

## **Eternal Security of the Believer**

by Doug Kennard

The issue of eternal security of the believer is resolved by this journal through a fusion of traditions. The editors have affirmed Dallas Theological Seminary's "eternal security" statement<sup>1</sup> and combined it with the Westminster Confession of Faith on the "perseverance of the believer."<sup>2</sup> This Dallas statement is built on a Lutheran initial salvation<sup>3</sup> and usually coupled with an Augustinian–Dispensational Christian life.<sup>4</sup> That is, growth in the Christian life is not required by this statement, only sufficient divine recovery to guarantee that the justified will be glorified. That is, this statement permits a reformed view but does not require it. So in a variety of ways Dallas theologians often identify themselves as moderately Reformed. However, the Westminster Confession is built on a Reformed salvation view that tightly fuses the initial justification–regeneration with the necessity to grow in the Christian life.<sup>5</sup> It is out of this orientation that Kevaughn Mattis identifies that the salvation and security of the believer is the hinge upon which the moral aspect of the Christian life turns.<sup>6</sup> Furthermore, in the tidbit by Ric Cannada "Secure in the Father's Love" this Westminster approach is summarized as:

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<sup>1</sup> Dallas Theological Seminary: Doctrinal Statement, Article X: Eternal Security: "We believe that, because of the eternal purpose of God toward the objects of His love, because of His freedom to exercise grace toward the meritless on the ground of the propitiatory blood of Christ, because of the very nature of the divine gift of eternal life, because of the present and unending intercession and advocacy of Christ in heaven, because of the immutability of the unchangeable covenants of God, because of the regenerating, abiding presence of the Holy Spirit in the hearts of all who are saved, we and all true believers everywhere, once saved shall be kept saved forever. We believe, however, that God is a holy and righteous Father and that, since He cannot overlook the sin of His children, He will, when they persistently sin, chasten them and correct them in infinite love; but having undertaken to save them and keep them forever, apart from all human merit, He, who cannot fail, will in the end present every one of them faultless before the presence of His glory and conformed to the image of His Son (John 5:24; 10:28; 13:1; 14:16–17; 17:11; Rom. 8:29; 1 Cor. 6:19; Heb. 7:25; 1 John 2:1–2; 5:13; Jude 24)."

<sup>2</sup> Westminster Confession of Faith, Chapter 17: Of the Perseverance of the Saints:

"I. They, whom God has accepted in His Beloved, effectually called, and sanctified by His Spirit, can neither totally nor finally fall away from the state of grace, but shall certainly persevere therein to the end, and be eternally saved.

II. This perseverance of the saints depends not upon their own free will, but upon the immutability of the decree of election, flowing from the free and unchangeable love of God the Father; upon the efficacy of the merit and intercession of Jesus Christ, the abiding of the Spirit, and of the seed of God within them, and the nature of the covenant of grace: from all which arises also the certainty and infallibility thereof.

III. Nevertheless, they may, through the temptations of Satan and of the world, the prevalency of corruption remaining in them, and the neglect of the means of their preservation, fall into grievous sins; and, for a time, continue therein: whereby they incur God's displeasure, and grieve His Holy Spirit, come to be deprived of some measure of their graces and comforts, have their hearts hardened, and their consciences wounded; hurt and scandalize others, and bring temporal judgments upon themselves."

<sup>3</sup>cf. Alister McGrath, *Iustia Dei: A History of the Christian Doctrine of Justification* (Cambridge:Cambridge University Press, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. 1998), pp. 188–218.

<sup>4</sup>cf. John Walvoord, "The Augustinian–Dispensational View" In *Five Views of Sanctification* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1987), pp. 197–238.

<sup>5</sup>cf. John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, 3.11.1, 6, 10; cf. Alister McGrath, *Iustia Dei*, p. 219–25.

<sup>6</sup> Tidbit: Kevaughn Mattis, "Eternal Security: The Hinge"; some in the Dallas tradition would emphasize rewards as this motivation for Christian living.

1) the promises of God, 2) godly fruit, and 3) the witness of the Holy Spirit.<sup>7</sup> This approach especially identifies itself as a Reformed approach within the wake of Johnathan Edwards' religious affections.<sup>8</sup> In this approach, the godly fruit and Spirit Witness could be seen as unified within the Spirit as guarantor of growth. Thus in both statements the emphasis of this security statement is on the wealth of God's promises and the continuing work of the Trinity to take those He initiates with salvation to the goal of their glorification. In both statements, the believer is secure grounded on the: promises, relationship, and character of God.

Further tidbits show the basic inclinations of an Arminian approach, which appreciates man's free will and deeply feels the threat from the warning passages. It would have been nice to have an Arminian to dialog with in the journal on this subject but perhaps that is broader than the intended goal at this time. However, these Reformed and Arminian traditions normally view the other as *the* alternative, and thus wrong.

However, there are other views. As one example, the Two-Ways Tradition claims that the issues expressed on this topic by the Reformed and Arminian traditions do not contradict each other. Of course such a tradition has many ways in which it works itself out among: Orthodox, Catholic, Anglicans, Episcopalians, patristic, and medieval theologians. Such diversity is too much to handle here. However, of interest to our Reformed readership may be the particular expression of Reformed Episcopalian, who would embrace the Westminster Confession, and thus advocate perseverance of the saints. However, they would also feel the warning passages in ways that looks to this readership to be more Arminian in approach. That is they do not see that the Biblical case that Arminian and Reformed marshal needs to be viewed as contradictory. With additional categories the issues raised by these theological foes do not have to contradict. Which means that I do not think that I have to provide an interpretation of the warning passages to address the security of the believer.<sup>9</sup> I will instead supply a positive presentation instead of a negative rebuttal.

Furthermore, one thing all these presentations for and against the security of the believer tend to have is an approach which proof-texts Scripture. The gain of this approach is that it gives the impression that the view is widely based in the Biblical text. That is an advantage, but it is already supplied by the documents and tidbits. However, there is a significant disadvantage in this proof-texting approach which is especially apparent if one approaches the issue from an alternative theological view. That is, proof-texting moves so quickly and assumes a tradition's inclination when the phrases of the Scripture are read so that it is rarely convincing to those inclined to an alternative tradition. The result is two or more contradictory views, each proof-texted with sufficient Biblical phrases to convince those who are already inclined toward granting a particular point of view. This tends to set up a post-modern or an isolationist condition for theological dialog.

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<sup>7</sup> Tidbit: Ric Cannada, "Secure in the Father's Love" *Reformed Quarterly* previous known as *Reformed: The RTS Quarterly* (Summer, 1995):12-13.

<sup>8</sup> Jonathan Edwards *Religious Affections* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1959).

