

# Justification By Faith and its Consequences

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Justification is a legal sentence or declaration issued by God in which He pronounces the person in question free from any fault or guilt and acceptable in His sight. The person is declared to have met all the requirements of God's holy law and to possess a perfect righteousness. As Packer states, "The biblical meaning of 'justify'... is to pronounce, accept, and treat as just, i.e., as, on the one hand, not penally liable, and on the other, entitled to all the privileges due to those who have kept the law. It is thus a forensic term, denoting a judicial act of administering the law -- in this case, by declaring a verdict of acquittal, and so excluding all possibility of condemnation. Justification thus settles the legal status of the person justified." (James I. Packer, "Just, Justify, Justification" Baker's Dictionary of Theology, p. 304) Upon examination, if a person is found to be guilty of any sin or lacking in righteousness in the least degree, he falls under the sentence of condemnation. Therefore only those who have perfect righteousness are justified.

## the two methods of justification

There are two methods of justification set forth in the Scriptures:

- Justification by works -- the legal method
- Justification by faith -- the gospel method

The first method *requires that men perfectly obey God's law*. "For it is not the hearers of the law who are righteous before God, but the doers of the law who will be justified." (Rom. 2:13). The apostle is not saying in this verse that anyone can keep the law, but is saying that if anyone does, he will receive eternal life as his reward. Paul makes it clear in Rom. 3:9-20 that no one can fulfill the law's demands, for all men are under the power of sin and without any righteousness whatsoever. Therefore he concludes that "no human being will be justified in God's sight by works of the law" (Rom 3:20). The law saves no one, it only makes sin known.

The second method offered to men whereby they may be justified *is through faith*. This method is not developed in Romans until man's need of a method apart from obedience to the law (apart from personal merit or works) is thoroughly established. Starting at Rom 3:21 and continuing through Chapter 10, Paul explains, illustrates and defends the doctrine of justification by faith. This is the burden of the Roman letter.

All men (Jews and Gentiles alike) are sinful (as was shown in Rom 3:9-20) and cannot possibly be justified on the ground of their own personal righteousness or legal obedience. But sinners are justified (acquitted -- put in right standing with God) by His grace (unmerited favor) as a gift. This method of justification has been made possible by the sacrificial death of Christ -- the benefits of which are received by faith. The sacrificial death of Christ has satisfied the demands of justice; therefore God can righteously justify all who believe in Jesus Christ. Justice demands that sin be punished, and sin will be punished,

either in the person of the unbelieving sinner or in the person of Jesus Christ, the believing sinner's substitute.

God, being just, can now justly declare a *guilty sinner* to be free from guilt. How can this be? "This seemingly impossible result was accomplished through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus. God sent Christ to die as a propitiatory sacrifice. To propitiate means to appease an injured party, to turn aside his wrath, to make him favorable to the offender. This is what Christ's blood accomplished. If it seemed unrighteous for God to acquit the guilty, Christ's death satisfied the requirements of righteousness, so that God could justify the sinner and at the same time remain just Himself. Christ's death, therefore, was a sacrifice to satisfy divine justice and as a consequence to reconcile us to God. Of course, not all sinners are acquitted. The benefit is restricted to those who have faith in Christ." (Gordon H. Clark, *Romans, The Biblical Expositor*, p. 243).

The two methods of justification -- by works and by faith -- are shown to rest on two contrary principles -- merit and grace.

- *Justification by works* rests on the principle that men *earn* their salvation by doing good. Good men are saved by their good works. Salvation then is not a gift but a wage.
- *Justification by faith* rests on the principle that God *imputes* righteousness as a free gift to the ungodly who believe in Him. Salvation is not earned by the sinner but is freely given to him when he believes.

## the ground of justification

Paul argues from the words of David: (1) that righteousness is reckoned (imputed) to the believing sinner apart from his own works, and quotes from the Psalmist showing (2) that the believer's sins are not reckoned to him (see Psalm 32:1,2). The reason the believer's sins are not imputed to him is that they were imputed to Christ (see Isaiah 53, cf., I Peter 2:24,25).

