

we seem to act in ways that are out of character to our real selves.

To all such strugglers there is a word of hope: What you are going through is not unique. Even the great apostle Paul went through such experiences. There is hope of recovery. Christ has made provision for such situations. As Paul experienced victory, so can we. We can live as people who have been sanctified.

We must first reckon ourselves as people who are dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus. That is our true nature. Sin is the exception, and not the norm. Such faith will give us the courage and confidence to yield ourselves completely to God.

When temptation comes, this faith tells us we are victors in Christ, and so we have the courage and confidence to yield to God the part of the body facing temptation. This is not done alone through some herculean effort on our part; we are in union with Christ. He has gone before us in crucifying himself. Now we are asked to be co-crucified with him. He is with us in the struggle.

Therefore, when we think of life we don't think of it as a great struggle. Rather, we say, "For to me, to live is Christ." May God grant such an experience to each of us!

## BIBLE STUDIES ON ROMANS 6-8

### The Spirit-Filled Life

Ajith Fernando

The eighth chapter of Romans describes the Spirit-filled life. It is a gold mine of spiritual truth and could cover a whole series of expositions. Instead, we will focus on the last major section which deals with suffering.

#### The Spirit-filled Life (8:1-17)

The first seventeen verses of chapter 8 describes what it means to be filled with the Holy Spirit. This fullness is God's answer to the problem of how we can be holy.

In this chapter, Paul affirms life through the Spirit. We have freedom from an accusing conscience because we have been freed from the control of sin (vv. 1-2). This victory over sin was secured for us through the work of Christ (v. 3). And the righteous requirements of the law can be fully met in us (v. 4). As F. F. Bruce says, "God's commands have now become God's enablings." We can live holy lives. This means our minds are controlled by the Spirit. And the result of this is life and peace (vv. 5-6).

In this way, Paul gives affirmation after affirmation of what the Spirit does in us.

#### Suffering and the Spirit-filled Life (8:17-39)

The Holy Spirit witnesses to us about the great heritage we have as children of God (vv. 14-16). Paul says that as children we are heirs to a heavenly inheritance. Immediately after mentioning the heavenly reward, Paul presents the fact that suffering is a prerequisite for inheriting this reward.

"Now if we are children, then we are heirs—heirs of God and coheirs with Christ, if indeed we share in his sufferings in order that we may also share in his glory" (v. 17). For the second time, Paul brings up the topic of suffering in this book. Both times we see a familiar pattern: a long process of argumentation, climaxing with a major theological affirmation, and then the inevitable question: *Why do Christians have to suffer?*

Paul argued for the affirmation that justification is by faith in chapters 1-4. Then in chapter 5, he tackled the question of suffering. He said that suffering is God's way of helping us along the path to glorification. In chapters 6 and 7, he grappled with the question of whether people can be holy. He came to the climax of his argument in chapter 8 with another great theological affirmation: The key to holiness is the Spirit-filled life. Then he returns to the question, *Why do people who are filled with the Spirit suffer?*

The victory we have in Christ is the great message we give to the world. Confidence in that victory gives us the courage to tackle the problem of suffering. We don't glibly preach power and prosperity in Christ and ignore all the suffering in the world. In fact,

we affirm that we are called to participate in this suffering—to taste some of its bitter cup.

Paul gives a fivefold answer to the question as to how suffering can coexist with the Spirit-filled life.

### Sharing in Christ's Suffering (8:17)

His first answer is given almost in passing in verse 17, when he says that when we suffer “we share in his [Christ's] sufferings.” Because Christ is a suffering Savior, those who follow him must also suffer. Suffering is an essential ingredient of union with Christ. Paul expressed a desire to know “the fellowship of sharing in his [Christ's] sufferings” (Philippians 3:10). There is a depth of oneness that we share with Christ which can only be achieved when we are one with him in suffering.

Paul found out about this at the start of his Christian life on the road to Damascus when Christ asked him, “Why do you persecute me?” (Acts 9:4). Paul was attacking the church, but Christ was feeling the pain. Christ and the church had become one in suffering.

The fullness of the Spirit is not simply some ecstatic experience that we have only when things are going our way. Paul affirms that we can be filled with the Spirit amidst the darkness of suffering, too. The heart of the fullness of the Spirit is having an intimate relationship with Jesus, and for that, suffering is an essential ingredient.