<sup>9</sup> For those interested in how I solve some of them, I recommend another paper of mine: Doug Kennard, "Warnings in the Book of Hebrews: The Two Ways Tradition," a paper presented at the Evangelical Theological Society, March, 1998.

The descriptive Biblical theology movement (of which I participate within) argues instead that all the traditions should join in examining the major Biblical texts to see what the broader text as a whole has to say on the issue and its related themes. I do not fool myself in assuming that there will always be agreement, but at least all of the particulars must be handled and made sense of for we cannot so easily avoid that which is present within the text before us. As such this article will study Ephesians 1–2:10 and Romans 8. This article will make two major points: 1) the elect are secure, and 2) there is ample assurance to indicate whom are these secure elect. Both passages contribute to both points though Ephesians 1–2:10 mostly underscores the point about security and Romans 8 mostly develops assurance.

### Ephesians 1–2:10

Ephesians is a letter in the Hebrew style of the first century, beginning with: 1) author, 2) recipients, 3) short blessing, and 4) longer blessing, followed by the body of the letter. Paul is the author and he is designated by the *will of God* (a repeated theme in our section) to be an apostle. The recipients are *the saints and faithful*, because both substantives are united when there is only one article that governs the compound phrase. The designation “saints” is placed first in the Greek phrase emphasizes that these who receive this letter should especially think of themselves as the group designated to be holy. In second temple Judaism, such a designation would be indicated as God’s perspective of His covenant people. The appropriate response of His people would be faithfulness to this covenant. However, in Ephesians these people are not Jews but Gentiles (Eph. 2:11), so that their holiness and faithfulness is accomplished by being *in Christ Jesus*, a personal New Covenant kind of designation (more on this in a moment). The short blessing recognizes that God the Father and Christ combine to provide these gifts and peace.

### In Christ

The passage is repeatedly punctuated by this phrase of “in Christ.” Elsewhere (eg. Romans 6), the phrase has more of the theme of death and resurrection *with* Christ.

Albert Schweitzer proposed a doctrine of mystical dying and rising with Christ to explain the problem which the resurrection of Jesus had created for traditional Jewish eschatology. So that we have already begun to experience Kingdom to the extent that we have mystically died and raised with and in Christ.<sup>10</sup> Currently the suffering that a Christian experiences is part of this sense of being caught between eras having died but only mystically raised having not bodily raised yet. Judaism, John, and Paul understood mystic revelation to involve the seer’s experience in heaven of end-time things yet to occur on earth (Dan. 2–7; 2 Cor. 12:1–10; Eph. 1:3–2:7; Rev. 1:19; 4:1–22:17).<sup>11</sup> This

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<sup>10</sup> Albert Schweitzer, *The Mysticism of Paul the Apostle*. Trans. by W. Montgomery (New York: Seabury Press, 1968), p. 144; cf. A. Feuillet, “Mort du Christ et mort du Chrétien,” *RBib* 66(1959):481–513; Mary Sylvia, *Pauline and Johannine Mysticism* (London: Darton, Longman and Todd, 1964); Alfred Wikenhauser, *Pauline Mysticism: Christ in the Mystical Teaching of St. Paul* (New York: Herder and Herder, 1960).

<sup>11</sup> *1 En.* 9.6; 103.2; *1QS* 115–118; *4 Ez.* 14.5.

mystical experience was viewed as projecting the visionary from the present into the future. Conversely, mystical experience could also be interpreted as moving the seer from the present into the past. That is what Paul, in effect, declares in Romans 6:3–13 happens to the believers baptized into Christ, though living in the present. Their baptism unites them to the cross of Christ in the past. In this manner, the eschatological death and resurrection of Jesus is not repeated or gainsayed. The believer now lives mystically in a post-resurrection manner already in Kingdom but also continues to live in our soulish body as well. However we have begun toward Kingdom in the second Adam, Christ. Schweitzer developed that:

But it is by His coming in the flesh and His dying and rising again that He first becomes man, from whom a new humanity can go forth. Since the humanity destined to Messianic glory, which takes its rise from Him, follows as the second humanity after the humanity which proceeds from Adam, Paul speaks of Him as the second Adam.<sup>12</sup>

This mystical participation through Christian baptism in Christ's dying and rising grafts the believer into the corporeity of Christ such that "he loses his creatively individual existence and his natural personality. Henceforth he is only a form of manifestation of the personality of Jesus Christ, which dominates that corporeity."<sup>13</sup> Schweitzer envisions that this Pauline mysticism is a real and physical union.

What is in view in the Pauline mysticism is an actual physical union between Christ and the Elect is proved by the fact that "being in Christ" corresponds to and, as a state of existence, takes the place of the physical "being in the flesh."<sup>14</sup>

Most of N.T. scholarship think that the physicality of Schweitzer's mysticism is overplayed and probably replace it with the ministry of the Holy Spirit.<sup>15</sup> However, if we recognize that the term "body" (σῶμα) also greatly emphasizes relationship and not merely physicality I think we would be closer to the emphasis of Paul's concept of "the body of Christ." Perhaps also Schweitzer is a bit extreme on the loss of personality within the believer's union with Christ, but there is some sort of fusion going on to describe the believer as a *new man* in Christ.

Wilhelm Bousset proposed a communal model of mysticism, that facilitates believers gathered in worship to be mystically absorbed into Christ and thereby become partakers of His death and resurrection.<sup>16</sup> Bousset saw that the death and resurrection which are attributed to Christ represent the historicism and fusion of two Hellenistic myths, the dying and rising of the god and the descent and ascent of the Primal Man. Applying these traditions, Bousset writes:

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<sup>12</sup> Schweitzer, *The Mysticism of Paul*, p. 167, see also pp. 166, 219.

<sup>13</sup> Schweitzer, *The Mysticism of Paul*, pp. 115–116.

<sup>14</sup> Schweitzer, *The Mysticism of Paul*, p. 127.

<sup>15</sup> Eg. James Dunn, *The Theology of Paul*, p. 393.

<sup>16</sup> Wilhelm Bousset, *Kyrios Christos*, tr. John Seely (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1970).

