

# The Epistle of Paul to the *Romans*

## **Sanctification: The Demonstration of God's Righteousness** (6:1 - 8:39)

Previously <sup>Romans 1-7</sup>, Paul mentioned the Holy Spirit only a few times; however in Chapter 8, Paul referred to the Spirit's work over 20 times. He frees believers from sin and death <sup>v.2-3</sup>, enables them to fulfill God's Law <sup>v.4</sup>, changes their nature and grants them strength for victory over their unredeemed flesh <sup>v.5-14</sup>, confirms their adoption as God's children <sup>v.15-16</sup>, and guarantees their ultimate glory <sup>v.17-20</sup>.

### **8:1 Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus,**

The word "therefore" indicates that what is ahead is the direct result of Paul's prior teaching, which can be summarized by the phrase: justification is by faith alone by God's grace alone. Condemnation <sup>Jeremiah 44:11-14, Romans 5:16-18</sup> is a legal term referring to a guilty verdict and the subsequent required penalty. In Christianity, this penalty is the second death <sup>Revelation 20:14</sup> (eternal separation from God <sup>2 Thessalonians 1:9</sup>), and has the opposite meaning of justification. Paul was emphasizing that no sin a born-again believer commits (past, present or future) will be held against him <sup>1 John 1:7, Revelation 1:4-6</sup>, because Jesus paid the penalty <sup>1 John 2:2</sup> and gave His righteousness to the believer <sup>Romans 3:21-26</sup>. Paul used the phrase "in Christ" <sup>2 Corinthians 5:17</sup> to indicate someone who is united with Christ: a genuine Christian <sup>1 Corinthians 1:26-30</sup>.

The Biblical authors made use of the word "therefore" over 400 times <sup>Genesis 32:32, Matthew 5:23</sup> to make it clear that the succeeding conclusion is entirely based on the previous discussion.

### **8:2-3a ...because through Christ Jesus the law of the Spirit of life set me free from the law of sin and death. For what the law was powerless to do in that it was weakened by the sinful nature, God did by sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful man to be a sin offering.**

The word "because" begins Paul's explanation of why there is "no condemnation" for the believer. In short, the "Spirit of life" (Holy Spirit) has replaced the law that can only produce sin and death <sup>Romans 7:5,13</sup>, and has replaced it with a new "law", the "law of the Spirit of life" (obedient faith <sup>Romans 16:25-27</sup> ⇒ the message of the gospel). The law is "powerless" to deliver sinners from punishment <sup>Acts 13:38-39, Galatians 3:10-11</sup> or grant them righteousness <sup>Galatians 3:21</sup>, because of their inherent "sinful nature" <sup>Job 5:7</sup>. The new "law" was enacted through the First

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Coming of Jesus <sup>Galatians 4:4-5</sup>, who came in the "likeness [outward appearance] of sinful man". Jesus Christ could not have been born with a "sinful nature", because that would have meant He was sinful from conception <sup>Psalm 51:5</sup>, but while being "tempted in every way", Jesus did not have the "weaknesses" of mortal man and He "did not sin" <sup>Hebrews 4:15</sup>. Therefore, Christ was able to pay the complete penalty (He was "a sin offering" <sup>2 Corinthians 5:21</sup>) when God poured out His wrath against all sin on the sinless flesh of Jesus Christ <sup>Isaiah 53:4-8</sup>. While the Law of God is certainly "holy, righteous and good" <sup>Romans 7:12</sup>, because of the weakness of the flesh <sup>Romans 7:15-19</sup>, the Law can only lead to sin and death <sup>Romans 7:5,13</sup>. So many in the American church today are not experiencing the incredible peace that God has promised <sup>Philippians 4:4-9, Colossians 3:15-17</sup>, because they have not fully embraced and trusted in the "truth" <sup>John 8:31-32</sup> that will lead to the freedom "from the law of sin and death" <sup>John 8:36</sup>. The Mother of Jesus was Mary <sup>Luke 1:30-33</sup> and His Father was God by the Holy Spirit <sup>Luke 1:35</sup>. This unique conception and birth allowed Jesus to have the characteristics of man and God. It also protected Jesus' body from the sinful nature, passed down from Adam <sup>Romans 5:12</sup>.

