

GOD ASSURES DELIVERANCE (FREEDOM) FROM STRUGGLING AND SUFFERING ROMANS 08:28–39

Introduction: Predestination, Man's Struggles and Suffering

The glorious message of Romans is that God assures deliverance (freedom) from struggling and suffering — through Christ. This is the whole point of all that has been written before. Man desperately struggles against the pressures and forces both within himself and alien to himself. He struggles against the weight and discouragement of trials; against the pollution and corruption of life; against the relentless accusations and bombardments of conscience and law; against the pain and decay of his body; against the striking fear and hopelessness of an eternal judgment hereafter. He struggles against the unknown and against pain, hurt, sorrow, loneliness, alienation, aging, death and hell (see Gal. 5:17). And somehow, through his suffering and struggle throughout life, he feels that his suffering and struggling are *due to a wrong relationship with God*.

Therefore, man views his many problems as *realty* being one supreme problem: how to get right with God. If he can establish the right relationship with God, he feels sure God will help him through his trials and take care of his future hereafter.

This is the very message of Romans. Man needs to get right with God, for he is under the condemnation and wrath of God (Rom. 1:18-3:20). Man needs a right relationship with God; he needs to be justified, that is, declared righteous by God (Rom. 3:21-5:21). Man needs to be freed from the struggle of sin, for sin corrupts and leads to death (Rom. 6:1-23). Man needs to be freed from the bondage of law (spiritual legalism); for the law enslaves, accuses, condemns and strikes hopelessness within the heart (Rom. 7:1-25).

Rom 7:24 *What a wretched man I am! Who will rescue me from this body of death?*

Rom 7:25a *Thanks be to God — through Jesus Christ our Lord! So then, I myself in my mind am a slave to God's law, but in the sinful nature a slave to the law of sin. (see Rom. 8:1-39).*

All the discussion in Chapter 8 up to this point has now moved to the summit. Those who love God and are called by Him will definitely be freed from the bondages and corruptions of this life and ushered into glory. God assures this. Nothing, absolutely nothing, shall prevent God's settled plan and purpose from coming about in the life of the believer. God's settled plan and purpose for the universe shall be consummated. He has determined two supreme things (Rom. 8:29).

=> Believers shall be conformed to the image of His dear Son (v. 29).

=> His Son shall have many brothers, among whom He is to be honoured as the first (the most preeminent) Person (v. 29).

- I. Assurance 1: God works things out for those who love Him (v. 28).
- II. Assurance 2: God has determined to fulfil His purpose for the believer (v. 29).
- III. Assurance 3: God has set the glorification of the believer — once for all (v. 30).
- IV. Assurance 4: God has acted for the believer, not against him (vv. 31-33).
- V. Assurance 5: Christ does not condemn the believer (v. 34).
- VI. Assurance 6: Christ protects the believer from the severest circumstances (vv. 35-37).
- VII. Assurance 7: Christ protects the believer from the most extreme experiences and forces (vv. 38-39).

I. Romans 08:28 God Works Out Things for the Believer

God works all things out for those who love Him. This is the first assurance of deliverance. What a comforting declaration! Scripture actually declares that “in all things God works for the good” for the believer. Think about it: nothing could assure the believer any more than God working all things out for his good. Note four things.

1. The words “all things” go well beyond the great events of the world. God does control the events of the world, but He controls much more. He rules over “all things” — all the events and happenings that occur in the life of the believer. He works “all things” out for good on behalf of His dear child.
2. The word “work” (sunergei) means to create and eliminate, place and replace, connect and group, interrelate and intermingle, shape and forge, press and stretch, move and operate, control and guide, arrange and influence. The word “work” is also present action which means that God is *continually* working all things together for good. God is in control of the believer’s life. Daily, moment by moment, God is arranging and rearranging all things for the believer’s good.
3. The word “good” (agathon) means for the ultimate good. We cannot see the future; we cannot take a single event and see all the lines and ramifications that run from it. We cannot see all the things that result from one single event, much less see the results of every event. But God does; therefore, God takes all the events of our lives and works them out for our ultimate good.

4. There is, however, a limitation on this glorious promise, a limitation that desperately needs to be noted. God works all things out for good *only* to those who *love God* and are *called* according to His purpose.
 - a. This fact is graphically seen in the Greek. The clause “of those who love Him” is placed first in the sentence: “But we know that to those who love God all things work together for good.” Scripture makes sure the point is not missed. God *only* looks after the affairs of the person who loves Him.

Thought 1. Think about it for a moment, for it is the only reasonable conclusion. If a man does not love God — does not place his life into the hands of God — how can God take care of Him? If the man turns his back and walks away from God, how can God look after him? God is not going to force His care upon any of us. He is not going to make mechanical robots out of us, forcing us to live at His beck and call. Such is not love; it is only mechanical behaviour. What God wants is love that flows from a heart that *chooses* to love Him. The choice is ours: we either turn our lives over to Him in love, or we continue to take our lives into our own hands.

- b. Note the words, “called according to his purpose.” The believer’s deliverance is purposed by God. God calls him for the glorious purpose of being saved from the struggle and sufferings of this life.

