause why it is so easy to lead the masses astray. But, again, the believer has found *purpose and direction*, being instructed in God’s grand eternal plan in His Son. See Ephesians 1:8-11 and marvel at the “*wisdom and prudence*” found in the Father’s eternal purpose—and rejoice that we have been intelligized by “*the mystery of His will which He purposed in Himself*”!

We could go on and on, but this is enough: the real answers to the real questions from real life are found in the real Savior. It is only “in Him” that we are made whole, fulfilled and complete.

## THE SUREST WAY WE KNOW

to help others come to know “the wonderful message of the wonderful grace of God” is to get that message *out to greater numbers*. It is the special focus of this ministry to do just that. Will you join us in prayer as we continue to reach out into the market place with the message of grace and determine in your heart what part *you* should have in it?

## Paulitically Correct

Seeing more and more people fall apart—spiritually, emotionally, mentally, relationally, financially, even physically—during the current pandemic, the following slightly edited from the writings of Alan Burns (1929) provides needed perspective:

Paul was no politician. Once, it is true, he claimed his Roman citizenship, but what happened thereafter? After claiming his “rights” as a Roman citizen, he received Roman protection for a season, but it is also true that as a Roman citizen he was put into a Roman prison, and ultimately as a Roman citizen suffered from the stroke of a Roman sword.

Paul had no political program. For him, the cross put an end to man in the flesh. It assessed the natural man and declared him bankrupt—morally, spiritually, politically, totally. Instead of being a citizen of the world he became a corpse in it: “*I am crucified with Christ.*” Thus, he declares,

“But God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom THE WORLD IS CRUCIFIED UNTO ME, AND I UNTO THE WORLD” (Gal. 6:14).

As far as the world is concerned, the church of God is a cemetery full of nothing but dead men—and men with their names on tombstones do not trust in political nominations.

The religious world prates much and often of the glories of “democracy;” yet the believer’s hope is centered not in man-ocracy but God-ocracy. If the reader has learned the truth of Paul’s epistles, he will not claim to be either a Republican, a Democrat, a Libertarian or a Socialist; for God’s choice and not his, God’s vote and not his ballot, has made him a member of the party of the grace of God. “*Demas hath forsaken me, having loved this present world*” (II Tim. 4:10) would correctly describe the modern religious political attitude toward Paul’s teaching.

Whitewashing the world is the occupation of a “church” which should have learned by now that what the world needs is to be washed white. The whitewash may be applied now with this brush and then with that; but the “church” which thus would gloss over, and patch up, and do a tinkerer’s job with a world whose disease is in its nature, and whose evils spring from its character, has repudiated the cross of Christ, the hope of the Scriptures, God’s way of dealing with the world’s sin, and has become merely a political club instead of a Paulitically sound church.

## NEWS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

**IT HAS BEEN QUITE A YEAR** and ministry opportunities continue to abound. *Forgotten Truths* is still reaching multitudes each week, as are our weekly and daily radio broadcasts. GSB continues to train soldiers around the world. We covet your prayers for these important ministries carrying the message of grace into the market place.

**UPCOMING CONFERENCES** are being planned again, pending local restrictions. With so many being cancelled in recent months we look forward to in-person fellowship! If this is not possible, most of these meetings will still be available via the Internet.

- Nov. 6-8: *Royal Grace Bible Church*, Concord, NC
- Nov. 20-22: *Southwest Bible Fellowship*, Tempe, AZ
- Dec. 5-6: *Zoom Conference* from Slidell, LA
- Jan.15-17: *Florida Grace Conference*, Kissimmee, FL
- Feb. 12-14: *Southern California Grace Conference*, San Clemente, CA
- March 26-28: *Clear Springs Bible Church*, Riceville, TN
- April 23-25: *GSB’s Soldiers Training for Service*, Rolling Meadows, IL

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For further details contact Pastor Russ Hargett at [russhargett@verizon.net](mailto:russhargett@verizon.net).

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