Acts 7:54 says that Stephen's opponents “were furious and gnashed their teeth at him.” The most creative theologian in the church was about to undergo a painful martyrdom. “But Stephen, full of the Holy Spirit, looked up to heaven and saw the glory of God” (v. 55). He was full of the Spirit as he was awaiting the painful blows of the stones. Stephen had entered into the fellowship of Christ's sufferings. This fellowship reached its peak when he was going through his darkest hour. He first had a vision of Christ (vv. 55–56). Then he began to say some of the same things that Jesus said when he was on the cross. He asked God not to hold this sin against his murderers (v. 60). And he asked God to receive his spirit (v. 59). He had become like Jesus when he suffered. And to become like Jesus is what it means to be filled with the Spirit.

When we suffer for Christ, Christ suffers with us. There is a depth of unity with Christ that can come only through suffering. There have been times when Christians, in their thirst for a deep unity with Christ, desire the fellowship of sharing in Christ's sufferings. This is the desire that Paul expressed in Philippians 3:10. A vivid instance of this is from the life of Ignatius, Bishop of Antioch in Syria, who lived at the end of the second century. He asked the church not to attempt to deprive him of the honor of martyrdom. He said, “Let fire and the cross, let the companies of wild beasts, let breaking of bones and tearing of limbs, let the grinding of the whole body, and all the malice of the devil, come upon me; if only I may gain Christ Jesus.”

An implication of this passage is that suffering is not optional for a few Christians. It is an essential ingredient of following Christ. If this is so, suffering must come into our basic descriptions of the Christian life. When Christ called people to follow him, he asked them to take up the cross of suffering. Therefore, this ingredient must enter into our evangelistic proclamation also. Honesty requires us to inform people about the life they are to expect when they come to Christ.

### Hoping for the Redemption of Creation (8:17–25)

Paul's next point in his discussion of suffering is that our suffering is born from the perspective of looking forward to the final redemption of creation.

Paul says, “We share in his sufferings in order that we may also share in his glory”

(v. 17). Note those words, *in order that*. F. F. Bruce points out that “there is an organic relation between suffering and future glory.” If we hope to share in the future glory, we must be willing to share in present suffering.

In verse 18, Paul says, “I consider that our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us.” Note that this glory is going to “be revealed,” not created. This is not just some faint hope that we have. Christ has risen from the dead. And his resurrection is the firstfruits of our resurrection (1 Corinthians 15:20). He is now enthroned above; he has already been glorified. But this glory is still to be fully revealed. The kingdom has come, now we await its consummation. We have been “marked in him with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit, who is a deposit guaranteeing our inheritance until the redemption of those who are God's possession” (Ephesians 1:13–14).

The suffering that God calls many to today may include failure in society, because they refused to compromise their principles. This is hard to take, especially as we see others doing better than us financially, socially, or in terms of ecclesiastical status.

But there is a logic behind this suffering. This does not come from a masochistic desire to experience pain. We don't suffer only because it is a fulfilling of our duty as Christians. The choice of the cup of suffering is a carefully calculated choice of a wise person. There is wisdom here, and not folly, as is often supposed. The Christian has weighed the options, and has decided that suffering for Christ is the wisest course to take. It is the best investment to make; the investment is secure and the yield is good. These are the two factors a prudent market analyst would look for when recommending an investment—security and yield.

Recently, many people in Sri Lanka lost their savings because they invested their money in unstable establishments. These investments gave a very high interest for a time but they crashed and the high yield was temporary. Not so the investment made through costly discipleship. It will produce a huge yield in heaven, and there is no uncertainty to it. It lasts forever.

Verse 19 presents the coming Judgment in a positive light. “The creation waits in eager expectation for the sons of God to be revealed.” “Eager expectation” is one word in the Greek. The basic idea of the word is “stretching the neck or craning forward.” It refers to an anxious longing for the end.

Note that the longing is attributed to the creation. It seems most likely that what Paul meant here is the subhuman creation, what we would call *nature*. This is another of the many passages in the Bible which shows that nature is not exempt from God's plan of redemption. God has not abandoned this world as hopelessly irredeemable. On the contrary, he has a plan for its glorification.

What creation waits for eagerly is “for the sons of God to be revealed.” The chief characters in the cosmic drama are the children of God. At the moment we may be insignificant, often despised, for our commitment to God. But the God we are committed to will be the final conqueror of the universe. At his conquest our status will be revealed.

It is significant that Paul uses the word *revealed*. It suggests what we know in our hearts to be true is going to be made public. We are princes and princesses in the kingdom of God and we will reign with him when he comes in glory.