To *impute* something to a person means to set it to his account or to number it among the things belonging to him -- to reckon it to him. If something is imputed to a person, it is made his legally; it is counted or imputed as his possession. To impute means to account, charge, credit, reckon, attribute, etc.

The twofold imputation of sin and righteousness (in relation to Christ and the believer) forms the *ground* of justification.

1. The believer's sins were imputed to Christ -- this is why He suffered and died on the cross (see I Peter 2:24, II Cor. 5:21). Christ became legally responsible for the believer's sins and underwent the believer's just punishment. By dying as the believer's substitute, He satisfied the demands of justice and forever freed the believer from any possibility of condemnation or punishment. When the believer's sins were imputed to Christ, the act of imputation in no way made Him sinful or polluted His nature -- it in no way affected His character; it only made Him *legally* responsible for those sins. Imputation does not change one's nature; it only affects one's legal standing.
2. Jesus Christ lived a perfect life -- He completely kept God's law. The personal righteousness worked out by Christ during His life on earth is imputed to the sinner the moment he believes. The believer is credited with Christ's righteousness and God views him as if he had done all the good that Christ did. Christ's obedience, His

merit, His personal righteousness is imputed to (credited to, set to the account of) the believer. This in no way changes the believer's nature (any more than the imputation of sin to Christ changed His nature); it only affects the believer's legal standing before God.

## the means of justification

The *means* by which the sinner receives the benefits of Christ's saving work (His sinless life and sacrificial death) is *faith in Him*. No one can be justified apart from faith, yet, no one is justified on the basis of his faith. Faith itself does not save the sinner but brings him to Christ who saves him; therefore, faith, though a necessary *means* to justification, is not itself the *cause* or *ground* of justification.

We must be careful not to confuse *imputed* righteousness (which is received by faith alone and is the only ground of justification) with *personal acts* of righteousness which are performed by believers as a result of the Holy Spirit's work in their hearts. These personal acts of righteousness in no way secure or add to our justification.

Eight times in the Roman letter reference is made to the righteousness of God.

1. Three times it has reference to God's attribute of justice, see Romans 3:5,25,26.
2. Five times (in 1:17, 3:21,22, and twice in 10:3) it has reference to that righteousness which God gives (imputes) to all who believe in His Son. The righteousness which He gives is apart from works of law (see Romans 3:28, and 4:1-8, 23-25); it is not our own (Phil. 3:9); it is the gift of God (Rom. 5:17) and is received by faith (Rom. 1:17, and 9:30-10:4; Gal.2:15-21). In I Corinthians 1:30 Paul speaks of Christ as being our "righteousness."

Abraham's faith illustrates the gospel method of justification by faith. (The promise made to him contained the gospel, Gal. 3:8.)

- a. The object of Abraham's faith was God's promise that He would make him the father of many nations. Rom. 4:18.
- b. The strength of his faith is seen in that he believed God's promise, though it seemed impossible that it could come to pass. Rom 4:19,20.
- c. The ground of his faith was the ability and faithfulness of God to do what He had promised. Rom. 4:21.
- d. The result of his faith was that he was made righteous (justified). Rom. 4:22.
- e. The record of his faith was given to teach us that all who believe in the death and resurrection of Christ are, like Abraham, counted righteous and therefore justified. Rom. 4:23-25.

The resurrection of Jesus Christ demonstrates the fact that God has accepted His sacrificial death as the full payment for the believer's sins and thus shows that those who trust in Him are justified. (Rom. 4:26)

## resulting blessings from being justified

In Romans 5:1-11, Paul rejoices in some of the blessings resulting from justification by faith.

1. Believers have peace with God. Rom 5:1
2. Believers, because they stand in God's favor through Christ, rejoice in their hope of sharing in God's glory. Rom 5:2
3. Believer's rejoice in their suffering, knowing that these sufferings produce endurance (fortitude) which in turn produces character (tried integrity) which in turn produces hope that does not disappoint them, for the Holy Spirit (who has been given to them) assures believers that they are the objects of God's love. Rom 5:3-5
4. Believers are assured of final salvation. Rom 5:6-11 God has proved His love for believers (even while they were ungodly) by giving His Son to die on their behalf. (5:6-8) Since they have already been justified (declared righteous) and reconciled to God by Christ's death, how much more then shall they be saved from God's wrath through Christ who now lives in their behalf (see John 14:19; Romans 8:11; I Cor. 15:23; Heb. 7:25; Matt. 28:18, cf., Eph. 1:20-22). Believers because they are reconciled to God, have present and abounding joy. (5:9-11).