Note a significant fact. The believer’s *position* and *behaviour* are both involved in the call of God.

=> *Positionally*, God chooses the believer by setting him apart through the Holy Spirit and through belief of the truth.

2 Th 2:13-14 *But we ought always to thank God for you, brothers loved by the Lord, because from the beginning God chose you to be saved through the sanctifying work of the Spirit and through belief in the truth. He called you to this through our gospel, that you might share in the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ.*

=> *In behaviour*, God calls the believer to a life of purity and holiness.

1 Th 4:7 *For God did not call us to be impure, but to live a holy life.*

The point is this: God delivers the person who is positioned in Christ and who lives a pure and holy life. The person who truly *loves God* and is living a godly life is the person who experiences all things being worked out for his good. It is the godly person who loves God that will be delivered from the struggling and suffering of this corrupt world.

1 Cor 10:13 No temptation has seized you except what is common to man. And God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can stand up under it.

Psa 34:19 A righteous man may have many troubles, but the LORD delivers him from them all.

Isa 41:10 So do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand.

Isa 43:2 When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and when you pass through the rivers, they will not sweep over you. When you walk through the fire, you will not be burned; the flames will not set you ablaze.

Thought 1. Contrast the unspiritual, carnal attitude of Jacob and the spiritual attitude of Paul.

=> Jacob said, "Everything is against me!" (Gen. 42:36).

=> Paul said, "In all things God works for the good of those who love him" (Rom. 8:28).

II. Romans 08:29 Godly Purpose of the Believer's Life

God has determined to fulfil His purpose for the believer. This is the second assurance of deliverance. Note three significant points.

1. This passage is often abused and misused. It is not dealing so much with theology or philosophy, but more with the spiritual experience of the Christian believer. If the pure logic of philosophy and theology are applied, then the passage says that God chooses some for heaven and others for a terrible hell. But this is simply not the meaning God intends for the passage. What God wants believers to do is to take heart, for He has assured their salvation.

God knows the suffering that believers go through daily (see Rom. 8:28-39). God "foreknew" even before the foundation of the world (v. 29). But no matter how great the suffering, no matter how great the opposition, no matter how great the struggle, God is going to complete His purpose for believers. God has "predestined [believers] to be conformed to the likeness of His Son," and absolutely nothing can change that. Why? "That Christ might be the firstborn [have the pre-eminence] among many brothers" (Rom. 8:29).

God loves His Son in the most supreme way possible. God has ordained that His Son shall have many brothers (adopted brothers) who will love and serve Him as the firstborn, that is, as the first Person or the most preeminent Person of the universe. God has ordained that Jesus Christ shall hold the highest rank and position: that He be the exalted Head of all creation and the One to whom all men look (see Col. 1:15, 18). Therefore, God is going to allow nothing to permanently defeat believers. God is going to allow no fallen child of His to ever remain down permanently. God is going to fulfil His purpose in every child of His, and nothing can stop His purpose. Jesus Christ, His Son, will have a *multitude of brothers and sisters* who worship and serve Him throughout eternity.

2. Believers will be conformed to the likeness of God's dear Son. The words "conformed to the likeness" (summorphous tes eikonos) mean both an inward and an outward likeness.
 - a. "Conformed" (summorphous) means the very same form or likeness as Christ. Within our nature — our being, our person — we shall be made just like Christ. As He is perfect and eternal — without disease and pain, sin and death — so we shall be perfected just like Him. We shall be transformed into His very likeness.
 - b. "Likeness" (eikonos) means a derived or a given image. The image of Christ is not something which believers merit or for which they work; it is not a likeness that comes from their own nature or character. No man can earn or produce the perfection and eternal life possessed by Christ. The likeness of Christ, His perfection and life, is a gift of God. To be conformed to the likeness of God's Son means...
 - to become a participant in the divine nature (2 Pet. 1:4).
 - to be adopted as a son of God (Eph. 1:5).
 - to be holy and blameless in His sight (Eph. 1:4; 4:24).
 - to bear the image of the heavenly: which is an imperishable, immortal body (1 Cor. 15:49-54; see 1 Cor. 15:42-44).
 - to have one's body transformed just like His glorious body (Ph. 3:21).
 - to be changed (transformed) into the same likeness of the Lord (2 Cor. 3:18).
 - to be recreated just like Him (1 Jn. 3:2-3).
3. Note what it is that assures the believer's deliverance from the suffering and struggling of this world. It is two things.

a. The foreknowledge of God. The word “foreknew” (proginosko) is used three different ways in Scripture. It means...

- to know something beforehand, ahead of time.
- to know something intimately by loving and accepting and approving it.
- to elect, foreordain and predetermine something.

The present passage is interpreted differently by scholars. Note that the second and third meanings are much the same. When a person is loved and approved, selection or election is involved. The person becomes a very special or select person.

Again, the point to see is not the pure logic of the theological or philosophical argument. This is not God’s purpose in this passage. God’s purpose is to assure the believer: the believer is going to be conformed to the likeness of Christ, and nothing can stop the glorious process. God foreknew the fact, saw it even before the world was ever founded. He has always loved and approved the believer, electing and ordaining him from the very beginning (see *Foreknowledge*, Acts 2:23).