One will not be able to avoid the impression that here is given the spiritual atmosphere within which the Pauline dying-with Christ and rising-with-Christ is located...The parallel again becomes quite close when we set the Pauline “in Adam die, in Christ be made alive” over against the falling and rising with the divine hero in Hellenistic piety...The pious person experiences in mystical fellowship the same thing which the divine hero previously and fundamentally has experienced in exemplary power. The experience of the believers is only the consequence, victoriously being worked out, of the one given beginning.<sup>17</sup>

Elsewhere, Marv Pate and I have critiqued Bousset’s view as: 1) recovering a helpful communal focus, 2) not appreciating the depth of Christian suffering, 3) too dependant upon a late somewhat dissimilar Hellenistic model and 4) not appreciating the possible earlier Jewish apocalyptic contribution to these issues.<sup>18</sup>

The current trend among scholarly exegesis identifies this Pauline mysticism, *in Christ*, with Jewish *merkabah* (divine throne/chariot) mysticism.<sup>19</sup> The ecstatic ascent to heaven by the righteous as participating in the age to come, which has already dawned in heaven, but not yet descended to earth (eg. Ezek. 1:15–26; Rom. 6:3–14; Eph. 1:1–2:7).<sup>20</sup> The worshipper encounters the glory of God by being raised into His presence (Ezek. 1:15–26; Eph. 1:3, 6, 12, 14, 18, 20–22).<sup>21</sup> Both the Pauline and second temple sources appreciate that this form of mysticism occurs within the community of believers rather than for an individual mystic. Such a view employs the notion of corporate personality, where a representative figure does a deed and others align themselves in the benefits made available by mystically being identified within the representative, especially in Adam, Abraham, Moses or Christ (Mt. 3:9; Lk. 3:8; Jn. 9:28; Rom. 4:1–16; 5:14–21; Gal. 3:6–18).<sup>22</sup> The very same community of believers live on in bodily form within the world. In this way the community of believers and the individuals within it are both in the present age and the age to come simultaneously in different ways. In community

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<sup>17</sup> Bousset, *Kyrios Christos*, pp. 193-194.

<sup>18</sup> Pate and Kennard, *Deliverance Now and Not Yet*, pp. 132–133, 157–162; in this context we also discuss Adolf Deissmann’s mystical model of suffering because of its applicability for mystical participation in the Messianic woes.

<sup>19</sup> Pioneering studies in this area include: W. D. Davies, *Paul and Rabbinic Judaism*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (N.Y.: Harper, 1955), pp. 198, 210ff.; Andrew Lincoln’s whole work addressed this topic, *Paradise Now and Not Yet: Studies in the Role of the Heavenly Dimension in Paul’s Thought with Special Reference to his Eschatology. Society for New Testament Studies Monograph Series, 43* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981); as did James Tabor’s study on 2 Corinthians 12:1-10, *Things Unutterable: Paul’s Ascent to Paradise in Its Greco-Roman, Judaic, Christian Context* (Lanham: University Press of America, 1986); Alan F. Segal, “Paul and Ecstasy,” *Society of Biblical Literature 1986 Seminar Papers*. ed. Kent Harold Richards (Chico: Scholars Press, 1986), pp. 550-580; \_\_\_\_\_. *Paul the Convert. The Apostolate and Apostasy of Saul the Pharisee* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1990); Pate and Kennard, *Deliverance Now and Not Yet*, pp. 78-92, 130–136, 211, 215, 225, 229-132 240-241; Mary Dean-Otting, *Heavenly Journeys: A Study of the Motif in Hellenistic Jewish Literature* (N.Y.: Peter Lang, 1984); Gershom Scholem, *Jewish Gnosticism, Merkabah Mysticism, and Talmudic Tradition* (N.Y.: The Jewish Publication Society of America, 1960).

<sup>20</sup> *1 En.* 14; 37–71; *4Q* 400–405; *11Q* 17; *2 En.* 15–16; *3 En.*; *Ascent of Isaiah* 9; *The Books of Adam and Eve* 37; *Apoc. Ab.* 29; *Hekalot* [places] *Rabbati*.

<sup>21</sup> This is particularly apparent in *1 En.* 9.4; 25.3; 60.2; 71.7.

<sup>22</sup> A. J. M. Wedderburn, *Baptism and Resurrection. Studies in Pauline Theology Against Its Graeco-Roman Background. WUNT 44* (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr [Paul Siebeck], 1987), p. 186.

identification, position, obligation, and blessing we are already in the age to come. Whereas, in our soulish bodies and the choices we sometimes make, it is apparent that we are not yet glorified as fully righteous, but retain a lingering effect of Adam.

This means that if we are already in Christ through our own death and resurrection that there is no undoing of that death and resurrection so as to lose this mystical condition. This means that if we are already in the age to come mystically then we are already secure by what God and Christ have accomplished. We already have every spiritual blessing *in Christ* in the heavenlies (Eph 1:3). Thus *in Christ* there is no lack.

### Longer Blessing (Eph. 1:3–14).

The longer blessing is one complex sentence repeatedly punctuated with benefits God has accomplished mystically in Christ. Thus further security is spelled out for those “in Christ.” Though the benefits and the resulting security supports a greater theme in this section which is worshipping God. For example, the blessing begins by focusing on God as the One Paul blesses, with phrases reminiscent of Jewish prayers<sup>23</sup> and the inclusion of Jesus Christ. Additionally, after each benefit is identified for its blessing accrued to us the sentences end with a repeated εἰς clause “to the praise of god’s glory” (Eph. 1:6, 12, 14). All these spiritual benefits ultimately show forth God’s glory.

Part of the reason that these blessings glorify God is that God does them: He chose, He predestined, He gave, He redeemed, He forgave. First, these things are God’s will (θεληματος; Eph. 1:5, 9, 11). In fact, God “works all things after the counsel of His will” (Eph. 1:11). With the emphasis in this passage on the divine initiation, strength and extensiveness of the blessings, I side with the Reformed camp in seeing that this phrase summarizes the whole of God’s activity rather than the specific ones mentioned. Thus this phrase speaks to God’s extensive determinism,<sup>24</sup> which further supports His glory. Secondly, these spiritual blessings are God’s accomplishment. There is no lack that leaves us vulnerable. These spiritual blessings are not awaiting our activities to complete them, though they may have us caught between time, during which God will sum up all things in Christ (Eph. 1:10, 14). So the remaining activity to complete these spiritual blessings is all God’s doing. And He will accomplish it all.

Election (Eph. 1:4). God chose us. God initiated the choice. He did so before time began. We did not contribute in our choices or actions to persuading God into making this choice (cf. Rom. 9:11–23). The concept of God choosing Israel was a central element of understanding themselves within Judaism (1 Chr. 16:13; Pss. 89:3; 105:6; Isa. 42:1; 43:20; 45:4; 65:9, 15, 22).<sup>25</sup> This concept of election extends into Christianity as a characteristic of the church (Eph. 1:4; Col. 3:12; Titus 1:1; Mk. 13:20–27; Lk. 18:7; 1 Pet. 1:1–2; 2:4–10; Rev. 17:14). God chose us. He chose us personally (on the basis of the ἡμᾶς as direct object of the choice). Thus this is not an abstract choice by which God chooses Christ through which we are then viewed as chosen, but rather an active divine

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<sup>23</sup> ‘Ahaba Rabba, Semoneh, ‘Esreh.

