

The Structure of Rom 5-8

- 5:1-11** **Justification gives us peace now, glory later, and a sure road to that glory.**
- 5:12-21** **Christ can be the hope for the whole creation because he parallels and contrasts with Adam.**
- ch. 6** **Will we live in solidarity with Adam or with Christ? ... in bondage to the old or in the freedom of the new?**
- ch. 7** **Q: How can the underlying intention of the Law bless us and not break us? ...**
- ch. 8** **A: Only by the Holy Spirit, who is the presence of , the promise of, and our help toward future glory.**
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Romans 5

5:1-4

As important as “justification” is for Paul, getting this “right legal standing, by faith” is only a doorway. Justification opens up to:

- *peace with God* — the judge who declares us “not guilty” doesn’t send us on our merry way — he wants a relationship, in the way of which his wrath necessarily stood
- *access* — benefits like those of Hebrews 4:14-16; 7:25 come to mind
- *boasting* — contrast Paul’s rebuke of the Jewish “boasting” in God based on being named a Jew and resting on a Torah of works (2:17; 3:27)
 - a) boasting in the hope of the (future) glory of God (see, esp. 8:18-25 — and the “high five” boasting of 5:11)
 - b) boasting even in our (present) afflictions (5:3-5)

5:5

love of God. There's some debate about whether Paul means "our love for God" (Wright) or "God's love for us" (Cranfield and nearly everybody else).

It's possible that Wright is right about 5:5 being about how we've been given the ability by the Holy Spirit now to "love the Lord your God with all your heart and soul and strength" (see the "obedience of faith" verses, and 2:25-29; 3:30; 8:4-9; 10:6-11) just because, as Paul goes on to explain, God has first demonstrated "his *own* love," 5:8). Love answers love, just as faith answers faith(fulness), under the Wright construct.

On the other hand, in verses 6-8 Paul describes how God's love for us was manifest in Christ's death for us. In 8:35 and 8:39, Paul asks "Who can separate us from the love of Christ ... and the love of God that is in Christ?" In those two verses Paul seems to me to mean Christ's love for us and God's love for us in Christ. With apologies to Wright, I think it's more plausible to think that here in 5:5 Paul is talking about God's astonishing love for us. His sovereign, amazing-grace love gives us peace now and hope for kingdom-come glory.

through the Holy Spirit who was given to us. Look back to 1:4; 2:29; and ahead to 7:6 and the whole of ch. 8 — under the old covenant there were two things missing: 1) a propitiating sacrifice that could actually cover sin; and 2) a power residing in us to enable living out what it is to be God's image-bearers. What's new about the new covenant is God's provision for 1) in Christ and for 2) in the Holy Spirit.

5:6-8

The truth of "that redemption which is in Christ Jesus" (3:24-25) which satisfied God's wrath — only now from the side of:

- this being a demonstration of God's *love* (rather than merely of his righteousness) — Think of Romans 5:8 as Paul's John 3:16.
- our redemption being a matter of Christ's death (the verb "to die" is used 4 times in 5:6-8 — and see the noun "death" in v. 10)
- just why it is that our redemption has to come to us "freely" and as a matter of God's "grace" — to wit, we are "weak ... godless ... sinners ... enemies" (v. 9)

5:9-11

These verses are a mini-commentary on the last part of 5:2 (*we boast in the hope of the glory of God*) and they are ideas that will be developed and nuanced in ch. 8, esp. vv. 18-25.

5:12-18

Paul starts a comparison between Adam and Christ in v. 12, but breaks it off and doesn't finish it until v. 18. The point is that: a) in God's economy, one man's being is determinative for the being of "the many;" and that b) what was lost in Adam has been more than made up for in Christ. But in vv. 13-17 Paul feels he must make sure we don't misunderstand the comparison between Adam and Christ:

vv. 13-14 — Just because the Law wasn't given until Moses, that doesn't mean that people before Moses or outside the Jewish race were off the hook. Even though they didn't (as Adam did) sin in response to specific instructions, and even though their sins weren't being "registered" ("imputed", "reckoned," "logged") — nonetheless, the fact that these people underwent death was proof that they were sinners.

vv. 15-17 — Paul doesn't want his comparison between Adam and Christ to mask a couple of huge imbalances between Adam and Christ, and between sin and grace. In a word, the goodness of the good news is infinitely better than the badness of the bad news.