Acts 15:18 That have been known for ages.

Rom 8:29 For those God foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the likeness of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brothers.

Rom 11:2 God did not reject his people [Israel], whom he foreknew.

1 Pet 1:18-20 For you know that it was not with perishable things such as silver or gold that you were redeemed from the empty way of life handed down to you from your forefathers, but with the precious blood of Christ, a lamb without blemish or defect. He was chosen before the creation of the world, but was revealed in these last times for your sake.

2 Tim 2:19 Nevertheless, God’s solid foundation stands firm, sealed with this inscription: “The Lord knows those who are his,” and, “Everyone who confesses the name of the Lord must turn away from wickedness.”

1 Pet 1:2 Who have been chosen according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through the sanctifying work of the Spirit, for obedience to Jesus Christ and sprinkling by his blood: Grace and peace be yours in abundance.

b. The predestination of God. The word predestination (proorisen) means to destine or appoint before, to foreordain, to predetermine. The basic Greek word (proorizo) means to *mark off or to set off* the boundaries of something. The idea is a glorious picture of what God is doing for the believer. The boundary is

marked and set off for the believer: the boundary of being conformed to the likeness of God's dear Son. The believer shall be made just like Christ, conformed to His very likeness. Nothing can stop God's purpose for the believer. It is predestined, set, and marked off. The believer may struggle and suffer through the sin and shame of this world; he may even stumble and fall or become discouraged and downhearted. But if he is a genuine child of God, he will not be defeated, not totally. He will soon arise from his fall and begin to follow Christ again. He is predestined to be a brother of Christ, to worship and serve Christ throughout all eternity. And Christ will not be disappointed. God loves His Son too much to allow Him to be disappointed by losing a single brother. Jesus Christ will have His joy fulfilled; He will see every brother of His face to face, conformed perfectly to His image. He will have the worship and service of every brother chosen to be His by God the Father. The believer's eternal destiny, that of being an adopted brother to the Lord Jesus Christ, is determined. The believer can rest assured of this glorious truth. God has predestined him to be delivered from the suffering and struggling of this sinful world. (See *Predestination*, Jn. 6:37; 6:39; 6:44-46 for God's part and man's part in salvation. See *Death of Jesus Christ*, Acts 2:23; *Predestination, Grace*, Rom. 9:10-13; See Rom 9:14-33.)

Eph 1:4-5 For he chose us in him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight. In love he predestined us to be adopted as his sons through Jesus Christ, in accordance with his pleasure and will.

Eph 3:11-12 According to his eternal purpose which he accomplished in Christ Jesus our Lord. In him and through faith in him we may approach God with freedom and confidence.

III. Romans 08:30 Glory of Believer

God has set the glorification of the believer, once-for-all. This is the third assurance of deliverance. It must be remembered throughout this passage that Scripture is talking about the genuine believer. A genuine believer is a person who sincerely believes in Jesus Christ and diligently seeks to please Him by living soberly, righteously and godly in this present world (Tit. 2:11-13). It is the genuine believer whose glorification is predestined, set forever and ever by God. The true believer can rest in this glorious truth, for God has done three wonderful things for him. God has *called, justified and glorified him*. Note that all three steps are in the past tense; all three steps are something already accomplished. The believer's glorification has already taken place in the plan and mind of God. God already sees believers

glorified; He already sees believers in His presence. It is assured and predestined — already written down in the annals of heaven, never to be erased.

Again, does this mean that some are destined to hell and some to heaven? No, a thousand times, no! This is not the purpose of this Scripture. God's purpose is to give enormous assurance to the true believer: he shall be delivered from the struggling and suffering of this sinful world. He is going to be freed — if he is a true believer — freed from all the sin and shame, failure and shortcoming, pain and death. He is going to be glorified right along with God's dear Son, the Lord Jesus Christ.

1. God has *called* the true believer. Some time ago the Spirit called and stirred the heart of the true believer to come to Christ. The believer responded to the call. Scripture definitely teaches that the believer had a choice. He could have chosen to respond or not to respond. (See Rev. 22:17.) Thank God he responded and came to Christ. Therefore, the call was *effective*; the call worked. The believer did respond to Christ. (See *Draw*, Jn. 6:44-46 for God's part and man's part in salvation.)

Mat 11:28 *“Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest.”*

2 Cor 5:20 *We are therefore Christ's ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us. We implore you on Christ's behalf: Be reconciled to God.*

Rev 3:20 *Here I am! I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with him, and he with me.*

Rev 22:17 *The Spirit and the bride say, “Come!” And let him who hears say, “Come!” Whoever is thirsty, let him come; and whoever wishes, let him take the free gift of the water of life.*

Isa 1:18 *“Come now, let us reason together,” says the LORD. “Though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they are red as crimson, they shall be like wool.”*

Isa 55:1 *“Come, all you who are thirsty, come to the waters; and you who have no money, come, buy and eat! Come, buy wine and milk without money and without cost.”*

2. God has justified the believer. Again, note the past tense. Justification has *already taken place* for the true believer (see *Justification*, Rom 5:1).

