

“Life and Peace in the Spirit” - Romans 8:1-11

Author: Paul the apostle (a Roman citizen by birth), born to proclaim God’s gospel (Gal 1:15-17).

Date/Provenance: Late 50s AD (58-59). Written from Corinth on third missionary journey (Acts 20:2-3, Rom 15:25-29, 16:1, 23, 1 Cor 1:14) with help of Amanuensis Tertius (Rom 16:22). Paul is hoping to visit soon (Rom 1:10, 16:22-33). He *will* visit Rome, but not as planned (see 2 Tim 4:6-8).

Circumstances: Both Jews and Gentiles (dominant) are addressed by Paul (e.g., Rom 2:17, 11:13).

Purpose: Paul wants to exhort w/full-orbed gospel, correct errors concerning it. Romans is Paul’s “Magnum Opus” (R.C. Sproul), the NT’s most systematic explanation of the gospel (Rom 1:16-17).

- 1 – The “Greatest Chapter in the Bible” (Derek Thomas) begins w/ a most encouraging declaration: No condemnation! As the chapter unfolds, the beauty of this declaration is further expounded by Paul (Rom 8:3, 16-17, 28-30, 32-35). Even as *sanctification* is the focus of chapters 6-8, *justification* (the focus of chapters 3-5) is still very much included.
 - App: We have good days & bad days in our struggle with the flesh (Rom 7). Yet the union we have with Christ is inalterable, our pardon and sonship unchangeable.
- 2 – The freedom we have from the law’s requirements as a way of salvation (Rom 6:14-18, 7:1-6) is based on Christ perfectly meeting them (Rom 5:12-17, Heb 9:15, 12:24, 1 Pet 3:18).
- 3 – The law was powerless to save us given our guilt in Adam’s sin and the sinful nature of all those born of Adam through ordinary generation (Ps 51:5, Prov 22:15, Jer 17:9, Eph 2:1!)
 - God the Father saves through Christ in a way that was impossible for any mere human (Mt 1:21, Lk 19:10). The Messiah came “in the likeness of sinful flesh” without having our sin nature (Heb 4:15, *Westminster Shorter Catechism* Q22).
- 4 – Jesus came “in order that” sin is fully condemned, yet sinners are saved. The gospel does not compromise on sin being incompatible with God’s character one bit (Ps 5:4-5, Hab 1:13, 1 Jn 1:5, Rev 4:8). Note that the righteous requirement of the law is fulfilled “in us” by Christ – He has conquered sin’s penalty and power, so we are released from its relentless bondage as a way of gaining God’s favor but are also saved *unto* good works (Eph 2:8-10).
 - 5-8 – The life we now have in the Spirit changes us to seek first His kingdom (Mt 6:33) rather than created things that are passing away (Mt 6:19-21, Rom 1:24-25). Those living for the flesh *cannot* please God at all (v8, Rom 1:28-32, Gal 5:16-24).
 - App: Is your mind being transformed by the Word of God (Rom 12:1-2)? Are your affections being shaped by the flesh or the Lord as your portion (Ps 16:4-6, Col 3:1-2)? Sin leads to death (Rom 6:23). But Christ gives eternal life and an abiding peace (Ps 4:8, Prov 3:24, Rom 14:17, 15:13, Phil 4:7, 2 Thess 3:16, Heb 12:11).
- 9-11 – The Holy Spirit indwells all believers (true in OT & NT, see John 3:6, cf. 1 Cor 15:50), though the *outpouring* of the Holy Spirit after Christ’s ascension is a new blessing to the church, fulfilled OT Scripture and the words of Christ Himself (Ezek 36, Isa 44:3, Joel 2:28 cf. w/ Acts 2:15-21, Jn 14:15-17 & Jn 16:7 cf. w/Acts 1:8, 2:38, 10:45). Triune God is always in agreement among the persons of the Trinity. “Spirit of Christ” reflects this (1 Pet 1:11).
- App: We are to be *filled* with the Spirit (Eph 5:18). Remember, the Spirit is involved in Christ’s miraculous conception (Mt 1:20, Lk 1:34-35). Christ’s ministry is characterized by the Holy Spirit resting upon Him (Isa 11:2, 61:1 cf. w/ 4:18). Hence, to know Christ is to have the power of God’s Spirit in us for being *powerfully* changed (Eph 2:22, Phil 2:13).