First (v. 15), "the fall" is pretty much a natural & just consequence of Adam & Eve's disobedience. By contrast, what has happened in Christ is an extraordinary manifestation of "God's grace" and his "gracious gift in Christ." As N.T. Wright says, "New creation is a response to anti-creation."

Second (v. 16), it might have been one thing for God to intervene immediately after the fall. But — curious as it may seem — God decided to fix things after the situation had become arguably unfixable, after "many transgressions." That is, after transgression upon transgression, sin upon sin, offense upon offense. The underside of the Bible is the unleashing of sin as a power that grows in an exponential power. Once a bomb explodes can it be unexploded? Once a David commits murder and spawns adulterous children who (like Absalom and Solomon) not only incarnate the father's lusts (sexually and politically), but create an expanding trail of grief, can the damage ever be undone? Paul's answer: as bad as is what Adam unleashed, so much better is the resolution that God provides in Christ. Death now works backwards. Everything will eventually be made better than right. The bad that comes from Adam will be less than the good that comes from Christ.

Third (v. 17), while the fall left "death" in charge, redemption will leave "us" ("those who receive...") in charge — glory will be about

the liberation of the creation through the restoration of God's image bearers (see 8:21).

And back to v. 18 (and as expounded in v. 19), which completes the thought begun in v. 12: as antitype to Adam, the one faithful Israelite, Christ, offers *dikaioma* (= "righteous conduct" — or in the language of v. 19, "obedience," *upakoe* = "really hearing") that leads to *dikaiosis* (= "rightwising," "being lined back up with God's character") for "all men."

Obedience to what?

- Just his redemptive death? Merely the mission? (Sort of a window into the Covenant of Redemption dynamic ... the agreement in the council of eternity between the 3 persons of the Trinity?)
- Accordingly, an Epistle to the Hebrews sort of training for the High Priesthood, in the fashion of Hebrews 5:7-10, qualifying him to be Sacrifice as well as Sacrificer, our blameless Passover Lamb, the "hilasterion," where a substitutionary atonement is offered?
- The course of his whole life? A vicarious Torah-keeping by Israel's one true Son ... an obedience that is imputed to those who become sons and daughters of "God's Israel"? — Look ahead to notes at Rom 8:3; and see also Galatians 4:4-5

How does his obedience benefit us?

- Is it merely "an obedience unto (and solely for the sake of) death" (Phil 2:8)
- Is there an imputation (crediting to, logging in as) to us of the righteousness of his life-as-lived-on-earth? What is it to "receive the gift of righteousness" (Rom 5:17)? What is it to be "saved by his life" (Rom 5:10)?

5:20-21

Summary: The whole redemptive plan was through Israel's Law eventually to draw the world's sins into one-people-as-embodied-in-one-human, there to magnify it, and there to crush it, so that "grace may reign in eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord."

Romans 6-8

The Structure of Romans 6

6:1 Question #1, a matter of status: If we stay where we were (united to Adam in the realm of sin, so to speak), won't that enable us to get more grace? Why not, indeed, remain in the place from which we were rescued?

6:2-11 Think about who we are now! Our baptisms have placed us in a new story, *his* story. Because we've left an old solidarity (union with Adam) and joined a new solidarity (union with Christ).

6:12-14 An appeal that applies vv. 2-11 & a promise that bridges to vv. 15-23

6:15 Question #2, a matter of behavior: Since Law's not our boss, can we do *whatever*?

6:16-23 A: Nope! We're under management.