## Adam and Christ

In Romans 5:12-21, Paul illustrates the gospel method of justification through a comparison of the saving work of Christ with the condemning work of Adam

Paul's design is to show that *just as* the race was condemned on the ground of the imputation of Adam's one sin, *even so* believers are justified on the ground of the imputation of Christ's righteousness. The central idea of the passage is that men are saved in precisely the same manner in which they were lost -- through the act of another. As Adam, by his one transgression, brought condemnation to all connected with him, so Christ, by His act of righteousness (His sinless life and substitutionary death) brought justification to all connected with Him.

The works of the two differ (verses 13-17) in that Christ did *much more* for his people than just to remove the imputed guilt of Adam's one sin; He also made complete satisfaction for all of their personal sins and in addition imputes to them perfect righteousness as a free gift, thus causing them to reign in life.

The heart of the argument of Romans 5:12-21 is contained in verses 12, 18 and 19. These three verses should be given special study. The point of the argument is to show that men are justified on the ground of the imputed righteousness of Christ just as they were condemned on the ground of the imputed sin of Adam. By means of the comparison between the fall of the race in Adam and the recovery of believers in Christ, Paul illustrates the gospel method of justification.

## dead to sin

In every age there have been those who have denounced the doctrine of justification by faith on the ground that it logically leads to sin. "If all the believer's sins have already been paid for, if he has already been credited with perfect righteousness, if his good works will not help save him -- if all this is true," ask the opponents, "then why worry about sin? why try to do good? why strive to live a righteous life?" Romans 6 answers all such objections showing that the truly justified sinner will take no such attitude. He will not sin that grace

may abound (vs. 1), nor will he sin because he is under grace and not under law (vs. 14). On the contrary, the gospel method of salvation by grace leads to true obedience -- it inevitably results in good works! But the justified sinner's obedience results from love, not fear; his good works are performed out of gratitude for God's free gift of salvation, not in the hope that these works will help save him. Justification by faith leads the believer, not to a life of sin, but to a life of grateful obedience.

Those who are justified by faith *cannot continue to live in sin* because through their identification with Christ, they are **dead to sin**. Rom. 6:1-11.

In Romans 5:20, Paul had shown that "where sin increased (as the result of the adding of the Mosaic Law) grace abounded all the more." If then, the increase of sin resulted in an overflow of grace, would it not be a good thing to sin purposely? Would this not magnify God's grace even more? Since some might reason in this manner, Paul himself raises the question, "Are we (who have been justified) to continue in sin that grace may abound?" (vs. 1). The apostle then answers with an emphatic *no* (vs.2) and shows why this cannot be, "How can we who died to sin still live in it?" Rom. 6:1,2.

In Romans 6:2,7, and 11, it is stated that believers have died to sin: "we who died to sin" (vs. 2); "he who has died is freed from sin" (vs. 7); "you must consider yourselves dead to sin" (vs. 11). These expressions mean that believers, through their identification with Christ, are dead to the **guilt** of sin. They are viewed by God *as if* they themselves *died* in the *death of Christ* and suffered the full penalty of sin's guilt. Sin can no longer make any legal claim on them; thus, they are *dead* to it -- free from its condemnation. That believers are *not dead* to the *influence* or *power* of sin in their lives is proved both by the Bible (see for example Romans 7:14-25) and Christian experience. As Haldane points out, the meaning of the phrase "dead to sin" is often extended to include "death to the *power* of sin, to which it has not the smallest reference. It exclusively indicates the justification of believers, and their freedom from the *guilt* of sin, having no allusion to their sanctification, which, however, as the apostle immediately proceeds to prove, necessarily follows." Bishop Moule paraphrases verse 7 as follows: "for he who once died to sin now stands free from its claim" and explains that "the *legal claim* of sin is meant here, not its *moral dominion*, for the Greek word rendered 'freed' is literally 'justified'."