Thought 1. The point is clear. If the believer has been truly *called*, if he has been truly saved, then his deliverance from struggling and suffering is assured.

His deliverance is a past fact and it is set eternally by God. No matter how deeply the believer senses his shortcoming and failure, his struggle with the sin and suffering of this world, he is a child of God. Every time he comes short or stumbles and falls, he needs to get up and begin all over again. He must not become discouraged and defeated, self-accusing and incriminating, feeling unworthy and undeserving, unwanted and rejected. Such a state of mind is one the most useful strategies of the devil — a strategy which he uses to defeat believers by the multitudes. God *has called* the believer, so he must arise and begin to diligently follow Christ once again. Every believer who is walking about defeated — no matter how great his fall — should arise right now and turn back to Christ. This is our call, our duty.

1 Cor 6:11 *And that is what some of you were. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God.*

1 John 2:1-2 *My dear children, I write this to you so that you will not sin. But if anybody does sin, we have one who speaks to the Father in our defence — Jesus Christ, the Righteous One. He is the atoning sacrifice for our sins, and not only for ours but also for the sins of the whole world.*

Paul the apostle, who was a converted murderer, is a dynamic example of this victorious attitude, the very attitude needed so desperately by all believers.

Phil 3:13-14 *Brothers, I do not consider myself yet to have taken hold of it. But one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus. (see Job 17:9; Ps.84:7; Pr.4:18; Heb.12:4).)*

3. God has glorified the believer. This, too, is past tense: the glorification of the believer is an accomplished fact, a fact that has already taken place in God's mind and plan. God already sees and counts the believer as *glorified* in His presence for eternity (see *Glory*, Rom. 2:7; *Honour*, Rom. 2:7; *Immortality*, Rom. 2:7; *Glory of God*, Rom. 3:23; *Glory* Jn. 17:22 for what the believer's glorification involves).

Rom 8:18 *I consider that our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us.*

2 Cor 4:17 *For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all.*

Eph 1:18 I pray also that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened in order that you may know the hope to which he has called you, the riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints.

Phil 3:21 Who, by the power that enables him to bring everything under his control, will transform our lowly bodies so that they will be like his glorious body.

2 Tim 2:10 Therefore I endure everything for the sake of the elect, that they too may obtain the salvation that is in Christ Jesus, with eternal glory.

Col 3:4 When Christ, who is your life, appears, then you also will appear with him in glory.

1 Pet 5:1 To the elders among you, I appeal as a fellow elder, a witness of Christ's sufferings and one who also will share in the glory to be revealed.

Rev 22:5 There will be no more night. They will not need the light of a lamp or the light of the sun, for the Lord God will give them light. And they will reign for ever and ever.

Psa 73:24 You guide me with your counsel, and afterward you will take me into glory.

IV. Romans 08:31–33 God Himself Acted for the Believer

God has acted for the believer, not against him. This is the fourth assurance of deliverance. This is the greatest truth in all the world. God did not have to act for man, but He did. God loves every man, no matter his condition or sin and shame. Therefore, believers can rest assured that nothing, absolutely nothing shall ever separate them from the plan and purpose of God. God's love is absolute. It is perfect. And God shall have His perfect love expressed by completing His perfect plan and purpose for each life. The believer can have absolute assurance that God will work all things out for his good, even things that fail and are painful to the heart. God shall deliver the believer from the struggling and suffering of this world. The true believer shall be conformed to the likeness of Christ and glorified with Him (vv. 29-30).

The point is this: God Himself is the believer's assurance. God Himself has acted for the believer; He has done everything necessary and then more: "If God is for us, who can be against us?"

1. God is our Saviour. It was God who "did not spare His own Son, but gave Him up for us all" (v. 32). The words "did not spare" (*ouk epheisato*) mean that God did not hold back or refrain from giving His Son; He did not refuse or even

hesitate to give His Son. The picture is that of God weighing man's eternal separation from Him against the sacrifice of His Son. He had a choice to make and He made it; He deliberately chose to sacrifice His Son for us. God knew exactly what He was doing. He wanted man delivered from this struggling and suffering world, and there was only one way for man to be saved:

=> Someone had to bear man's penalty for transgression and sin, which was the judgment of death.

Therefore, God handed His own Son over to die *for* us — in our behalf, in our stead, in our place, as our substitute. God *did not spare* His own Son; He gave Christ Jesus up for us all. What a glorious, marvellous, wonderful love! And just how wonderful His love is can be clearly seen in this: it was while we were sinners, acting and rebelling against God, that He gave His Son to die for us.

Rom 5:8 *But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.*

Rom 5:6 *You see, at just the right time, when we were still powerless, Christ died for the ungodly.*

John 3:16 *“For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.”*

Gal 1:4 *Who gave himself for our sins to rescue us from the present evil age, according to the will of our God and Father.*

Isa 53:6 *We all, like sheep, have gone astray, each of us has turned to his own way; and the LORD has laid on him the iniquity of us all.*

(See *Death of Jesus Christ*, Jn. 3:16; *Death of Jesus Christ*, Acts 2:23. See 1 Pet. 2:24; 3:18.)