<sup>24</sup> Cf. Doug Kennard, “God’s Sovereignty and Human Free Will” In *The Classical Christian God. Toronto Studies in Theology* 86 (Lewiston: Mellen Press, 2002), pp. 135–166.

<sup>25</sup> *Sir.* 46.1; 47.22; *Wis. Sol.* 3.9; 4.15; *Jub.* 1.29; *1 En.* 1.3, 8; 5.7–8; 25.5; 40.5; 41.2; 48.1; 51.5; 93.2; *1QS* 8.6; *CD* 4.3–4; *1QM* 12.1, 4; *1QH* 2.13; *1QpHab* 10.13; *Sib. Or.* 3.69.

choice to benefit us with the character traits of holiness (ἁγίους) and blamelessness to match the mystical position in Christ for those who are already saints (ἁγίοις; Eph. 1:1). This is analogous to the divinely caused condition of faithfulness in Christ which would also result in the chosen character trait of blamelessness (Eph. 1:1, 4). These traits in second temple Judaism do not mean that a person is sinlessly perfect, but that they remain within the covenant and avail themselves of the mystical benefits that the covenant provides. Likewise, God chose us to be in Christ and to be the beneficiary of many profound spiritual benefits that are already ours. However, these benefits work themselves out in a transformed character through the qualities of: holiness, faithfulness, and blamelessness. Those who have these characteristics identify by their appropriate religious affections that they are the elect of God, and thus they are secure.<sup>26</sup>

Predestined to Adoption (Eph. 1:4–6, 11–12). God actively predetermined before we were here that we would be intimate family through the adoption process. This adoption process implies that we Gentiles were not initially experientially in this condition of blessing and inclusion (Eph. 2:11; Rom. 9:4; Gal. 4:5). However, the fact that this adoption was predetermined shows that our inclusion was within the divine plan all along. The active verb “chose” extends the divine activity into the aorist participle “predestined” much like it had accomplished in the previous aorist participle “blessed” (Eph. 1:4–5). This active choice is further applied into real life as grace freely *bestowed* (ie. another supporting active *verb*; Eph. 1:6). This divine activity is wrapped in the *enclusio* of love: it is motivated and accomplished in the sphere of God’s love (Eph. 1:4) to mystically locate us in Christ, the Beloved (Eph. 1:6). So that we too partake in the intimacy of God’s love through His kind choice of His will. God has chosen us into intimacy, and He will not cast us away.

We are adopted into God’s family. So that one aspect of adoption is to make us family with all the benefits of love that this relationship entails. It is through such intimate adoption that we respond to God in intimate prayer, “Daddy, Father” (Rom. 8:15). Such intimacy in adoption also prompts us to respond to the incongruities and suffering of the world in the manner that Christ suffers, with groaning about the divinely wrought futility in the world, and longing deeply for the redemption of our bodies (Rom. 8:17–23). However, this adoption relationship also works on the level of Greco–Roman adoption which provides inheritance and the authority of the relationship (which could frame a political network by serving in office). The inheritance is mystically identified as in Christ (Eph. 1:10). The expression of inheritance is in the near context also identified as predestined, and thus making us heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ (Eph. 1:11; Rom. 8:15–17). So we share in the privilege and wealth of Christ’s inheritance. This inheritance stretches out into the future thus guaranteeing our security of salvation. If such inheritance includes a role of responsibility (as it usually does in that context)<sup>27</sup> then the Greco–Roman practice of adoption to develop political allegiance may serve as a foundation for service on two levels: 1) in this age, authoritative people in distinctive roles are then given to the church (Eph 4:11–13 grounded in the soteriology of Eph. 1),

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<sup>26</sup> cf. Jonathan Edwards *Religious Affections*.

<sup>27</sup> In second temple Judaism reward includes increased responsibility (*m. ‘Abot* 4.2; *b. Ber.* 11b) and Greco–Roman adoption was one of the main political mechanisms to build a political power base (cf. Lily Ross Taylor, *Party Politics in the Age of Caesar* [Berkeley, University of California Press, 1971], pp. 34, 91, and a prime example of Clodius is discussed on p. 88).

and 2) in the age to come, we will eventually reign with Christ (Rom. 8:15–17; cf. Mt. 19: 28; Lk. 19:14–15, 17, 19; Rev. 20:4, 6).

The goal of this inheritance with Christ is that in our being adopted, God is glorified (Eph. 1:12). Likewise, the predestination extends to all aspects of the counsel of God's will (Eph. 1:11–12). At this point Paul breaks out in praise and reminds us that our salvation goes beyond us to include God's glory.

Redemption (Eph. 1:7–8, 14). Redemption is used in contexts of buying from slavery, rescuing Israel from Egypt, captivity or an impending threat (Deut. 7:8; 9:26; 13:5; 15:15; 24:18; 1 Chr. 17:21; Dan. 4:34). Redemption (ἀπολύτρωσις) in Paul has an already aspect (Eph. 1:7; Rom. 3:24; 1 Cor. 1:30; Col. 1:14) that connects it with a “not yet” aspect of redemption (Eph. 1:14; 4:30; Rom. 8:23). That is, those who have been redeemed are guaranteed and reassured to be eschatologically redeemed. The already aspect of Pauline redemption is designated by apposition to be *forgiveness* (Eph. 1:7; Col. 1:14) and its synonym *justification* (Rom. 3:24). Such past tense redemption is described to be accomplished by Christ's blood, which simply identifies that in Christ's death this redemption is accomplished. No redemption price is paid to anyone, since there are ample second temple Jewish statements of Israel being redeemed by the blood (that is, death) of the martyrs such as in the Maccabean victories.<sup>28</sup> The abundant riches of this forgiveness redemption are actively lavished upon us so that we continue in the condition of the redeemed, that is, forgiven. The completeness of such a forgiven condition removes any continued obligation that sin might press upon the redeemed. That is, they are not obligated to sin and they are not in bondage to sin, since they are redeemed (Rom. 6:1–7:6). Perhaps the lingering inroads which sin has is through indwelling sin in our flesh embodiment (Rom. 7:14–25). However, the eschatological expression of our redemption, redeems us to a higher level of God's possession, that of the redemption of our bodies (Eph. 1:14; Rom. 8:23). So glorified bodies are freed from sin. Our past redemption confirms the pledge of the complete eschatological redemption.

Informed of All Summed up in Christ (Eph. 1:8–10). In the context of divine wisdom and insight, the aorist participle, “He made known,” informs us of the blessed condition that not only are these things true, but additionally we are informed about these soteriological benefits of God's will. Such an informed condition is part of the benefit of being in Christ. However, God has made known even the eschatological realization that everything will be summed up in Christ, in the coming era of His Kingdom.