Romans 6

6:1

5:21 had ended with the thought that the "reign" of grace supplants the "reign" of sin. The question Paul now poses is: won't we give God more honor if we remain in sin's dominion, thereby giving God more of an opportunity to come down and rescue us? In fact, Paul says (in 3:8) that he had been accused of teaching that we should "do evil that good may come."

6:2

One of Paul's famously emphatic "No's!" His premise: "This is the kind of people believers are: we have died to sin." The conclusion (obvious to him, and which he thinks should be obvious to us): "How will we live 'in it'?"

6:3-11

OK, but this “dead to sin” thought is new to the argument. Where does it come from? Paul appeals to believers’ baptisms: ... *as many as were baptized into Christ have been baptized into his death*. What Paul unpacks throughout Rom 6 is truths that should be obvious to his readers from what they have experienced in undergoing the drowning waters of baptism.

Sidebar on baptism:

- Noah’s flood — trial by drowning, inheritance of accuser’s estate (Gen 69)
- Moses’s deliverance — Israel’s “redemption” (cf. Rom 3:24) took her across the boundary of death, “into Moses” unto life on the far side where there was a song & a dance (Ex 15))
- Isaiah’s renewing waters/storm of judgment (Isa 35 & 28)
- Jesus’s two baptisms: in the Jordan & on the Cross (Mk 10:38; Lk 12:50)
- Paul
 - Col 1:13-14 — rescue from the dominion of darkness and transferral into the Kingdom of God’s beloved Son
 - Col 2:11-14 — “circumcised with the circumcision of Christ (v. 11)” — Q: How? A: “Buried with Christ in baptism, in which you were also raised with him” (v. 12) ... brought from death to life (vv. 13-14), having a share (so it is implied, I think) in Christ’s triumph over the celestial powers (v. 15)
 - Col 3:5-11 — called to “put off” the old man”; Col 2: 12-14 — called to “put on the new,” called, in essence to put on Christ, who *is* all the attributes of vv. 12-14.

Notice the prepositions “into” (vv. 3,4), “with” (vv. 4,5,6,8), and “in” (vv. 2,11) — what is true of Christ either is now or will be in the future true of us as well. And the whole of our lives is determined by our working that fundamental relationship out. Thus:

- ... so we too may walk in newness of life (6:4)
- ... we will be united to a likeness of his resurrection (6:5)
- ... that we may no longer be slaves of sin (6:6)
- ... we will live with him (6:8)
- ... reckon yourselves dead to sin and alive to God *in* Christ Jesus (v. 11)

6:12-14

So, not only is the call of the gospel not simply that we shouldn’t remain “in sin” that grace may abound; rather, grace calls us, in the words of Cranfield, to “revolt in the name of [our] rightful ruler, God, against sin’s usurping rule” (ICC,

1.317). (Notice the verb “rule”/ “exercise kingship” at 5:14,17,18,21; 6:12; and “to lord over” at 6:9,14; 7:1; 14:9). It’s rather like a call to an uprising of slaves who realize, “Hey, we’re better than this!” (As Paul might say, “I am speaking in human terms.”)

We can revolt against sin because, we’re “not under law but under grace.” Important: Paul’s not against the Law as such (see all his positive statements about the Law, 3:31; 7:12,14a; 8:4; 13:8-10). What he wants us to understand that the Law’s threat against sinners — its curses — have been broken by the Christ’s death and resurrection. Because his death and resurrection are our death and resurrection, the Law holds no terror for us. It does not confront us with an unattainable standard. Now, as forgiven by Christ’s atoning sacrifice and as empowered by the Holy Spirit (which Paul will discuss in ch. 8), we have the power to overthrow sin’s dominion.

6:15

But wait! This “not-under-law-but-under-grace” thing. That’s such an arresting phrase — it sounds like it means: Even if we’re not supposed to live “under sin’s dominion” (per 6:1), our freedom from sin means that sins are immaterial — so we can do whatever we please! Yes?! Well, again, “No, not hardly!”