2. God is our Provider. Since God has done such a great and glorious thing, how shall He not also give us all things? Giving His own Son for us was the greatest gift in all the world; therefore, He is bound to give us everything else. Nothing could ever cost God anything close to the price He has paid in giving up His Son: therefore, God shall give us everything else. Note three points.

a. God's provision includes spiritual, eternal and material gifts.

=> The spiritual provision is the fruit of the Spirit (See Eph. 1:3.)

Gal 5:22-23 *But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law.*

Eph 1:3 *Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in the heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing in Christ.*

=> The eternal provision is deliverance from the struggling and suffering of this sinful world. It is the gift of eternal life, of living gloriously conformed to the image of His dear Son, Jesus Christ (see note, pt. 2, Rom. 8:29 for just what this means).

Eph 2:7 *In order that in the coming ages he might show the incomparable riches of his grace, expressed in his kindness to us in Christ Jesus.*

=> The material gifts are the necessities of life (see Mt. 6:25-34).

Phil 4:19 *And my God will meet all your needs according to his glorious riches in Christ Jesus.*

Mat 6:31, 33 *“So do not worry, saying, ‘What shall we eat?’ or ‘What shall we drink?’ or ‘What shall we wear?’ But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.”*

b. The provision is *freely* given. God’s gift of His Son was freely given; therefore, all that God provides for man is freely given. No man can merit or earn God’s provision. God provides and meets the need of the believer because He loves the believer.

Eph 2:8-9 *For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith — and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God — not by works, so that no one can boast.*

c. The provision of God comes through Christ and through Him alone. Note the words “with Him.” It is *with Christ* that God gives us all things. If we are *with Christ*, then all things are given to us. We shall be delivered from struggling and suffering. Believers can rest assured of this. No matter how much we struggle and suffer through the sin and shame of this world, God will see us through it all. He is going to conform us to the glorious likeness of His Son.

John 4:10 *Jesus answered her, “If you knew the gift of God and who it is that asks you for a drink, you would have asked him and he would have given you living water.”*

Rom 6:23 *For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.*

2 Cor 9:15 Thanks be to God for his indescribable gift!

3. God is our Justifier. This is the most glorious truth: God does not charge us with sin. In fact, He does not bring any charge against us. He justifies us (see *Justification*, Rom. 4:22; 5:1).

Note the question: Who shall bring any charge against God's elect? It is God; only God can charge us with sin and shame. But note: if we have truly trusted Jesus Christ as our Saviour, if we are one of God's elect, he does not charge us with sin. He justifies us. He forgives our sin and counts us righteous in Christ Jesus. If we are God's child, no one can charge us with anything. We are God's; we belong to God. No one can charge, count or doom us to be...

- a failure
- a shame
- unworthy
- an embarrassment
- helpless
- lost
- hopeless
- a detriment
- a sinner
- of no value
- defeated
- unusable

Man is not our judge; therefore, man cannot judge these things to be true of us — only God can. God is our Judge, and this is the glorious truth: God does not judge His elect. He does not lay sin and shame against His children; He justifies His children. No matter how much we have struggled and suffered through the sin and shame of this world, God delivers us. No matter how far we have fallen, no matter how discouraged we have become, if we are truly God's child, He picks us up and justifies us in Christ Jesus and continues to conform us to the likeness or image of His dear Son. God does not leave us down and defeated, nor does He go around charging us with sin and shame. God justifies us and continues His work of forgiveness and grace in our lives. (See *Grace*, Rom. 6:14-15. Also see *Foreknowledge and Predestination*, Rom. 8:29.)

1 Cor 6:9-11 Do you not know that the wicked will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: Neither the sexually immoral nor idolaters nor adulterers nor male prostitutes nor homosexual offenders nor thieves nor the greedy nor drunkards nor slanderers nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God. And that is what some of you were. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God.

Phil 1:6 Being confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus.

Rom 14:4 Who are you to judge someone else's servant? To his own master he stands or falls. And he will stand, for the Lord is able to make him stand.

Heb 13:6 *So we say with confidence, “The Lord is my helper; I will not be afraid. What can man do to me?”*

Psa 112:7 *He will have no fear of bad news; his heart is steadfast, trusting in the LORD.*

Prov 1:33 *“But whoever listens to me will live in safety and be at ease, without fear of harm.”*

V. Romans 08: 34 Jesus Christ does not Condemn; He has Saved the Believer

Christ does not condemn the believer. This is the fifth assurance of deliverance. Note how direct and forceful the question is: “Who is he that condemns?” It is Christ; only Christ can condemn us for our sin and shame. But the glorious news is that Christ does not condemn us. On the contrary, the very opposite is true. Christ does four wonderful things for us.

1. Christ has died for us. Christ is our glorious Saviour. When we *honestly* come to Him, He does not condemn us for our sin and shame; He forgives us. He is able to forgive us because He died for us.
- => Our sins are a shame, for sin is rebellion against God. Sin acts against God, fights and struggles against God. Sin goes against all that God stands for. Sin is insurrection against God; it is the crime of high treason against God. Sin is the most terrible act that can be done against God.