Sealed by the Holy Spirit (Eph. 1:13–14). Being in Christ entails believing the message of the gospel of salvation. In Christ the security of eschatological redemption is heightened by the Holy Spirit sealing the believer in Christ. It is as though a letter rolled into a scroll has a wax seal placed upon it that is not to be broken until the letter gets to the intended destination and recipient. In this context the sealing by the Holy Spirit acts as a pledge guaranteeing that we will be preserved for the goal of our inheritance in eschatological redemption. We are God's possession and we are preserved for that goal. The privilege of being sealed by the Holy Spirit brings with it the responsibility to live

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<sup>28</sup> *1QpHab.* 8.1–3; *2 Macc.* 6.30; 7.9, 11, 14, 16–17, 22–23, 29, 30–38, 36–38; *4 Macc.* 6.27–29; 9.23–24; 17.21–22; *Testament of Moses* 7.37; 8.3, 5; cf. George W. E. Nickelsburg, *Jewish Literature between the Bible and the Mishnah. A Historical and Literary Introduction* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1981), pp. 119–120.



our lives consistently with what the Holy Spirit would have for us (Eph. 4:30). Sin may grieve the Spirit but it does not break the seal. We remain sealed for the day of redemption. This continued presence of the Spirit of promise provides security for the believer so that their eschatological redemption will be realized.

### Thanksgiving and Prayers for the Church (Eph. 1:15–23).

Paul thanks and prays for his readers in a consistent style familiar to semitic and Hellenistic context alike.<sup>29</sup> The thanksgiving and prayer section is also one long complex sentence, like the blessing section. The sentence includes sections of: thanksgiving, intercessory prayer, and praise of Christ.

Paul thanks God for his readership specifically for their faith in Christ and love of the saints (Eph. 1:15–16). Paul's gratitude reminds us of lives transformed which demonstrate authentic religious affections, and thus further assures of the wonderful salvation developed earlier in the chapter.

Paul's thanksgiving blends into making requests in prayer for his readership that extend their knowledge and wisdom of God and His soteriological benefits for them (Eph. 1:16–19). These prayers especially focus on knowing the hope of God's calling and the rich inheritance of the saints. Both these themes ground these prayers in God and His activity electing to a distinctive life and enriched inheritance given to us. Both these themes encourage the readership in issues of their security, because Paul is praying for them.

With such themes Paul usually breaks out with didactic praise (Eph. 1:19–23 as in 4:1–6). Christ's elevation is rehearsed from resurrection to ascension to exaltation to sovereignty of church and the age to come. With Christ as sovereign over all and in all this reassures us that nothing ultimately threatens the destiny of those who are His.

### Saved from Sin Nature to Good Works (Eph. 2:1–10).

This section includes two Greek sentences. The first sentence (Eph. 2:1–7) begins with the believer's previous condition only to find the subject (God) and verb (made us alive) (in verses 4–5) remedying our deadness. The second sentence explains the place of good works (Eph. 2:8–10).

Unsaved Condition: Dead in Sin Nature (Eph. 2:1–3). In contrast to the enlivening, enriching and adoption of the elect, we all experienced a phase of our lives which could be called dead in trespasses and sins (Eph. 2:1). This is not merely that death would be the outcome of this way of living (as in Rom. 6:23) but that we were the walking dead (Eph. 2:1; Mt. 8:22; Lk. 9:60; 15:24, 32). Already in the O.T. and second temple Judaism a life under the specter of disease, sin, alienation, captivity, or the rule of one's enemies was seen as a life in which death had you in its grasp and was dragging you down into *sheol*, the place of the dead (Pss. 13:1–3; 30:3; 31:12; 88:3–6; 143:3; Hos.

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<sup>29</sup> This is similar to Hellenistic letters in which the gods are thanked, however following a longer blessing would be unusual beyond the Semitic context; cf. Paul Schubert, *Form and Function of the Pauline Thanksgivings* (Berlin: A. Töpelmann, 1939), pp. 158–84. Paul's style also reflects Jewish thanksgivings as in *IQH*; cf. Andrew Lincoln, *Ephesians. Word Biblical Commentary, vol. 42* (Dallas: Word Books, 1990), p. 48–49.

13:14; Jonah 2:6).<sup>30</sup> Paul uses such a concept of “dead” as a lifestyle designation, describing an unresponsiveness to live rightly and thus entangled in sin choices and deeds (Eph. 2:1; 1 Tim. 5:6; also Rev. 3:1). Paul along with second temple Jewish rabbis also described Gentiles as dead because they were beyond the pale of God’s covenant and thus tended not to live rightly (Col, 2:13 and Eph. 2:1 with 11).<sup>31</sup> The eschatological outcome of death (which is a dominating power of sin) has reached into the preconversion lives of the elect, rendering us to be zombies (walking dead). That is, not only is the eschatological condition of deadness so pervasive as to impact the damned’s realized eschatology into existential deadness but it goes further even into dominating the existence of the preconversion elect.

The evidence for this “already” deadness was our walk (περιεπατήσατε), that is, inclinations and direction of travel. We were dominated by the patterns and direction of the world (Eph. 2:2). We were dominated by the values and lifestyle by which Satan had dominated us. Such an effect of Satan, the power of the air, can still be seen in his producing sons that display his qualities of disobedience. As the mystical union in Christ adopts us into God’s family, so the participation with Satan in sin mystically makes us members of Satan’s family. It is from this family trait that all these sin characteristics flow with devastating consequences. For example, *flesh* is the life which pursues sensual lusts within Satan’s world system, opposed to God and His grace (Rm. 8:7; 2 Cor. 1:12; Gal.5:17, 19; Eph. 2:3; Col. 2:18, 23; 2 Pet. 2:10, 18; 1 Jn. 2:16). Such lusts and the desires of the flesh which emerge from beneath the skin showing our true perverse bent. This results in many sinful acts, such as jealousy, dissension, arguing, anger, drunkenness and sensuality (Gal. 5:1.9-21; Jude 7). Flesh’s influence can be seen in the father who purposes to spend time with his family but wastes the time watching the game on television, or the woman who has purposed to diet and finds herself snacking again between meals. Or again the boy who purposes to not masturbate but finds himself doing so again, or the girl who wishes to live for Jesus but continues to check herself out every time she is before a storefront window. Though intending to do otherwise, they have given into the urges of the flesh. Whereas, when this is coupled with the *mind* to sin the conscious awareness, choice, and intention also runs headlong toward sin. The same sins may ensue, but now they are chosen.