6:16-23

Overall, and overtured in v. 16: To be “under grace” is to be under a new — if gracious — dominion. You can’t choose whether to serve, you can only choose whom to serve.

6:17

Notice how Paul has to cast his thoughts about being delivered from Adam-slavery to Christ-slavery as prayer — a mystery happens in human hearts, for which the credit has to go to God.

The very awkwardness of phrasing about “that pattern of teaching to which you were committed/entrusted” (most translations have some such) or maybe even better, “... that was handed on to you” (NEB, mg) suggests that when people are joined to Christ, this is not just an ephemeral, totally experiential and subjective thing — they come into a community of people submitted to a common “pattern of teaching” about who Christ is, about what he has done, and what life “in him” looks like.

6:19

Paul realizes the inadequacy of language to get at the incredible, irony-laden truths he’s trying to communicate. What’s hard for us to understand? Well, at

least these things: the slavery-freedom axis (e.g., how our “rule” [remember 5:17] is “servitude” — how we once were “free” relative to “righteousness” [6:20]); and how interchangeable the notions of service “to God” and service “to righteousness” now are (see 6:13,16,18,19,20,22)

6:21-23

Notice how these verses look back to 5:3-5 (what do our tribulations produce?) and ahead to 7:1-6 (what “fruit” do our lives produce?).

The Structure of Romans 7

7:1-6 Paul had said in 6:14, we are “no longer under law but under grace.” Now he explains why: a death has occurred that frees us from any longer being “under the law.”

7:7-12 Is the law sinful? No, the law puts the spotlight on sin.

7:13-25 Well, if the law is good, does it bring me death? No, sin is what worked death in me through the good commandment — that’s what makes sin so utterly awful. Who can rescue me from the tug-of-war between my “inner man” who delights in God’s law and this “alien law” I find in me that goes a different direction? Thanks be to God through Jesus! Herein lies the set up to ch. 8, where Paul celebrates:

- 1. the work of Christ on the Cross, bringing us from under the curse of the law**
- 2. the Holy Spirit in our hearts, bringing us from under the powerlessness of the law, and**
- 3. the love of the Father in securing our destiny and the power of God to bring us to his promise of glory.**

Romans 7

7:1-8:17 (or so)

Paul says he writes to those who “know the law” — he probably means Torah, the Jewish Law. He writes of implications he thinks should be clear (“Or do you not know...?”) of what he has just said about us “not being under law but under grace” (6:14b) and about “God’s gift bringing eternal life in Christ” (6:23).

It seems to me, if readers are tracking with his “from exodus/baptism to promised land/glory” trek, they’ve got to be asking: “But didn’t the giving of the Law after the exodus and before the promised land complicate things? And doesn’t the abiding presence of the law between baptism and glory complicate things in the new covenant situation?”

Paul has actually been setting things up so he can — in ch. 7 and continuing into ch. 8 — talk about the dynamic between “an obedience of faith” (whereby law is positively fulfilled through faith in Christ) and the law’s “increasing the trespass” (whereby the law makes sinners’ situation worse) — how does his gospel “establish the law” in its double-edged sense (3:31)? Chap. 7 is about the latter, and chap. 8 is about the former.

How do we read, then, the Old Testament in such a way as to find there a blessing and not a curse? We have to read it in view of its promise of: a) Christ’s provision for our sin (8:3), and b) the Holy Spirit’s coming to enable us to “walk” (8:4). This is all a part of what it is for “the one justified by faith” ... “to *live*.”

7:1-6

The tricky thing is that the pronoun “you” (referring, of course, to believers) in vv. 1-7 occurs in two senses — in one sense we’re masculine, we’re the “man” who dies in order to be released from an old union to sin and death (because of our solidarity with Adam) ... this “old man” (see Rom 6:6) died with Christ. In another sense, we’re feminine, we’re the woman who survives a husband’s death and is now free to belong to another, to Christ, so as to “bear fruit” to him.