Therefore, we deserve to be condemned by God and put to death for sin. But we do not have to face condemnation. Christ has already paid the penalty for sin. Christ has already been condemned and executed for our transgression against God. This is the glorious love of Christ. He has already died *for us*: in our place, in our stead, as our substitute. Therefore when we sincerely come to Christ, He does not condemn us; He loves us and forgives our sin and shame. This is the very purpose of His death — to free us from sin, from its penalty and condemnation.

Rom 5:6 *You see, at just the right time, when we were still powerless, Christ died for the ungodly.*

Rom 5:10 *For if, when we were God’s enemies, we were reconciled to him through the death of his Son, how much more, having been reconciled, shall we be saved through his life!*

Rom 5:8 *But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.*

1 Pet 2:24 *He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, so that we might die to sins and live for righteousness; by his wounds you have been healed.*

1 Pet 3:18 *For Christ died for sins once for all, the righteous for the unrighteous, to bring you to God. He was put to death in the body but made alive by the Spirit.*

1 John 3:5 *But you know that he appeared so that he might take away our sins. And in him is no sin.*

Isa 53:6 *We all, like sheep, have gone astray, each of us has turned to his own way; and the LORD has laid on him the iniquity of us all.*

2. Christ has risen from the dead for us. Christ is our risen Lord. His resurrection does two marvellous things for the believer.
 - a. The resurrection of the Lord proves that God was perfectly *satisfied* with the death of Jesus Christ. What Christ did — His dying for our sins — was *acceptable* to God; therefore, God has *accepted* Jesus' death *for us*. God has *approved* His dying *for us*. God's divine justice was perfectly satisfied with Christ dying for us. This is clearly seen in the resurrection of Jesus Christ: if God had not been satisfied, He would have left Jesus in the grave. But thank God, God was satisfied, so He raised up Jesus to live forever as the Sovereign Saviour of the world.

Rom 1:4 *And who through the Spirit of holiness was declared with power to be the Son of God by his resurrection from the dead: Jesus Christ our Lord.*

Rom 4:25 *He was delivered over to death for our sins and was raised to life for our justification.*

Acts 17:31 *“For he has set a day when he will judge the world with justice by the man he has appointed. He has given proof of this to all men by raising him from the dead.”*

1 Cor 15:17 *And if Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile; you are still in your sins.*

- b. The resurrection of the Lord gives the believer a new life, making the believer a *new creation* and a *new man* (see Rom. 6:3-5).

Rom 6:4 *We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life.*

Rom 6:10-11 *The death he died, he died to sin once for all; but the life he lives, he lives to God. In the same way, count yourselves dead to sin but alive to God in Christ Jesus.*

2 Cor 4:11 *For we who are alive are always being given over to death for Jesus' sake, so that his life may be revealed in our mortal body.*

2 Cor 5:15, 17 *And he died for all, that those who live should no longer live for themselves but for him who died for them and was raised again. Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come!*

Eph 1:19-20 *And his incomparably great power for us who believe. That power is like the working of his mighty strength, which he exerted in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly realms.*

Col 2:12 *Having been buried with him in baptism and raised with him through your faith in the power of God, who raised him from the dead.*

Col 3:1 *Since, then, you have been raised with Christ, set your hearts on things above, where Christ is seated at the right hand of God.*

3. Christ has been exalted for us. He is our exalted Lord. He sits face to face with God at His right hand. This gives two assurances to the believer.
 - a. The believer shall also be exalted into the presence of God. Just as Christ lives face to face with God, the believer shall also live face to face with God throughout all eternity. (See Rom. 8:29. See *Glory of God*, Rom. 3:23.)

Rom 8:11 *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.*

Rom 6:5 *If we have been united with him like this in his death, we will certainly also be united with him in his resurrection.*

Rom 6:8-10 *Now if we died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him. For we know that since Christ was raised from the dead, he cannot die again; death no longer has mastery over him. The death he died, he died to sin once for all; but the life he lives, he lives to God.*

Rom 8:16-17 *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.*

John 14:2-3 *“In my Father's house are many rooms; if it were not so, I would have told you. I am going there to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am.”*

John 17:24 *“Father, I want those you have given me to be with me where I am, and to see my glory, the glory you have given me because you loved me before the creation of the world.”*

Col 3:4 *When Christ, who is your life, appears, then you also will appear with him in glory.*

- b. The Lord Jesus Christ is exalted as the Sovereign and majestic Lord of the universe. He is the Ruler who reigns and rules over all, who possesses all might and power and is full of all wisdom and truth. He is the One who is going to destroy and utterly eliminate sin and evil in the world. He is the One who is going to establish a kingdom of righteousness and justice, love and truth in the new heavens and earth.