Smeaton points out that this mode of interpreting the passage is comparatively recent: "The old view advocated by the Reformers and Puritans, failed by making the whole [dying to sin] too much a subjective experience, or an inward renovation. The origin of the misinterpretation must be traced to the separation of the sixth chapter from the fifth, as if a wholly new subject began at Rom. 6:1." Compare the words of Horatius Bonar, who after having defended Haldane's interpretation, states "To be 'dead to sin' is a judicial or legal, not a moral figure. It refers to our release from condemnation, our righteous disjunction from the claim and curse of law. This, instead of giving license to sin, is the beginning and root of holiness."

Only by realizing that he is dead to the condemning power of sin and alive to God "in Christ" can a sinner truly love or trust God. Only as the believer sees what Christ has done for him can he find the motive to do what God requires of him. Once he sees God's love for him "in Christ" he no longer wants to "live in sin".

## dead to the law

The believer is not only *dead to sin*, he is also said to be *dead to the law*. Those who are justified by faith are *not under law* (i.e., saved by keeping its commandments) but *under grace* (i.e., saved by the free mercy of God) they are *therefore* called upon to yield

themselves to God as His obedient slaves. Rom 6:12-7:6. Paul calls upon believers to yield themselves, *not* to sin, *but* to God and as a motive for such action, appeals to the fact that they are under grace, not under law, and thus are free from sin's dominion (power to damn or to destroy them). Rom 6:12-14

Believers are not under law as *a way of salvation* (they are saved by grace through faith, see Eph. 2:8-10). This, however, does not mean that they are free from God's law as *a rule of duty* -- they are under the law of Christ. Paul, in Galatians 3:23-4:11, shows that the law of Moses was Israel's custodian (child-trainer, guardian) but now that "the faith" (the New Covenant) has come, God's people are no longer under this custodian. They have received adoption as mature sons and are under the leadership of the Holy Spirit. The saints under the law of Moses were treated as immature children in that they were regulated by detailed laws, whereas the saints under the law of Christ are treated as mature sons and are guided by much broader principles of conduct. Believers living in the present age, therefore, have far more liberty and as a result greater responsibility than the believers who lived under the old system. See John 1:17; Matthew 11:7-15. The rule of duty for believers today is contained in the New Covenant. Though the laws of the Old Covenant are profitable for study, they are no longer binding on God's people. However, many of the moral principles contained in the law of Moses (the Old Covenant) have also been included in the New Covenant Law, (e.g. the laws forbidding murder, adultery, etc.) and thus the two codes of law, though different, have much in common.

The kind of life led by those who are truly justified (those who are not under law but under grace) is *illustrated* by comparing their service to God with *the service of an obedient (self-yielding) slave* to a master. Rom 6:15-23. Every man belongs to the master whom he *willingly* serves, whether sin or righteousness. If we are "*obedient slaves*" to sin, we are not saved; but if we yield ourselves as "*obedient slaves*" to righteousness, we prove ourselves to be true believers, and therefore truly saved. If a man can live at peace with sin, he has no peace with God. He is not justified! Notice the contrast of the end rewards between these two types of servitude; the servants of sin *earn* eternal **death** for themselves, the servants of God are *given* eternal **life** through Christ Jesus.

The believer's freedom from the law is illustrated by comparing it to *a married woman's freedom from a dead husband*. Rom 7:1-6. Paul shows that *just as* a married woman is discharged from her husband when he dies and is free to marry another, *even so* the believer, through the death of Christ, has died to the law (and is therefore discharged from its demands as the condition of his salvation) and is now joined to Christ that he might bring forth fruit for God.

