

# The Source of the Believer's Hope: An Analysis of Romans 8:26-39

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## Introduction

Recent events have shaken our nation's sense of security. We are now rallying behind our leaders' plans to retaliate against terrorist activity. In addition, each of us faces adverse circumstances (financial concerns, medical difficulties, family problems, etc.) that threaten our peace of mind. However, believers in Jesus Christ are not alone as they face the world's problems. Rather, we have great cause for hope—a positive confidence in God.

The word *hope* appears 6 times in Romans 8 (see below). The latter portion of the chapter (vv. 26-39) explains the basis for the believer's hope, though it does not actually use the word. An analysis of this text makes it very clear that the Christian hope is grounded in God Himself. Indeed, our hope resides in all three persons of the Triune God.

<sup>16</sup> The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God:

<sup>17</sup> And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together.

<sup>18</sup> For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.

<sup>19</sup> For the earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God.

<sup>20</sup> For the creature was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of him who hath subjected the same in **hope**,

<sup>21</sup> Because the creature itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God.

<sup>22</sup> For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now.

<sup>23</sup> And not only they, but ourselves also, which have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body.

<sup>24</sup> For we are saved by **hope**: but **hope** that is seen is not **hope**: for what a man seeth, why doth he yet **hope** for?

<sup>25</sup> But if we **hope** for that we see not, then do we with patience wait for it.

## The Spirit's Intercession

<sup>26</sup> Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered.

<sup>27</sup> And he that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because he maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God.

The problems that are in view in these verses are our own infirmities—our inherent frailty, weakness, and feebleness. The solution that is presented is the Holy Spirit’s intercession on our behalf. *Intercession* is defined as “pleading with one party on behalf of another, usually with a view to obtaining help for that other” (Wallace 858). It is comforting for the Christian to know that even when life is so confusing that we do not know what to pray for, the Holy Spirit is pleading for us according to God’s will.

## God’s Sovereignty

<sup>28</sup> And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.

<sup>29</sup> For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren.

<sup>30</sup> Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified.

No specific problems are identified here. Rather, it is simply stated that “all things work together for good to them that love God” (v. 28). No circumstance in the Christian’s life escapes God’s watchful eye. If we are indeed God’s children, we can be sure that whatever comes our way will further His purpose in our lives. His purpose is revealed here—that we might “be conformed to the image of his Son” (v. 29). In other words, we can trust that all of life—though it may appear to be meaningless, out of control, or hopelessly evil—is in God’s sovereign hand and will ultimately serve good ends.

God intends for life to drive us to become more like Christ. Indeed, He will see us through the entire process of salvation. Those whom He foreknew to be His children will ultimately be glorified in His presence.

## Christ’s Love

<sup>31</sup> What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us?

<sup>32</sup> He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?

<sup>33</sup> Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God’s elect? It is God that justifieth.

<sup>34</sup> Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us.

<sup>35</sup> Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?

<sup>36</sup> As it is written, For thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter.

<sup>37</sup> Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us.

<sup>38</sup> For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come,

<sup>39</sup> Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

A variety of adverse circumstances are in view here—distress, persecution, and famine, to name a few (v. 25). Once again we are comforted with the fact that “in all these things we are more than conquerors” (v. 37). We are overcomers, not through our own abilities, but through God’s love.

The emphasis of this entire passage is “the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord” (v. 39). Absolutely nothing can separate us from Christ’s love (vv. 35-39). God, who did not spare His own Son in the pursuit of our salvation, will certainly take care of all our needs (v. 32). And if God is on our side, no one can defeat us (v. 31).

## Work Cited

Wallace, Ronald Stewart. “Intercession.” *The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia*. Ed. Geoffrey W. Bromiley. 4 vols. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1979-88.