Eph 1:20-21 *Which he exerted in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly realms, far above all rule and authority, power and dominion, and every title that can be given, not only in the present age but also in the one to come.*

Phil 2:9-11 *Therefore God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.*

Heb 1:3 *The Son is the radiance of God's glory and the exact representation of his being, sustaining all things by his powerful word. After he had provided purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty in heaven.*

1 Pet 3:22 *Who has gone into heaven and is at God's right hand — with angels, authorities and powers in submission to him.*

2 Pet 3:10-13 *But the day of the Lord will come like a thief. The heavens will disappear with a roar; the elements will be destroyed by fire, and the earth and everything in it will be laid bare. Since everything will be destroyed in this way,*

what kind of people ought you to be? You ought to live holy and godly lives as you look forward to the day of God and speed its coming. That day will bring about the destruction of the heavens by fire, and the elements will melt in the heat. But in keeping with his promise we are looking forward to a new heaven and a new earth, the home of righteousness.

Rev 3:21 *To him who overcomes, I will give the right to sit with me on my throne, just as I overcame and sat down with my Father on his throne.*

Note: it is Jesus Christ (and not another) who rules and reigns over the universe. This stirs enormous assurance in the hearts of genuine believers. Why? Because Jesus Christ has demonstrated His glorious love and care for the world. He not only can, but He will look after us and work all things out for good until He returns (v. 28). The *control of evil* in the world and our lives are under His care. He is working all things out for good to those of us who truly love Him and are called according to His purpose (v. 28).

Mat 6:31, 33 *So do not worry, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?'... But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.*

Mat 28:20 *"And teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."*

Luke 12:7 *"Indeed, the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Don't be afraid; you are worth more than many sparrows."*

John 10:28 *"I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; no one can snatch them out of my hand."*

Rom 8:28 *And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose.*

Heb 13:5 *Keep your lives free from the love of money and be content with what you have, because God has said, "Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you."*

1 Pet 5:7 *Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you.*

Jude 1:24 *To him who is able to keep you from falling and to present you before his glorious presence without fault and with great joy.*

Gen 28:15 *"I am with you and will watch over you wherever you go, and I will bring you back to this land. I will not leave you until I have done what I have promised you."*

Psa 121:4 Indeed, he who watches over Israel will neither slumber nor sleep.

Isa 43:2 When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and when you pass through the rivers, they will not sweep over you. When you walk through the fire, you will not be burned; the flames will not set you ablaze.

4. Christ intercedes for us before the throne of God. He is our great Intercessor, our Mediator and Advocate who stands between God and man. It is Christ Jesus who brings us to God and who makes redemption, even the forgiveness of our sins, possible (Eph. 1:7).

=> It is His advocacy, the advocacy of His death and resurrection for us, that forgives our sins.

1 John 2:1-2 My dear children, I write this to you so that you will not sin. But if anybody does sin, we have one who speaks to the Father in our defence — Jesus Christ, the Righteous One. He is the atoning sacrifice for our sins, and not only for ours but also for the sins of the whole world.

=> It is His intercession, the intercession of His death and resurrection for us, that saves us.

Rom 4:25 He was delivered over to death for our sins and was raised to life for our justification.

=> It is His presence in heaven and His plea, the *plea* of His death and resurrection for us, that opens the door of heaven to us.

Heb 9:24 For Christ did not enter a man-made sanctuary that was only a copy of the true one; he entered heaven itself, now to appear for us in God's presence.

The point is this. The believer has the greatest assurance imaginable: he shall be delivered from the struggling and suffering of this world. No matter the sin and shame of his life, if he truly comes to Christ, he is not condemned. He is not judged for sin, no matter how terrible or how far he has fallen. If he will only come to Christ, Christ will deliver him. Christ will not leave him down and discouraged and defeated. Christ will not even scold or reproach him. Christ will receive His dear child with open arms.

Eph 1:7 In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, in accordance with the riches of God's grace.

1 John 1:9 If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.

Mat 11:28 “Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest.”

VI. Romans 08:35–37 Assurance of God’s Protection

Christ protects the believer from the severest circumstances. This is the sixth assurance of deliverance, and it is the most wonderful assurance imaginable. “Who [or what] shall separate us from the love of Christ?” Too many people, even believers, feel that God does not love them, that He just could not love them. They feel unworthy of His love, for they come too short, are too disobedient, and fail too often. How could God possibly love them when they go against His will so much? The results of such feelings are...

- a sense of unworthiness
- a sense of discouragement
- a low self-esteem
- a downing of oneself
- an accusing of oneself
- a defeated life

Note a crucial point: such feelings totally contradict Scripture. Look at the verse: “Who [or what] shall separate us from the love of Christ?” There is no circumstance, no situation, no event that can cause Christ to turn away from us. No matter how terrible or severe the situation, it cannot separate the true believer from the love of Christ. Christ loves the believer regardless of the circumstance, and He longs to be reconciled to the believer. No more severe circumstance can be imagined than the ones given:

=> Trouble: to undergo struggle, trials, temptation, suffering or affliction.

=> Hardship: to suffer anguish, trouble, strain, agony; not knowing which way to turn or what to do.

=> Persecution: to be abused, mocked, ridiculed, shamed, mistreated, ignored, neglected, harassed, attacked or injured.

=> Famine: to have no food, to be starving and have no way to secure food.

=> Nakedness: to be stripped of all clothes and earthly comforts; to be bare, having all earthly possessions taken away.

=> Danger: to be exposed to the most severe risks; to be confronted with the most terrible dangers to one’s body, mind, soul, property, family and loved ones.