Here’s the point: The baptized Christian, in Paul’s understanding, is no longer “in Adam” (the point of vv. 1-3 and v. 4a) but “in Christ” (the point of v. 4b). Our union with Christ in his death has taken us out of the sphere of Adam where sin and death reigned over us ... the law kept us in that union (“wedding”). In what sense did we die?

6:2, we died to sin

6:3, we were baptized into Christ’s death

6:4, we were buried with him into death

6:5, we were united to the likeness of his death
6:6, the “old man” was co-crucified with Christ
6:8, we died with Christ
6:11, we are urged to reckon ourselves to be dead to sin

We used to be husbands united by the law to sin — but through Christ’s body (7:4), we died — so that marriage is dead. Christ’s death has silenced the law’s threats, so the law doesn’t “govern” us any longer — we’re not “under” its sentence of death any longer.

Now, instead, Paul thinks of us as the bride of Christ (see 2Co 11:2; Eph 5:22-32). This points us back to the image of “fruitbearing” in 6:21-22, only now we see that we’re talking about *childbearing*. And that invites reflection on the difference between a metaphor of management/ownership/slavery (the last half of ch. 6) and a metaphor of marriage/intimacy/companionship (7:1-6).

This thought rather transfigures the whole question of whether to sin or not, of whether to obey or not — it’s about pleasuring our Bridegroom rather than pleasing our Boss!

7:5-6

These verses are reminiscent of 2Co 3:6: “God has made us competent to be ministers of a new covenant, not of the letter but of the Spirit; for the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life.” What has happened in the gospel is that the covenant has been made new — under the old covenant, the law given between the exodus and the promised land did not bring blessing because it could not give the life that it demanded (its sacrifices could only temporarily mask sin; and God’s “Shekinah”-Glory traveled with Israel, but was not a personally indwelling, heart-transforming presence). Under the new covenant (accessible to circumcised and uncircumcised alike — remember 2:28-29!), we have to be able to see how in this period between baptism and glorification, the law blesses — it blesses us because: a) its curses have been broken in Christ’s death for us, securing our forgiveness and securing our access to the Father (8:3), and b) now God’s life-giving, transforming presence abides *in us*, not just *alongside* us (8:4).

7:7-12

In the first place, law is not evil — it is good. As Paul had said back in 5:20-21, God introduced law (the Torah) into the human equation so he could bring sin to full clarity and draw it, eventually, into concentrated expression in Jesus-hanging-on-the-cross —precisely to crush it. Paul amplifies here in 7:7-12 the first part of the law’s function: the good news of the law’s bringing to “my” consciousness the awfulness and the subtlety of sin.

7:13-25

“OK, if the law isn’t bad, it sure is on the side of death — after all, Paul, didn’t you say in 2Co 3:6, that ‘the letter kills?’” Replies Paul, “Thanks for the opportunity to clarify: the death isn’t in the law — the death’s in *me*! Why does it take God-hanging-on-a-tree? Why wasn’t it enough to have God’s glory cloud merely *among* us and *around* us and *alongside* us instead of *in* us? Why won’t we know “full adoption” until Christ returns? Because there’s a fundamental warp to who we are — that’s what the law shows us. But, thanks be to God, the law doesn’t have the final say!”

“So what’s?” of 7:7-25:

For Gentile believers:

1. a lesson on how to read ourselves into Israel’s story
2. an angle of vision on how the OT should reveal to us how deep the heart problem (see Rom 1) was and is — a truth for which nothing in our pagan backgrounds could have prepared them
3. an appreciation for the sensitivity of conscience that our Jewish Christian brothers and sisters would have toward their, and, well, maybe especially *our* sinfulness
4. a compassion for rather than arrogance towards nonchristian Jews who don’t “get it” about the tensions within the OT meta-narrative that can only be resolved in Christ

For Jewish believers:

1. a more circumspect view of ourselves — we must see that “the Law” that we are so quick to invoke against Christians of pagan background (i.e., those who’ve come to ascendancy in the Roman churches in our absence) should make us a broken and not a prideful people — as “elder brothers” in the faith, maybe we should be a bit more patient
 2. a profoundly tender heart toward our nonchristian countymen: “Dear God, how touched we are by the plight of our kinfolk (our fellow Jews) who know only the first exodus and not the second — how united we are with Paul (see 9:1-5) in our affections for our lost kin.”
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Romans 8

8:1-11 — Life through the Son & the Spirit

Paul is parsing the transition from “sin’s reign in death” to “grace’s reign through righteousness to eternal life in Christ” (5:20-21); and most immediately Paul is picking back up the line of thought he had initiated at 7:5-6: what it means for us who have been *freed* from the condemnation of the law is that we are now enabled to *serve* in the newness of the Spirit.

8:1

now. See also 3:21; 5:9,11; 6:19,22; 7:6. The endtimes negative verdict against sin (“condemnation”) will not come in against “those in Christ Jesus” because of what God has done for them “in Christ Jesus” in the “now.” Verse 2 explains **why**. Verse 3 explains **how**. And verse 4 explains the “**so what?**”

8:2 — Why there’s no condemnation ...

Remember, Paul has been writing this section to “those who know the law,” meaning, I think, both Jews for whom the biblical narrative has shaped their self-understanding all their lives (“out of faith,” 3:30)and Gentiles who have recently stepped into that story (“through faith,” 3:30).

For the law of the Spirit of life ... from the law of sin and of death. The law’s (the Torah’s) true intent had been to offer life and to point to the age of the Spirit — (2:15,29; 3:21b; 7:10,14 — see Deut 10:16; 30:6,15). The law’s (the Torah’s) negative function of locking us all “under sin” was temporary (Rom 3:20; 4:15; 5:13,20; 6:14,20; 7:5, 7-25). Christ’s coming has effected a switch in the law’s administration — its curse function has ended, because the blessing it promised (the Messianic sin-offering and the regime of the Spirit) has now arrived. (In a sense, by the way, the letter to the Galatians is an extended argument based on this premise.)

in Christ Jesus has set you free. Those who by faith are united to Christ in his death and resurrection and have been indwelt by the Holy Spirit — they have been brought out of the Egypt of sin and death, and they have been promised citizenship in the kingdom of life (to borrow phrasing from NTW).

8:3 — How there’s no condemnation ...

God himself did what the law could never do — break sin’s power.

his own Son. See 8:32, and compare with Gal 4:4 (there simply, “his Son”). *His own Son* is Paul’s version of John’s “only begotten Son” (John 3:16). It’s Paul’s way of pointing to Jesus Christ’s pre-existence and divinity — see also Rom 9:5.

The sending of the Son condemns sin at sin’s strongest point, “the flesh” (3x).
The sending of the Son breaks sin’s power in three respects:

- *in the likeness of sinful flesh* — the incarnation itself as the beginning of the restoration of our humanity ... Jesus’s life of obedience to his Father’s will (Rom 5:19; Php 2:5-11 — see Luke 3:38-4:13) ... the one obedient son of Adam (Luke 3:38-4:13), the singularly faithful seed of Abraham (Gal 3:16), the only true Israelite (Ex 4:22; Hos 1:10; 11:1; Isa 1:2; Gal 4:1-7), the uniquely “begotten” royal Son of David (Ps 2:7; Rom 1:4-5) who lived perfectly the terms of the covenant (perhaps the “faith of Jesus” verses, 3:22,25-26 — see also Gal 2:20; Php 3:9).
- *in the likeness of sinful flesh* — the whole redemptive design that begins with the separation of a seed of promise (Seth’s line over Cain’s, Abraham from out of Ur of the Chaldees, Jacob over Esau, Israel from out of the nations) was to concentrate sin into One who could stand in for all the rest of humankind and take the full measure of punishment. Note the “where” of 5:20 — “*where* sin increased, grace abounded all the more” — that “where” was ultimately Calvary, where Isa 53’s Suffering Servant hung, “pierced for our transgressions ... to justify the many” (with Rom 4:25, compare Isa 53:4-6,11-12).
- *and for sin*. Of course, Jesus comes to deal with sin in a general sense — Paul has already spoken of Jesus being offered up as a “propitiating sacrifice” (3:25), satisfying God’s wrath against sin. But here, Paul uses a most interesting phrase to talk about Jesus’s sacrifice, “for sin” (*peri hamartia*). In Lev 5:7-8; 6:25 (MT/LXX 6:18) this phrase refers to the “guilt offering” as opposed to the “whole burnt offering” (the propitiatory sacrifice) or the “scapegoat” (the expiatory sacrifice). The “guilt offering” is for unintentional, against-my-own-will sins — precisely the kind of sins that have provoked the inner anxiety of Rom 7:14-25. In other words, Christ’s sacrifice is so exhaustive that it takes care of the subtlest as well as the most obvious of our sins — the ones we can easily walk away from and the ones that will afflict us all the days of our lives. No matter how trifling, no matter how ginormous, they’ve been handled. How cool is that? (Sorry for the theological jargon!)

8:4 — The “so what?”

With our sin problem taken care of, the Spirit of God indwells us and enables a “walk” that fulfills the “just requirement of the law.” In a word, now it’s possible to “seek glory, honor and immortality” (2:7) without fear of condemnation due to

failure. Now the commandments don't bring death, but they do what their deepest intention was: shine the light on the path of *life* (7:10).

We're given the power to live "according to the Spirit" and not "according to the flesh"



From Riley to Ty Cobb

8:5-11 — simply a commentary on that dynamic.

The residence of the Holy Spirit in us *is* "Christ dwelling within us" (v. 10), for as Paul had written the Corinthians, "The Last Adam became Life-giving Spirit" (1Co 15:45. Luke had unpacked this in terms of Jesus ascending to the Father, receiving the Holy Spirit, and pouring the Holy Spirit out on the church — that's what Pentecost was all about (Acts 1:8; 2:33).

Jesus had promised in the Upper Room: just as the Spirit had been "with them" (empowering Jesus's ministry), now that Jesus was going to the Father, the Spirit would be "in them" (John 14:17) — the result would be a co-indwelling of Christ and his followers just like the co-indwelling of the Father and the Son: "I in my Father and you in me and I in you" (John 14:20).

To put it in terms of the exodus story: the Shekinah-Glory no longer dwells alongside the camp, but in the very hearts of those who are in the camp.

8:12-17 — **From debtors to sons — the Spirit bears witness to a sonship-established**

We owe Egypt nothing — there there was only slavery (revisiting themes of Rom 6). There's no going back.

Instead, Paul puts before us a different path (though he opens with the idea of “obligation,” he only states the negative, merely implying the positive).

8:13

We’re called, as NTW nicely says, “to see the death-bound inclinations of the present body for what they are, and to anticipate the verdict of the grave by putting them to death here and now.” See Col 3:5-11 — we’re “to say ‘no’ to the practices that carry the smell of death with them.”

8:14-16

As Israel was called to follow the pillar of cloud and fire, we are called to follow the Spirit (compare Exod 13:21-22, etc.).

The “sonship” that Israel pictured is now ours (Exod 4:22, “Tell Pharaoh, ... ‘Israel is my son, my firstborn’”; Isa 1:2; Hos 1:10; 11:1, “Out of Egypt I called my son”) — witnessed to not *just* corporately, externally, transiently, but personally, internally, and permanently.

Jesus’s “Abba, Father” in the Garden of Gethsemane (Mark 14:36) implied the deepest and most personal of relationships. The Holy Spirit has given us a share in that same deep and personal sense of sonship.