Thus far in the letter, Paul has shown several things concerning the law: it brings the knowledge of sin, but in no way can it justify the guilty (3:20); it brings wrath (4:15); it increase the trespass (5:20); believers are not under law but under grace (6:14,15); believers are dead to the law -- discharged or freed from it (7:4,6); the sinful passions of unbelievers are aroused (incited to evil) by the law, to bear fruit for death (7:5). "What then shall we say (in light of all these facts)? *That the law is sin?*" (7:7). Paul answers with an emphatic *no* and proceeds to show the true function of the law by showing its operation in his own life. First, he explains how the law (before his conversion) had made sin known to him and thereby had made him realize that he was spiritually dead (7:7-13). Then he explains his relationship to the law after his conversion; after he had been made alive spiritually. He delighted in the law and desired to keep its precepts but found that sin still dwelt within him, causing him to do the evil which he had come to hate (7:14-25). Both before and after his conversion, the law had served to identify sin and to condemn it by pointing out God's perfect will, but in neither case had the law given Paul the strength to overcome sin. Thus the law is shown to be ineffective, either for justification (it cannot put

the sinner in right standing with God), or for sanctification (it cannot enable the justified sinner to overcome evil while he remains in this body). The law can only command -- it cannot give strength to perform; it can only point out sin -- it cannot enable one to conquer sin.

## unending struggle with indwelling sin

Paul in 7:14-25 was writing of his experience as a Christian. He describes his struggle with indwelling sin, "the law is spiritual; but I am carnal, sold under sin" (7:14). Note well the contrast between the *willing* servant of sin in 6:16,17 (he is lost!) and the *unwilling* servant of sin in 7:14-25 (he is saved!). The best commentary on these verses is Romans 8:23, where God's children are said to groan inwardly as they wait for the redemption of their bodies. Complete victory over sin is promised but not while living in this body of sin. See Romans 8:10,11 and I Cor. 15:35-57. Paul concludes by showing that as long as he remained in this life the warfare between his spiritual nature and his carnal nature would continue.

Many, in the present day, leave the impression that the mature or enlightened Christian need not struggle with indwelling sin. All one need do is to yield himself to God by an act of faith and *victory is his!* As a result of this false notion many sincere believers are misled and confused when they fail to experience the "promised victory", and some are even made to doubt their salvation. The truth is that the most mature saint is in constant conflict with indwelling sin even as the apostle Paul was. The one who should doubt the genuineness of his salvation is the one who does not have this struggle, who does not cry out "wretched man that I am", and does not constantly long for deliverance.

Like Paul, every true believer struggles with indwelling sin. Romans 7:14-25 is the description of their lives. As the apostle John so emphatically states: "If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us," (I John 1:8).

No believer is able to understand why he sins; it is a mystery beyond his reach. The testimony of every saint is the same as that of Paul, "I do not understand my own actions," vs. 15; "I can will what is right, but I cannot do it," vs. 18; "I do not do the good I want, but the evil I do not want is what I do," vs. 19; "I see in my members another law at war with the law of my mind and making me captive to the law of sin which dwells in my members," vs. 23.

The believer in no way excuses sin. Even though he, like Paul, is "captive to the law of sin," (vs. 23) he feels his responsibility to refrain from sin. He can will what is right but he "cannot do it," (vs. 18) yet, he assumes the obligation to do good and longs for holiness; his continual cry is, "wretched man that I am!" (vs. 24), and he longs for deliverance.

"Inability is consistent with responsibility...As the Scriptures constantly recognize the truth of these two things, so are they constantly united in Christian experience. Every one feels that he cannot do the things that he would, yet is sensible that he is to blame for not doing them. Let any man test his power by the requisition to love God perfectly at all times. Alas! how entire our inability; yet how deep our self-loathing and self-condemnation...The renewed man condemns himself, and justifies God, even while he confesses and mourns his inability to conform to the divine requisitions." (Hodge, Romans, p.246)

Every believer is assured of deliverance from indwelling sin through Christ Jesus, but not while living in this body of sin. Paul asked, "Who will deliver me from this body of death?" (vs. 24) and answered, "Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord!" (vs.25). How and when Christ will deliver us is not stated in chapter seven, but in chapter eight we read, "...if the spirit of Christ is in you, although your bodies are dead because of sin, your spirits

are alive because of righteousness. If the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, he who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will give life to your mortal bodies..." (vs. 10,11). "We...groan inwardly (cf. 7:24) as we wait for adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies," (8:23).