Such a sinning condition indicates that our experience was by *nature children of wrath*, even as the rest (Eph. 2:3). The concept of *nature* (φύσει) governs our whole being. Our whole being was in the experience of those who will be damned under God’s wrath (Rom. 2:8). So that the preconverted elect have an authentic non-Christian existence prior to their conversion. However, the damned experience in this life a realized eschatological expression of wrath already by God giving them over to their sins and the consequences of them (Rom. 1:18, 24, 26, 28). Such a family quality which the damned already experience, we elect also experienced pressing on our lives from God because our nature show our allegiance was not with God. We were totally depraved in this sense: all that we were about (by nature, allegiance, inclination, choice, and deed) demonstrated the impact of sin so that in that condition we were participating in. This wrath showed we would have been damned in the wrath not yet given by God

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<sup>30</sup> *IQH* 3.19; 11.10–14.

<sup>31</sup> *m.* ‘Ed. 5.2; *y. Ber.* 2.4; *b. Ber.* 18a; *Midr. Qoh.* 9.5; *Gen. Rab.* 39.7.

eschatologically, but God's mercy rescued us from this impending consequence which we had begun to participate in as children of wrath.

Merciful God Enlivened Us (Eph. 2:4–7). Many evangelicals think that God's mercy is not getting what we do deserve (staying judgment) and grace is getting what we do not deserve (benefit). They are wrong. Biblically "grace" and "mercy" are synonyms; both grace and mercy provide positive benefits. For example, God's mercy as an expression of love raised us alive from this dead condition (Eph. 2:4–6). Now we have life which extends into everlasting life. Such a resurrection extends into a mystical ascension into the heavenlies in Christ. This transformation is also described as an expression of God's grace saving us and expressing kindness of His surpassing riches (Eph. 2:5, 7). Therefore, by the synonyms, "grace" and "mercy", God wonderfully rescued the elect from the deadness that existentially dominated us and gave us all the benefits of mystical salvation in Christ (as developed in Ephesians 1). Since God alone has fully accomplished the continuing condition of salvation, there is assurance for those who have experienced this transformation. Such divine saving saves us unto resurrection and ascension not merely mystically but eschatologically to mirror the mystical condition of reality that has already begun for us in Christ. This is assurance of salvation!

The Place of Good Works (Eph. 2:8–10). To remind us that our salvation is secure Paul reiterates that salvation is God's gift (Eph. 2:8). Grace (χάριτι) also reminds us that it is God's gift. Therefore we can only accept this *gift* of salvation. It is a faith thing. There is nothing to be done to earn salvation (Eph. 2:9). Such a gift given graciously to us is not a cause for boasting. In fact, since we have seen that salvation is not an external gift awaiting our future, but a present mystical reality already worked into us, our salvation guarantees our future. "We are God's workmanship" (Eph. 2:10). Our salvation is what we already are produced by Him, and of course there is more which He is producing. For example, salvation is already us in that it is life from deadness. Of course Paul holds that there is a future stage in which this life produces resurrection bodies too. Therefore we do not lose what we already are produced by God. Likewise, "God has created us in Christ Jesus for good works." Therefore, our good works are the intended outcome of the divine creation transforming us. Our good works do not contribute toward our being saved. They are the result of the internal and mystical soteriological transformation wrought by God, which we call our salvation. Therefore we are assured of salvation and we are exhorted to consistently let our inclinations, choices and direction of travel (walk: περιπατήσωμεν) show these good works (compare Eph. 2:2 with 10). We are no longer totally depraved but rather new creatures. As new creatures we are to do the good works that come from the transformation which God produces in us.

## Romans 8

Romans to this point has developed: a person's despicable condition in sin, the gracious salvation that places us into Christ and the freedom from sin's bondage to that of an enlivening allegiance to Christ as new men in the Spirit. Now Romans 8 develops the wonderful aid of the Spirit in showing who we are and the rest of the trinity in keeping us secure. In the first half of the chapter there is a dichotomy of two lives: the flesh and the Spirit. These are variously interpreted but it mostly breaks out into two camps. Those

with Christian life views known as Keswick, Augustinian–Dispensational, and Holiness tend to see the contrast as between the Spirit filled believer and the carnal sinning believer. Those with Christian life views known as Reformed, Lutheran and Two–Ways tend to see the contrast as between the Spirit enabled Christian and the non–Christian. I think that the passage is clear enough to indicate which option is more accurate to the text. I see the contrast as between the Spirit enabled Christian and the flesh non–Christian.

#### No Condemnation (Rom. 8:1–4).

“There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus” (Rom. 8:1). Most protestant commentators take this statement as primarily legal akin to justification, and if that is so then we have another assurance of salvation. However, the immediately preceding context worked the enslavement of the embodied to indwelling sin. So that possibly condemnation might have more here to do with a non condemning lifestyle such as occurs when a person is consistent to his conscience as Paul develops the reverse in Romans 2:1 and 14:23 (these other texts use κατάκριμα as does Rom. 8:1). Such condemning lifestyles would have implications for damnation. However, a non condemning lifestyle would be far more pervasive than an abstract justification because it is addressing lived issues. The subsequent rationale provided by the two γὰρ clauses (Rom. 8:2–3) and their goal in the ἵνα clause (Rom. 8:4) indicate that the condemnation here especially has to do with lived issues. On a side note, I hold that “the Law” references with the article (τοῦ νόμου) are referring to the Mosaic Law (Rom. 7:7, 16: τοῦ νόμου), which is utilized or co–opted by the inner man’s mind or the peripheral flesh and its indwelling sin (Rom. 7:21–25: τοῦ νόμου). First, there is no condemnation *because* (1<sup>st</sup> γὰρ clause) the Law (τοῦ νόμου) as the Spirit uses it has to do with life for those who are in Christ Jesus (Rom. 8:2). This goal for life is evident in that the Spirit’s use of the Law (τοῦ νόμου) has set you free from the flesh’s use of the Law (τοῦ νόμου) to entrap in sin and death (Rom. 8:2; cf. 7:5–6). This goal of life is both the resurrection life we have now mystically but it has implications to living right and resurrection unto glory (Rom. 6:1–14, 22). Likewise, death has a present expression of walking deadness with the outcome as damnation (Rom. 5:17, 21 death reigning; 6:21–23; 7:9, 11, 13). The second γὰρ clause identifies that though the Law (τοῦ νόμου) was weak through the flesh (Rm. 7:5, 14–23), God sent His Son concerning (περὶ) sin in flesh that looked like our sinful flesh, and condemned sin in the flesh (Rm. 8:3). This condemnation (κατέκρινεν) of sin occurs in the sphere of the flesh (ἐν τῇ σαρκί). In the context the sphere of flesh would more likely be a reference to in this life before one is set free from their body. Finally, such condemnation of sin is for the *purpose* (ἵνα) “that the requirement of the Law might be fulfilled in us, who do not walk according to the flesh, but the Spirit” (Rom. 8:4). The sphere within which the righteousness (δικαίωμα) of the Law is fulfilled is in the Spirit person’s life. It is not said to be done on their behalf but rather *in us*. That is, *the Spirit who releases us from the Law fulfills the Law in us*

*because He is the guarantor of growth.* This means we undergo real life transfer as His work which mystically implements the Law in our lives in a New Covenant manner.