This is a particularly significant feature for those who come from countries where Christianity is a minority religion. Our distinguished service for the kingdom wins no praise from the powers that rule. They may regard our work as being destructive to the national life of the people. We do not need public-relations agents to publicize what we are doing. Publicity may be harmful for us. At times it is better that this work be done

quietly without attracting much attention. But one day this work is going to be revealed. Then recognition will be given—not the passing earthly accolades that sometimes don't even survive our lifetime, but a crown of glory that lasts forever. A great reward will be given in the final day to those who persevere.

Verse 20 describes what happened to creation: "For the creation was subjected to frustration, not by its own choice, but by the will of the one who subjected it, in hope . . ." In Genesis 3, we are told that even the ground was cursed because of the Fall. The whole of nature lost its equilibrium. There is still beauty there, but there are also destructive storms, terrible droughts, and a host of other natural disorders. Therefore, at the present time, as Ecclesiastes 1:2 and 12:8 says, everything under the sun is utterly meaningless. The Greek word translated as "frustration," is what is used often in Ecclesiastes in the Septuagint (Greek translation). It appears thirty-seven times in Ecclesiastes and is translated as "meaningless" in the NIV and "vanity" in the AV.

"The creation was subjected to frustration." "Was subjected" is in the aorist tense, suggesting that it was a distinct event. If so, this must refer to the Fall. Paul says the subjection was done "not by its own choice, but by the will of the one who subjected it." This refers to the curse when God decreed the world would suffer the effects of the Fall. But this decree was made "in hope" (v. 20). As Leon Morris puts it: "The cosmic fall is not the last word; the last word is with hope." The Creator is going to redeem his creation.

Verse 21 states what this hope is: "The creation itself will be liberated from its bondage to decay and brought into the glorious freedom of the children of God." Revelation 22:3 looks to the day when "no longer will there be any curse." This verse reflects the same hope, but verse 21 describes it as liberation from "bondage to decay." Death and decay are found all around us as one of the realities of the present age.

According to this verse, when the creation is changed to its glorious state, it is not going to be annihilated. Paul says "the creation itself will be liberated." It is going to be transformed rather than annihilated. In this transformation it will receive a glory that corresponds to the glory that we are going to receive.

Our eternal home will contain the good things about the present creation in a perfected state but without its decay. It is not going to be a strange place with an "otherworldliness" that some find unattractive to consider. It will be a place of beauty, of the type of beauty we have come to appreciate. But this beauty will be perfect. Because of our mortality, all pleasure on earth is temporary and incomplete. Not so heaven! Indeed, this is why there is such an eager longing in us as we look forward to it.

This longing is described as a groaning in verse 22: "We know that the whole creation has been groaning as in the pains of childbirth right up to the present time." Two vivid words are used here. The first *sustenazo* is translated "groaning" and has the idea of lamenting. The second word *sunodino* is used for the pains of childbirth. This brings in the idea of anticipation into the travail. This groaning and travail is going on even now. Paul says it is taking place "right up to the present time." It is a day-to-day experience in this present age.

There is lament, but it is a lament of one who knows the pain is going to end. It is lament tinged with hope. It is like the lament of a person whose beloved has left the country for an extended period of time. The separation is hard to bear, but one day there is going to be a glorious reunion.

This groaning is experienced not only by the sub-human creation, it is a factor in the experience of the average Christian, too. "Not only so, but we ourselves, who have the

firstfruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for our adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies" (v. 23). His language here is significant. We are people who "have the firstfruits of the Spirit." That is, we have tasted of the Spirit's fullness. What we have experienced is a foretaste of glory divine. It tells us of the glory of sonship—of having an intimate relationship with God.

What we have experienced of this relationship gives us a longing for the fullness. So, says Paul, "We groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for our adoption as sons."

On that day we will also experience "the redemption of our bodies." Today, our bodies give evidence of mortality. They are susceptible to illness and aging. Our resurrection bodies will not have these limitations of mortality.

There is a dual theological emphasis in this passage. On the one hand, there is a healthy view of creation that sees it as something that is going to be redeemed and not annihilated. This world is made of "stuff" that is not intrinsically bad. This gives us the courage to persevere in costly service on earth. We do not view the world as a place abandoned by God. Rather, it is the arena of God's activity now. Thus, it should be the arena of our service now.