Paul looked for deliverance from indwelling sin but not while in the flesh, and neither can we! Notice his conclusion, "So then I of myself serve the law of God with my mind, but with my flesh I serve the law of sin." (7:25).

Although the believer is plagued with indwelling sin, his sin can never condemn him. Chapter seven ends with the solemn fact that we are still sinners even after we have been saved (born again); but chapter eight opens with the wonderful assurance that "there is therefore now *no* condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus." Those in Christ are justified on the ground of His righteousness which has been imputed to them. In this blessed truth believers should find hope and comfort to help them in their fight against sin. They have more than sufficient reason to rejoice; their Lord has already delivered them from the condemning power of sin and will, in the resurrection, deliver them from the presence of indwelling sin. "Those Christians are under a great mistake, who suppose that despondency is favourable to piety. Happiness is one of the elements of life. Hope and joy are twin daughters of piety and cannot, without violence and injury, be separated from their parent. To rejoice is as much a duty as it is a privilege." (Hodge, Romans, p.212). Every true saint, like Paul, as long as he remains in this life has an unending struggle with indwelling sin. His Adamic nature (which is subject to sin) is in constant conflict with his renewed nature (which is subject to God's law). He finds within himself a deep yearning to do God's will -- this is his innermost desire. He also finds within himself a compelling force that makes him captive to the law of sin and causes him to do the very things he hates. What assurance of salvation can such a one find -- what hope is there of final victory? The believer's *present comfort* is found in the saving work of Christ, through whom he has already been justified (declared righteous) and is thus assured of salvation. His hope for *final deliverance* from the struggle rests in God's promise that He will raise him from the dead in the last day with an incorruptible body completely free from sin. Until that time, however, he must walk by faith and live in hope -- ever struggling to put to death the deeds of the body while constantly longing for and striving after the things of the Spirit. Although the believer will be free from sin when he dies, yet his salvation will not be *complete* until his body is resurrected (cf. Rom. 8:22,23).

## the security of believers

Romans 8 is one of the greatest chapters in all of God's Word. Hodge gives as the theme of the chapter "the security of believers" and says, "The salvation of those who have renounced the Law, and accepted the gracious offers of the Gospel, is shown to be absolutely certain. The whole chapter is a series of arguments, most beautifully arranged, in support of this one point. They are all traced back to the great source of hope and security, the unmerited and unchanging love of God in Christ Jesus. The proposition is contained in the first verse. There is no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus: they shall never be condemned or perish." (Hodge, Romans, p.310)

**Through their identification with Christ, believers (though sinful in themselves) have been freed from the law and therefore cannot be condemned. Hence their salvation is certain.** Rom 8:1-4.

The reason there is no condemnation for those "in Christ" (joined to him by faith) is that they have been freed (Greek, "justified") from the law of God through the gospel of Jesus

Christ. (8:1-4) Hodge observes that "the law of the Spirit of Life is the gospel, i.e., the law of which the life giving Spirit is the author." Haldane and Moule concur with this interpretation of the phrase. Moule writes, "It is the Divine Rule of *Justification*, (which alone, as the whole previous reasoning shows, removes 'all condemnation') and is thus 'a law' in the sense of a 'fixed process'.

The "law of sin and death" here has reference to God's law, which, as we noted in Rom 7:7-13, brought the knowledge of sin and death to Paul. "If it had not been for the law, I should not have known *sin*... when the commandment came, sin revived and I died; the very commandment which promised life proved to be *death* to me" (7:7,9,10) Hodge interprets verses 1 and 2 as follows: "There is no condemnation to those who are in Christ, because they have been freed in Him by the gospel of the life-giving Spirit from the Law which, good in itself, is, through our corruption, the source of sin and death." (Hodge, Romans, p. 251) In order to free believers from the guilt or condemnation of sin, God sent His own Son into the world (in a nature like man's sinful nature, but not itself sinful. See Heb. 2:14-18; 4:15). Christ gave Himself as a sacrifice for sin, and thereby legally put sin away and thus freed His people from its guilt. As a result of Christ's sacrificial work, the just requirement (demand) of the law has been fulfilled (fully met) in those who are joined to Him. This of course is because of the fact that what Christ did, He did as their substitute or representative, and it is therefore counted (imputed) to them as if they themselves did it. (8:4)

**Believers are indwelt by the Holy Spirit who *has* regenerated them, who *is* sanctifying them, and who in the last day *will* resurrect them.** Rom 8:5-11.