=> Sword: to be killed; to suffer martyrdom.

Imagine a person experiencing all this. What would his thoughts be? Would he feel that he had been forsaken by God? In the midst of so much dark trouble, would he believe that God loved him?

Scripture declares loudly and clearly that God does love him. There is absolutely nothing — no matter how dark and depressing, no matter how severe — that can separate the believer from the love of Christ. Circumstances are not evidence that God does not love us. God loves us no matter what the circumstances may be.

But believers must always remember: they are going to suffer while they are in this world. In fact, the world is going to count them as sheep for the slaughter, rejecting and persecuting them (Psa. 44:22). The world is going to persecute believers as long as believers continue to live for Christ. Their lives of godliness convict the world, and the world rejects godliness (see *Persecution*, Mt. 5:10-12).

However, note what is said. No matter the circumstances, we are more than conquerors through Christ who has loved us (v. 37). No matter the circumstances and their severity, Christ will carry us through all, strengthening and encouraging us. We cannot lose, no matter the severity of the situation. Christ loves us and is going to look after and take care of us. The believer can rest assured, Christ protects him from the severest circumstances:

=> Christ meets all the material necessities of life.

Mat 6:31, 33 *“So do not worry, saying, ‘What shall we eat?’ or ‘What shall we drink?’ or ‘What shall we wear?’ But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.”*

=> Christ gives us rest.

Mat 11:28 *“Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest.”*

=> Christ gives us peace.

John 14:27 *“Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid.”*

John 16:33 *“I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world.”*

=> Christ provides an escape from temptation.

1 Cor 10:13 *No temptation has seized you except what is common to man. And God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can stand up under it.*

=> Christ comforts us through all trials.

2 Cor 1:3-4 *Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our troubles, so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves have received from God.*

=> Christ supplies all our needs.

Phil 4:13 *I can do everything through him who gives me strength.*

=> Christ delivers us through persecution.

Heb 12:3 *Consider him who endured such opposition from sinful men, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart.*

1 Pet 4:12-13 *Dear friends, do not be surprised at the painful trial you are suffering, as though something strange were happening to you. But rejoice that you participate in the sufferings of Christ, so that you may be overjoyed when his glory is revealed.*

=> Christ delivers us into His very presence, giving us eternal life if we are martyred.

2 Tim 4:18 *The Lord will rescue me from every evil attack and will bring me safely to his heavenly kingdom. To him be glory for ever and ever. Amen.*

Rev 3:21 *To him who overcomes, I will give the right to sit with me on my throne, just as I overcame and sat down with my Father on his throne.*

=> Christ cares for us no matter the situation.

1 Pet 5:7 *Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you.*

=> Christ enables us to overcome the world.

1 John 5:4 *For everyone born of God overcomes the world. This is the victory that has overcome the world, even our faith.*

=> Christ strengthens those whose hearts are fully committed to Him.

2 Chr 16:9 “For the eyes of the LORD range throughout the earth to strengthen those whose hearts are fully committed to him. You have done a foolish thing, and from now on you will be at war.”

=> Christ delivers us from fear.

Isa 41:10 So do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand.

=> Christ sustains and supports the aged believer.

Isa 46:4 Even to your old age and gray hairs I am he, I am he who will sustain you. I have made you and I will carry you; I will sustain you and I will rescue you.

VII. Romans 08:38–39 Protection from Extreme Experiences

Christ protects believers from the most extreme experiences and forces. This is the seventh assurance of deliverance. There is nothing in the universe that can separate the believer from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord. The believer can be fully persuaded of this glorious fact. Just consider the experiences and forces mentioned by Scripture:

=> Not death: confronting death and leaving this world cannot separate us from Christ and His love (Jn. 5:24).

=> Not life: no trial or pleasure or comfort of life, not any person nor any thing in this life can separate us from Christ and His love.

=> Not angels, nor demons: no heavenly or spiritual creature, no being from any other dimension can separate us from Christ and His love.

=> Not the present nor the future: neither present events, beings or things, nor future events, beings, or things — absolutely nothing in existence or any thing in future existence — can cut us off from Christ and His love.

=> Not height or depth: nothing from outer space or from the depths of the earth can separate us from Christ and His love.

Note the *grand finale*: if there be any other creature than the ones named, that creature cannot separate us from “the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.”

Zep 3:17 “The LORD your God is with you, he is mighty to save. He will take great delight in you, he will quiet you with his love, he will rejoice over you with singing.”

John 3:16 “For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.”

John 16:26-27 “In that day (after Jesus’ ascension) you will ask in my name. I am not saying that I will ask the Father on your behalf. No, the Father himself loves you because you have loved me and have believed that I came from God.”

Rom 5:8 But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

Eph 2:4-5 But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions — it is by grace you have been saved.

1 John 3:1 How great is the love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God! And that is what we are! The reason the world does not know us is that it did not know him.

1 John 4:9 This is how God showed his love among us: He sent his one and only Son into the world that we might live through him.

Jer 31:3 The LORD appeared to us in the past, saying: “I have loved you with an everlasting love; I have drawn you with loving-kindness.” ■