### Spirit People Belong to Christ (Rom. 8:4–9).

There are two distinctive walks: the flesh and the Spirit (Rom. 8:4; περιπατοῦσιν). Such *walk* is normally one's inclination, choices, and direction of travel. The modern views of Keswick, Augustinian–Dispensational, and Holiness beginning in 1867 with Phoebe Palmer normally focus on a more modern second hand sensitive description of “walk”, namely moment by moment as in the sweep of a second hand. Thus they see this passage as only relevant to address snapshots of moments in which the Spirit or the flesh walking person are seen as a moment of either a dependant or sinning kind of Christian. Whereas, the pre-modern views of Reformed, Lutheran, and Two–Ways normally focus on a concept of walk that is more akin to character. For example, David was still called a man after God's own heart even in the midst of a terrible sinning year of adultery, conspiracy and murder. Thus they see that the character of one's inclinations, choices and direction of travel indicates whether a person is a Christian or a non–Christian. The evidence in the passage needs to decide between these views.

The person according to the flesh is broadly described by the flesh with regard to their character (Rom. 8:4–9). Thus they are in the domain of the flesh. The flesh person thinks about flesh things, in fact they may even actively choose or set their mind to think about these flesh things (Rom. 8:5). Such an outcome of their mind set on flesh is death, which in this context probably means walking deadness, physical death and damnation (Rom. 8:6, 13; with 5:17, 21 death reigning; 6:21–23; 7:9, 11, 13 and its release through physical death, 7:24). The reason for death being the outcome of flesh is that “the mind set on the flesh is hostile toward God, for it is not even able” (Rom. 8:7; Gal. 5:17). The flesh's inability to please God is because flesh is hostile toward God (Rom. 8:8; Gal. 5:17). Such a person in the flesh does not have the Spirit of God dwelling in him and thus does not belong to Christ (Rom. 8:9). Such a person is not a Christian. Notice the sensual, divisive and destructive traits of the flesh person: “The deeds of the flesh are evident, which are: immorality, impurity, sensuality, idolatry, sorcery, enmities, strife, jealousy, outbursts of anger, disputes, dissensions, factions, envyings, drunkenness, carousings, and things like these, of which I forewarned you just as I have forewarned you that those who practice [or who habituate in] such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God” (Gal. 5:19–21). This statement of non inheritance in Kingdom is condemning to damnation in light such inheritance being identified by Paul with being a child of God (Rom. 8:17; Gal. 5:21). Such flesh people should be reassured that they will be damned if they continue in this way of life.

The person according to the Spirit is broadly described by the Spirit with regard to their character (Rom. 8:4–17). Thus they are in the domain of the Spirit. Likewise the Holy Spirit is the guarantor of their growth. Subsequently, the Spirit person thinks about Spirit things because the Spirit prompts us to these thoughts (Rom. 8:5). Such an outcome of the Spirit minded person is life and peace (Rom. 8:6). The context clearly indicates that this life and peace is at least with God in harmonious relationship with God in contrast to the flesh person (Rom. 8:6–8). Thus this has ramifications to indicate that

such a person is not only the walking alive in Christ but also those who have everlasting life as well (Rom 6:1–11, 22–23). This provides assurance of salvation. However, not only are these Spirit people immersed within the context of the Spirit, but the Holy Spirit is also indwelling them in a mutual interpenetration (Rom. 8:9). Such indwelling of the Spirit does not merely indicate residence as possibly occupying only a room of the home of our life. What would locational indwelling mean for an omnipresent being as the Spirit Who is in everything? It is because for Paul “indwelling” does not primarily refer to location but to a presence of empowerment. Indwelling can be seen in this context as a metaphor for empowerment, because here it is the indwelling (οἰκεῖ ἐν) Spirit Who dominates the Spirit characterized people with these Spirit qualities, in contrast to a moment before where indwelling (οἰκοῦσα ἐν) sin was personified as the active agent to color the struggling flesh people in their flesh deeds (Rom. 7:14, 17, 20). That is, this text strongly indicates that the Spirit is the guarantor of growth, transforming the Spirit people into qualities that reflect the Spirit’s concerns. The results in such a person are: “the fruit of the Spirit is: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law” (Gal. 5:22–23). These religious affections do not violate law because we began our study in Romans affirming that the Spirit fulfills the requirement of the Law in our life inclinations and choices (Rom. 8:2, 4). Thus this empowering indwelling of the Spirit shows by the religious affections (such as the fruit of the Spirit) that the Spirit is actively in our life to impact us in this way. However, with such evidence of Spirit fruit we show ourselves to belong to Christ (Rom 8:9).

#### Spirit Indwelt Will be Resurrected (Rom. 8:10–13).

Not only does the Spirit indwell to empower life change but Christ also indwells (ἐν ὑμῖν) to empower life change (Rom. 8:10). In such a condition, even though our body is dead<sup>32</sup> because of sin, yet our human spirit is alive as the start of the resurrection. This resurrection of our spirit is through or because of righteousness (διὰ δικαιοσύνην). This could harken back to Romans 5 Christ’s covenantal righteousness accomplished on our behalf or the closer contextual reference (in Romans 8:4) of the Spirit working out righteousness in us as another fruit which evidences we are authentically spiritually alive. I prefer this second sense of righteousness because it fits better in the continuum of religious affections both before and after this verse, and it sets up the rationale more tightly for the argument of verses 12 and 13. That is, if we are alive through righteousness, then the way that we live righteously indicates the impact of the Spirit in our lives. This sets up another reassurance of salvation, for those who evidence that they are spiritually alive are reassured that they will be resurrected bodily by the Spirit as He had done so for Christ (Rom. 8:11). Such resurrection is only for the saved, therefore providing further assurance of salvation.

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<sup>32</sup> The body continues in a moving deadness (Rom. 7:24; 8:10). However, enlivenment occurs for those whose bodies are dead because of sin (σῶμα νεκρὸν) for they become spiritually alive and will resurrect in time caused by the Spirit that has to do with Christ (Rom. 8:10–11). Likewise, Abraham and Sarah were as good as dead in their inability to have children but God made the miracle of Isaac happen (Rom. 4:19; σῶμα [ἥδη] νεκρωμένον and νέκρωσις τῆς μητρός Σάρρας).