The Holy Spirit's work in the Christian has a threefold aspect -- past, present, and future. Through regeneration, the Holy Spirit made the unbeliever spiritually alive and caused him to believe in Jesus Christ. The Spirit continues His work through the process of sanctification by which He imparts spiritual strength and guidance to the believer. Sanctification begins at regeneration and does not end until death. In the resurrection the Spirit will give life to the saint's mortal body when He raises him from the dead. Those who "walk according to" vs. 4; "live according to" vs. 5; and "set their minds on" vs. 6, the *flesh* are *dead spiritually* and therefore hostile to God and His law, verses 7 and 8. The term "flesh" is used here to denote man's fallen sinful nature. Although the Christian is still influenced by the flesh (his fallen nature), the "flesh" no longer dominates him. It does not characterize his life as it did before he was made alive and energized by the Holy Spirit. The believer "walks" and "lives" according to the *Spirit*, verses 4, 5,6,9-11. The saved man does not live by the standards and dictates of the flesh, but his life is regulated or influenced by the Holy Spirit who dwells within him and who is the dominant ruler of the "inner man". He is still troubled by indwelling sin, but he is not ruled by it as he was before regeneration. Though his body is dead by reason of sin and guilt, his spirit is alive because of the righteousness which has been imputed to him.

**Believers (through adoption) are, in their present state, the children of God and therefore fellow heirs with Christ.** Rom 8:12-17.

By the Spirit, believers are to put to death the deeds of the body (i.e., works of the flesh, see Gal. 5:16-24). Only those who resist sin, who are led by the Spirit, and who suffer with Christ are true believers. (vs. 13,14,17).

**Believers, though they must suffer various afflictions while in this life, are sustained through them all by the encouragement and help that comes from God.**

Rom 8:18-28.

Their present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that is to be theirs -- and though they now "groan inwardly" because of sin and suffering, they live in hope and

patiently wait for the redemption of their bodies when they shall be glorified (made like Christ). Rom 8:18-25.

The Holy Spirit helps believers in their weaknesses and sufferings by teaching them how to pray and what to pray for.

Believers are assured that God works all things together for their good. Rom 8:28.

Haldane, in commenting on this familiar verse, says "If all things work together for good, there is nothing within the compass of being that is not, in one way or other, advantages to the children of God... The creation of the world, the fall and the redemption of man, all the dispensations of Providence, whether prosperous or adverse, all occurrences and events -- all things, whatsoever they be -- work for their good... They do not work thus of themselves: It is God that turns all things to the good of His children. The afflictions of believers, in a peculiar manner, contribute to this end.

"Even the sins of believers work for their good, not from the nature of sin, but by the goodness and power of Him who brings light out of darkness. Everywhere in Scripture we read of the great evil of sin. Everywhere we receive the most solemn warning against its commission; and everywhere we hear also of the chastisements it brings, even upon those who are rescued from its finally condemning power. It is not sin, then, in itself that works the good, but God who overrules its effects to His children, -- shows them, by means of it, what is in their hearts, as well as their entire dependence on Himself, and the necessity of walking with Him more closely...

"But if our sins work together for our good, shall we sin that grace may abound? Far be the thought. This would be entirely to misunderstand the grace of God, and to turn it into an occasion of offending Him." (Haldane, Romans, pp. 392, 393)

The promise contained in Romans 8:28 can only be claimed by those who "love" God, who are "called according to his purpose."

**Believers are assured of final salvation, for they have been predestined to eternal glory.** Rom 8:29, 30.

Each individual who has been called by God's Spirit and justified by faith can be assured that he was loved by God before the foundation of the world and marked out (ordained) for everlasting life. For as Romans 8:29,30 show, being "called" and "justified" are the result and therefore the evidence of one's having been predestined to eternal glory.