8:17

If we have come to share Christ’s sonship (as our prayer with him, “Abba, Father,” implies), it means we also share in his incredibly glorious inheritance. But we need to understand that just as his path was cruciform, so is ours: “If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. For whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake and the gospel’s will save it” (Mark 8:34-35).

8:18-25 — the Spirit prompts an urgent longing for our sonship-completed.

Remember 5:3-5? Suffering itself is a cause for celebration because it produces endurance, proven character, and a hope-that-will-not-shame-us — for “the love of God” has been poured out in our hearts. Paul is now about to close the loop: hope and patience (8:25) will see us all the way to glory — when we have finally been conformed to the image of God’s son (8:29) we will come into the fulness of our adoption (the redemption/resurrection of our bodies, and the whole of creation (the venue of our sufferings) will itself be liberated from its “slavery to corruption,” and there will be a new heavens and a new earth, where we will reign in everlasting life.

Now, Paul gives us perspective on why it is that it hurts so much between here and there — it's precisely because in the Endtime Spirit's indwelling, we've been given a foretaste of final glory (8:23). Through it all, the Father's and the Son's love will sustain us (8:35,39).

8:26-27 — The Spirit's help in our weakness

God's people are a kingdom of priests (Ex 19:6; 1Pt 2:9; Rev 1:6), gifted with a Spirit of grace & supplication (Zch 12:10) — the Spirit here as the earthly presence of Jesus in his ongoing High Priestly ministry of intercession (as conceived of by the writer to the Hebrews — see Heb 7:25).

8:28-30 — The Father's electing love

those who love God. Paul thinks of believers as those who truly, from the heart, fulfill Israel's "Shema": "Hear, O Israel ... you shall love the Lord" — theirs is "an obedience of faith."

called according to God's purpose ... to be conformed to the image of his Son. The whole purpose of God's redemptive plan is to sum up all things in his Son (Col 1:15-20; Eph 1:10), and to reflect his own glory out into the world that he is reclaiming through his reclaimed image-bearers (see Eph 1:11-12; 1Pt 2:9).

What we experience in the process of being conformed to the image of God's Son:

- a Spirit-led "walk," putting to death the deeds "the old man" who has died (8:4,14; ch. 6)
- a Spirit-enabled assurance/witness/confession that we are children (8:16-17)
- Spirit-prompted "endurance" in suffering (8:17-25)
- Spirit-aided "interceding/groaning" (8:26-27)

What God the Father does in the process of conforming us to the image of his Son:

- foreknows — this is knowledge, not as in having information about, but as in being intimate with, as in "Adam knew Eve and she conceived and gave birth ..." (Gen 4:1; see Gen 18:19; Jer 1:5; Amos 3:2; Gal 4:9 [cf. Mt 7:23]; 1Co 8:3)
- predestines — paralleling in us what God has done with Jesus himself — note the linguistic parallels between 1:4, where Jesus is "appointed" (*horizein*) Son-of-God-in-power by his resurrection, and 8:29, where we are "pre-appointed" (*pro + horizein*) to be conformed to his image
- calls — what happens inside us when we hear the gospel, and "get it" (1Th 1:4-5; 2Th 2:13-14) — when we "get it," it's a God-thing

- justifies
- glorifies

8:31-39 — If God so loves us ...?

If God has so bonded his people to himself—as in chs. 5-8), “what then shall we say to these things?!?!” Paul hurls into the face of his imagined interlocutor five questions the apostle considers to be unanswerable:

- “If God is for us, who is against us?” (v. 31b)
- “If God wouldn’t even withhold his own Son, is there anything else he wouldn’t provide?” (v. 32)
- “If God acquits/vindicates his elect, who will charge them with anything?” (v. 33)
- “If Christ is our advocate, who can condemn us?” (v. 34).
- “If such love (vv. 35,39) has taken hold of us (reading these as subjective genitives), what could possibly separate us from it?”