To mirror the divine Spirit assurance of produced righteousness and resurrection is the human responsibility implication (Rom. 8:12–13). Because the Spirit is producing righteousness in us, we are not obligated to the flesh and its death outcome. Rather, we are responsible to remove deeds of flesh from ourselves and others. By so living righteously by the Spirit we identify that we will live everlastingly. So we see here that part of our assurance of salvation is also evidenced by the choices we make and the life we live, though we recognize that this transformation is brought about by the Spirit.

Assurance of Everlasting Life (Rom. 8:14–25).

To help explain the reassurance of present and everlasting life, Paul explains further this Spirit transformation (Rom. 8:14–17; the role of γὰρ in verses 14 and 15 show that what follows is tightly expressing this point of the previous phrase “you will live” in verse 13). The leading of the Spirit in this context is that leading to Spirit produced righteous living such as the removal of fear and the expressing of intimacy in prayer (Rom. 8:14–15). Such leading is not raising an issue of guidance in the big life decisions. Those who see the Spirit transforming them in the way this text develops should be reassured that they are sons of God. Being in God’s family is not a fearful place but alive with a spirit of adoption which fosters intimacy in prayer: “Abba! Father!” prayers. It is in this way of evidencing life transformation that the Spirit bears witness with our human spirits that we are children of God. Once again this text speaks to the issue of assurance of salvation. However, such a Spirit witness operates on the level of spirit communication and thus reassures our spirit with the evidence that the Spirit is producing in us so that we know that we are God’s children (Rom. 8:16). If children of God and we are then heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ (Rom. 8:17). So our salvation is secure for we who have seen the Spirit wrought religious affections in our lives.

Likewise we know that we are heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ if we suffer with Christ because it evidences that we will be glorified with Christ (Rom. 8:17). Suffering with Christ first entails joining Christ in His sufferings, perhaps in the manner of suffering which Christ called His disciples to do, identifying them with Him (eg. Mt. 5:3–12; 16:16–27). Paul also gives himself as the example of what it means to suffer with Christ, inviting others to follow in his perspectives (Rom. 8:18–25). Secondly, suffering with Christ then entails that the present suffering does not compare with the glory to be revealed to us in Christ (Rom. 8:18). Thirdly, suffering with Christ recognizes that the creation was subjected to futility by God (presumably in the oracle of judgment at the fall Gen. 3:14–19). Yet this futility has a purpose in it, that of rescuing the creation from its slavery to corruption as the glory of the children of God is realized (Rom. 8:19–21). Fourth, we can join with the whole creation in mourning and groaning over this futile condition, longing deeply for redemption of our bodies in glory, an eschatological expression of adoption of sons (Rom. 8:19, 22–23). Fifth, we join God by persevering in the hope of our salvation, which He put us on in the present condition of creation (Rom. 8:20, 24–25). So suffering with Christ further evidences the assurance of our salvation written in us by God.

### Divine Activity to Bring us to Glory (Rom. 8:26–39).

In addition to God helping us to glory and the sufferings with Christ helping us to glory, the Holy Spirit prays for us as we need him to do so (Rom. 8:26–27). Paul admits that at times we do not know how to pray. In those instances, the Spirit intercedes on our (the saints) behalf to God in a way in which is too deep for words.<sup>33</sup> That is, the Spirit prays for the saints supporting the purposes which God has for us in bringing us to glory. This further reassures we saints of the divine activity to bring us to glory.

Furthermore, we know that God causes all things to ultimately work together for good in their transforming us into the image of His Son and thus a further promise of our glorification (Rom. 8:28–30). Once again, our assurance of salvation is not rooted in an abstract promise but in God’s call to which we responded, and the Spirit’s fruit in us of our love for God, and in our responsible expression of our love for God. However, the emphasis is on the divine activity which brings us to glory. As we mentioned in Ephesians 1, the predestination is a predetermining which has as its purpose to bring us to be like Christ (our already resurrected brother). This predestination and the aorist “calling” were identified in Ephesians 1:4 as occurring before the foundation of the world.<sup>34</sup> The aorist tense (as used here for “called”, “justified” and “glorified”) describes punctiliar description. That is, not that the calling, righteousing, and glorification occurs at the same point in time but that they all are being described in a manner that evidences that they securely hang together. That is, those who God initiated with (in predestining them to be like Christ) are the very ones He has called, and righteoused.<sup>35</sup> Likewise, glorification is also said in the aorist to indicate that though it is still future and thus has not been realized experientially (Rom. 8:18, 22–23), such glorification is as good as already accomplished by God (Rom. 8:30). This also reassures us of security of salvation. God’s determining plan shows that He will vindicate us.

Likewise God’s past activity and present faithfulness in contexts of accusation shows that he will vindicate us (Rom. 8:31–39). Thus if God is for us no one can be effective against us (Rom. 8:31). God has already given us the greatest costing item (that of His Son), so He has amply demonstrated His commitment to finish our salvation (Rom. 8:32). Whoever would bring a charge against God’s elect will be met by God vindication of those same elect (Rom. 8:33). Whoever would try to condemn the elect would find that their vindication is an already realized arrangement in Christ’s death and resurrection (Rom. 8:34). Likewise, Christ joins the Holy Spirit in interceding on our

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<sup>33</sup> This is not the Puritan view of the Spirit prompting us to pray (which Romans 8:15 already addressed), nor the Pentecostal praying in tongues (as 1 Cor. 14:14 mentions) because the Spirit is the one interceding on our behalf (Rom. 8:27; ὑπέρ).

<sup>34</sup> Rom. 8:30: προώρισεν, τούτους καὶ ἐκάλεσεν compare with Eph. 1:4–5: ἐξελέξατο ἡμᾶς ἐν αὐτῷ πρὸ καταβολῆς κόσμου and also προορίσας ἡμᾶς.

<sup>35</sup> This could mean justification (as in Rom. 5), or the righteousing in this life which the Spirit produces being viewed as a snapshot description (Rom. 8:4, 10), or an ongoing vindication (Rom. 8:33–39), or an eschatological vindication (Rom. 2:5–7). There appears to be an experiential order of salvation in Romans 8:30 and the first option would not have occurred before the previous category of pre-creation calling, and the last option of eschatological vindication would not occur after the next term: glorification. Most evangelicals automatically read this term as a legal justification along with Romans 5 and the trial language of Romans 8:33–34. However, the near context might more readily emphasize the second or third option. There is not enough conclusive evidence to limit this reference in Romans 8:30 to one of these views.



behalf (Rom. 8:34; ὑπὲρ). Nothing can separate us from the love of Christ, not even the horrible consequences which Paul and the Christians were suffering in that day, namely: tribulation, distress, persecution, famine, nakedness, peril, sword, and slaughter (Rom. 8:35–36). “In all these things we overwhelmingly conquer through Christ who loved us” (Rom. 8:37). Which means those agents or powers which bring about these sufferings are impotent to threaten our salvation. Therefore, our salvation is secure.