Believers have been predestined to be conformed to the image of God's Son. This conformity (being made like Christ) will take place when the saints are glorified in the resurrection, at Christ's second coming. (Compare Romans 8:17-23; I Cor. 15:49, 51-57; Phil. 3:20, 21; I John 3:2.) They have been predestined to this end so that Christ "might be the first-born among *many* brethren." See Heb. 2:10-17. Compare also Col 1:15,18; Heb. 1:6; Rev. 1:5.

Notice the chain of events: Those whom God (1) knew or fixed His heart upon in ages past, (2) He marked out or ordained, and (3) in time He called (effectually), and (4) He justified (declares them righteous on the ground of Christ's work), and (5) He glorified. "So indissoluble is the chain that the last link is here viewed as an accomplished fact because the first links are so." (Moule, Romans, p.157) The exact number known by God before the world began shall be glorified, no more, no less, and all of them *must* and *will* pass through *each* of these five steps. To illustrate: Suppose God foreknew 100 individuals, then He predestined 100, He called 100, He justified 100, and He glorified 100 individuals. None are gained, none are lost. He will bring to salvation each individual whom He set His heart on (loved) before the world began.

**God is for believers -- no one can effectually be against them.** Rom. 8:31-34.

That God is for believers is undeniably true since He has already given His own Son to die for their sins. Certainly, God would not give His most precious possession for His elect and then withhold from them blessings of a lesser nature. (8:31,32)

God's people have been cleared in His court of justice from all of their sins. Since God's justice has been completely satisfied, who is there to charge or condemn believers? Would Christ Jesus condemn the very people He loved and gave Himself for, was raised for, and even now intercedes for? (8:33,34)

**God's love for His people is infinite and unchangeable, and nothing in all creation can separate believers from it.** Rom 8:35-39.

"This is the last step in the climax of the apostle's argument; the very summit of the mount of confidence, whence he looks down on his enemies as powerless, and forward and upward with full assurance of a final and abundant triumph. No one can accuse, no one can condemn, no one can separate us from the love of Christ." (Hodge, Romans, p. 290)

Compare Paul's language in Romans 8:35-39 with the words of Christ in John 10:27-30.

Haldane concludes his comments on chapter 8 with these words, "The feelings of the believer, viewed in Christ, as described in the close of this chapter, form a striking contrast with what is said in the end of the former chapter, where he is viewed in himself. In the contemplation of himself as a sinner, he mournfully exclaims, 'O wretched man that I am!' In the contemplation of himself as justified in Christ, he boldly demands, 'Who shall lay anything to my charge? Who is he that condemns?' Well may the man who loves God defy the universe to separate him from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus his Lord.

Although at present the whole creation groans and travails in pain together, although even he himself groans within himself, yet all things are working together for his good. The Holy Spirit is interceding for him in his heart; Jesus Christ is interceding for him before the throne; God the Father has chosen him from eternity, has called him, has justified him, and will finally crown him with glory. The Apostle had begun this chapter by declaring that there is no *condemnation* to them who are in Christ Jesus; he concludes it with the triumphant assurance that there is no *separation* from His love. The salvation of believers is complete in Christ, and their union with Him indissoluble." (Haldane, Romans, p 438. Italics are his) In Romans 8 Paul rests the doctrine of the eternal security of believers on seven irrefutable arguments:

1. There is no condemnation for those in Christ. (verses 1-4)
2. The Spirit has regenerated, is sanctifying, and will resurrect them. (verses 5-11)
3. They are now the children of God and fellow heirs with Christ. (verses 12-17)
4. They are sustained through afflictions by hope and the help of the Spirit. (verses 18-28)
5. They have been predestined to be conformed to the image of God's Son. (verses 29-30)
6. God is for them! He gave His Son to die for them! Therefore, who is to condemn them? (verses 31-34)
7. Nothing can separate them from the infinite and unchangeable love of God in Christ Jesus. (verses 35-39)

Each argument, starting from the top down, rests on the following arguments so that when they are viewed together they form an indestructible foundation. The chapter starts with NO CONDEMNATION "in Christ" and ends with NO SEPARATION from the love of God "in Christ".