**8:3b-4 And so he condemned sin in sinful man, in order that the righteous requirement of the law might be fully met in us, who do not live according to the sinful nature but according to the Spirit.** The only way the laws' righteous requirements can be met is not by the written code, but by the Holy Spirit writing the law on the hearts of believers <sup>Jeremiah 31:33-34, 2 Corinthians 3:3</sup>. And, since every genuine Christian is indwelt by the Spirit <sup>v.9</sup>, they are commanded to "live" ("walk" <sup>1 John 1:7</sup>) "by the Spirit" <sup>Galatians 5:16</sup> and to exhibit the fruit of the Spirit <sup>Galatians 5:22-23</sup>. The NT perspectives on the two aspects of the Mosaic Law are: (1) The ceremonial laws have been set aside because they are imperfect <sup>Galatians 4:8-10</sup> and no longer required <sup>Acts 10:9-16</sup>, since they were fulfilled in Christ <sup>Colossians 2:13-17</sup>. and (2) The moral law is based on the character of God, summarized in the Ten Commandments <sup>Exodus 20:3-17</sup> and condensed in the OT <sup>Deuteronomy 6:5, Leviticus 19:18</sup> and in the commands of Jesus <sup>Mark 12:29-31</sup> to love God ultimately and to love a neighbor as one's self. These pronouncements have been conveyed to human governments as the way to govern in society <sup>Romans 13:1-7</sup>. However, every unbeliever is still under the requirement of perfection and the inevitable result of condemnation until coming to Christ <sup>Galatians 3:23-25</sup> and God requires it as the behavior standard for every believer.

**8:5-8** Those who live according to the sinful nature have their minds set on what that nature desires; but those who live in accordance with the Spirit have their minds set on what the Spirit desires. The mind of sinful man is death, but the mind controlled by the Spirit is life and peace; the sinful mind is hostile to God. It does not submit to God's law, nor can it do so. Those controlled by the sinful nature cannot please God. The "minds" of all believers are centered on Christ <sup>1 Corinthians 2:16, Philippians 2:5</sup>, while unbelievers have their "minds set" on "what...nature desires" <sup>2 Peter 2:10</sup> ("earthly things" <sup>Philippians 3:19</sup>). Those with a "mind of sin" are spiritually dead <sup>Ephesians 2:1-2</sup> and "cannot understand" things from the Spirit <sup>1 Corinthians 2:14</sup>. Supporting these concepts from Paul, James made it clear that a person is not able to be a friend of the world and with God at the same time <sup>James 4:4</sup>. The evil works <sup>Galatians 5:19-21</sup> of an unbeliever are simply an outward manifestation of what is in their heart <sup>Hosea 5:4, Luke 6:45</sup>.

**8:9-11** You, however, are controlled not by the sinful nature but by the Spirit, if the Spirit of God lives in you. And if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Christ. But if Christ is in you, your body is dead because of sin, yet your spirit is alive because of righteousness. And if the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead is living in you, he who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through his Spirit, who lives in you. Paul continued with his comparing/contrasting of the Spirit and the sinful nature. The spirit of evilness ("sinful nature") "lives" in the heart of the unregenerate person, but once redeemed, a person has the "Spirit of God" living in them <sup>John 14:20,23, 2 Timothy 1:14</sup> (they are a "temple of the Holy Spirit" <sup>1 Corinthians 6:19-20</sup>) and "the Spirit of truth" will be with them forever <sup>John 14:15-18</sup>. God raised Jesus (and will raised the saints <sup>Romans 6:5, 1 Corinthians 6:14</sup>) from the dead, because it was "impossible for death to keep its hold on [Jesus]" <sup>Acts 2:24</sup>.