Yet at the same time, the Christian is realistic about the limits of what can be achieved on earth. The world is suffering from the consequences of the Fall. We cannot expect a utopia here. This world is groaning, waiting for its redemption. We will serve faithfully and sacrificially, but we will not expect our final rewards and comforts here. On earth we are groaning, waiting eagerly for the return of our Lord. The idea of waiting eagerly for the consummation is a common theme in the New Testament. Our greatest ambitions in life are related to the next life. Here we labor and toil to bring eternal blessing to as many as we can. There we will rest from our labors.

Is this groaning reflected in our preaching today? Is the healthy disdain for earthly reward that Paul constantly reflects in his writings reflected in our thinking and our ministries? When Paul returned to the new churches he had helped to found, his message was: "We must go through many hardships to enter the kingdom of God" (Acts 14:22).

Preachers today may hesitate to preach on such themes because members of their congregations may feel uncomfortable with the message. This worldly preaching is attracting large crowds today. If we promise people groaning and travail in this life they may go to another church. This would be considered a failure for the preacher who will go down the ecclesiastical "status ladder" as a result. That is a cost that some find too big to pay.

If contemporary Christians say they are groaning, waiting for the return of Christ, we would probably pronounce them as unsuitable for ministry because they have too negative an attitude to life. Jeremiah would fail most of our tests for ministry. But the fact is that our roots are in the next world. And this is what makes it possible for us to be willing to suffer loss in this world for the sake of our ministry.

It is people with this perspective who will be able to persevere in difficult settings. They won't give up and go elsewhere because their gifts are not being fully used. The topic of fulfillment is one of the latest fads in ministerial education. We are encouraged to go to places of ministry where we can be fulfilled. And fulfillment is understood as the use of our gifts to the fullest. There is some truth here. But with too much of this kind of emphasis we will have a generation of disillusioned Christian workers. They will expect the wrong rewards from ministry, rewards developed using this-worldly criteria.

Consider the example of the call to go to the unreached or to difficult places of ministry. One will not see much "earthly" fulfillment and success in that type of work, especially during the first few years. You may be a great preacher, but if you go to the

unreached, at the start you would have a congregation of one person—yourself! Is that a price worth paying? History tells us that it was indeed worth it. Some of the men and women the world considered most brilliant and talented went to the unreached and worked amidst hardship and frustration. They saw little fruit during their lifetimes, but today there are churches all over the world as evidence of the fruit of their labors.

This does not imply that those who go to difficult areas are not fulfilled. There is a deep fulfillment that comes from doing the will of God. It is only when we do the will of God that we are fully human. And to be fully human is to be complete, to be fulfilled. There is the great peace and joy of moving along the stream of God's sovereignty, the stream which will culminate in the consummation of the eternal kingdom.

Many contemporary strategies to determine the will of God ignore the call to suffer. They have forgotten that our rewards are in heaven. Often people make a decision aimed at going up in this life. But in reality, that decision takes them down. They have gotten disoriented, their thinking is so far removed from God's ways of thinking that they don't realize they are going down. Often people who are doing God's will are disillusioned because they seem to be lacking in earthly success. They need to be reminded that the final reckoning about the significance of their work will be revealed not in this life but in the next.

We must not be surprised when we encounter suffering, for we are people who groan in this life. We have a whole eternity to enjoy rest from and rewards for our labors.

One of the key concepts in the heavenly perspective is that of hope. "For in this hope we were saved" (v. 24). This hope had a big part to play in our salvation. "We were saved" is in the aorist tense, indicating that it is an act that took place in the past. When we were saved we experienced some great blessings. But we knew these were only a foretaste of the heavenly blessing. Hope is one of the things that attracts us to Christianity.

There is an eschatological element to the basic evangelistic message. We invite people to come to Jesus and receive many blessings such as freedom from guilt, fulfillment in life, the presence of God with us, and the power of the Holy Spirit at work in us. But we also point them to eschatological blessings whose attractiveness far outweighs the attractiveness of the present blessings. We tell people that if they come to Christ, then they will avert the eternal punishment of hell and will inherit the eternal reward of heaven.

I have just completed writing a book on the doctrine of hell. A number of those whom I talked to about this book told me that the thing which ultimately resulted in their conversion was the prospect of going either to heaven or to hell. That is just one evidence that the hope of reward in the afterlife is still an important and relevant aspect of the Christian gospel. In verse 24, Paul says the prospect of avoiding hell and inheriting heaven was a significant feature of the gospel which the Roman Christians accepted.