Verse 10 clearly states that a Christian has both a "dead" body (the unredeemed "flesh") and a live spirit <sup>Ephesians 2:4-5</sup>. This is another statement by Paul about the flesh and the spirit struggling to control a believer's soul <sup>Romans 7:14-20, Galatians 5:16-18, James 4:1, 1 Peter 2:11-12</sup>.

The Holy Spirit is referred to by many names in the Bible, including the following: the "Spirit of truth" <sup>John 14:16-17</sup>, "Spirit of Jesus" <sup>Acts 16:7</sup>, "Spirit" <sup>1 John 4:13</sup>, "Spirit of God" <sup>Matthew 3:16</sup>, "Spirit of your Father" <sup>Matthew 10:20</sup>, "Spirit of the Lord" <sup>Luke 4:18</sup>, "Spirit of holiness" <sup>Romans 1:4</sup>, "Spirit of Christ" <sup>v.9</sup>, "Spirit of him who raised Jesus" <sup>v.11</sup>, "Spirit of our God" <sup>1 Corinthians 6:11</sup>, "Spirit of the living God" <sup>2 Corinthians 3:3</sup>, "Spirit of his Son" <sup>Galatians 4:6</sup>, "Spirit of wisdom and revelation" <sup>Ephesians 1:17</sup>, "Spirit of Jesus Christ" <sup>Philippians 1:19</sup>, "the eternal Spirit" <sup>Hebrews 9:14</sup>,  
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"Spirit of grace" Hebrews 10:29, "Spirit of glory" 1 Peter 4:14, "seven spirits of God" Revelation 3:1 and the "Spirit of prophecy" Revelation 19:10.

**8:12-14** Therefore, brothers, we have an obligation – but it is not to the sinful nature, to live according to it. For if you live according to the sinful nature, you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the misdeeds of the body, you will live, because those who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God. Having been "bought at a price" 1 Corinthians 7:23a, believers ("brothers") have a duty ("obligation") to not yield to the sin that still remains in their flesh, but have faithful obedience to the living presence of God's "Spirit" Deuteronomy 11:1, John 14:15, James 1:22. In fact, a believer should never allow the "flesh with its passions and desires" to have any power in their life, because the flesh has been "crucified with [Christ]" Romans 6:6, Galatians 5:24. It is a privilege for all saints to be called "sons of God" Hosea 1:10, John 1:12-13, Revelation 21:7, and this should be a sufficient reason to choose to live a "life worthy of the calling" Ephesians 4:1. The last part <sup>v.14</sup> is a transition into the next section <sup>v.15-16</sup> describing Christian "sonship".

**8:15-17** For you did not receive a spirit that makes you a slave again to fear, but you received the Spirit of sonship. And by him we cry, "Abba, Father." The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God's children. Now if we are children, then we are heirs – heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ, if indeed we share in his sufferings in order that we may also share in his glory. The unredeemed are in "slavery [to] the fear of death" Hebrews 2:14-15, as well as a fear of "punishment" 1 John 4:17-18, but the redeemed are blessed by the Spirit with an awareness of their "sonship" (*huiothesia*: adoption as sons). When a man is "born again" John 3:3, 1 Peter 1:23, he instantly becomes a child of God Matthew 5:9, John 1:12-13, Revelation 21:7. And as a member of God's family, the believer can come into His presence with freedom/confidence Ephesians 3:12, and call Him by the same informal name Jesus used: Papa or Daddy ("Abba" Mark 14:36).

In the Roman culture, seven reputable witnesses had to testify to the validity of an adoption before it could be legal. However, only the Holy Spirit needs to testify in order for the adoption of a person to be validated. The Spirit seals the believer 2 Corinthians 1:21-22 and provides the "power" for spiritual service Acts 1:8, resulting in a harvest of fruit Galatians 5:22-23.

In addition to becoming God's child, He has also made His children "heirs" Galatians 3:29; heirs of God's Kingdom Matthew 25:34, eternal life Titus 3:7, God Himself Revelation 21:3, etc. And, since Christians are joint heirs with Christ, they will join Him in inheriting all things Hebrews 1:2.