Heaven and hell seem to have disappeared from modern preaching. That makes the evangelistic message incomplete. Missing a key aspect of the gospel impoverishes the church. This "worldly" preaching has produced a plague of selfishness and worldliness in today's church.

In the second part of verse 24, Paul states that Christian hope has to do with the future: "But hope that is seen is not hope at all. Who hopes for what he already has?" Hope in the Christian gospel indicates that we have not yet experienced the full blessings of salvation.

Verse 25 gives an implication of living in hope: "But if we hope for what we do not yet have, we wait for it patiently." We wait for what we hope patiently. The Greek word

translated "patiently" is *hupomone*. It does not mean what usually comes to our mind when we think of patience. What usually comes to our mind is of people stoically enduring hardship with a passive acceptance of circumstances. Christian patience is positive endurance, rather than a quiet acceptance. Leon Morris says, "It is the attitude of the soldier who in the thick of the battle is not dismayed but fights on stoutly whatever the difficulties."

Recently, the Christian hope of heaven fell into disrepute because of what we may call the "pie-in-the-sky-in-the-world-by-and-by" religion. It was like an opiate which lulled people to acquiescence amidst hardship, to a fatalistic acceptance of injustice. They did not fight for legitimate rights because they were assured of a home in heaven for which they waited in eager anticipation. This is not Christian hope. Christian hope is the hope of a soldier enduring in the heat of battle.

We need to redeem the concept of future reward and give it its biblical thrust. Christian hope motivates us to service on earth. It gives us a sense of mission and of militancy. It convinces us that the price of trying to apply kingdom principles in this fallen world is worth paying. And so it helps us persevere in service amidst hardship.

Verses 17–25 gives an "eschatological perspective" on suffering. It reminds us that our sufferings are temporary. We now live in hope, persevering in obedience and spurred on by the prospect of a day of final redemption of ourselves and of the whole creation.

### **The Spirit Helps Us in Our Weakness (8:26–27)**

But hope is not all we have to cheer us amidst hardship. Paul says that the Spirit is there to help us as we face the limitations of our weaknesses (vv. 26–27). This is Paul's second point in his answer to the paradox of suffering and the Spirit-filled life.

### **God Will Fulfill His Purpose for Us (8:28–30)**

The fourth point in Paul's exposition on suffering and the Spirit-filled life is presented in verses 28–30. There may be problems, but through it all God is at work and will achieve good even through the problems.

Paul defines that good in verses 29 and 30. The final goal is glorification. When we are glorified, one of the most important things about us is that we will be like Jesus. As Paul puts it, we were "predestined to be conformed to the likeness of his Son." But this is not going to be a new nature that is suddenly invested on us. Daily, God is making us more and more Christlike. That is the goodness which God strives to achieve through all things. Even suffering is a means of doing that in us. Because God has implanted in us a thirst for holiness, the knowledge that the suffering is going to be a means of God achieving this ambition of ours help make the suffering bearable.

But there is an even more pleasant consideration for us to think about regarding our sufferings. Paul's fifth point on suffering and the Spirit-filled life is that amidst the suffering, God is for us.

### **God Is for Us (8:31–38)**

Five great affirmations that are all related to the fact that God is for us are contained in verses 31–38. First, if God is for us, no one can be against us; that implies that no one can defeat us. Second, in view of the fact that God expressed his commitment to us in sacrificing his own Son, we can rest assured that he will give us all the things that we need. Third, the accusations that people may bring against us are of no consequence because we have been justified by virtue of the sufficient work of Christ, and we have this same Christ as our advocate in the only court that really matters—the heavenly court.

Fourth, nothing can separate us from the love of Christ. And fifth, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us.

Paul does not end this section with his fifth point. He goes back to his fourth point that nothing can separate us from the love of Christ, and he repeats it with even greater emphasis than before. He wants to end the section with this favorite theme of his, which is a key to the Christian's response to suffering: the love of God.

For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord" (vv. 38–39).

Suffering is not a pleasant word—but love is. If there is love in our hearts we can experience beauty amidst the ugliness of suffering. The beauty of the Spirit-filled life is that there is such love which helps us face suffering. In Romans 5:5 (TEB), Paul said that "God's love has flooded our inmost heart." When love floods our inmost heart, it washes away the bitterness that may have come into our lives because of suffering.

To be filled with the Spirit is to have a love relationship with God. Nothing brings true radiance to a person's life as much as love does. And we are people who have been loved. People may have been wicked to us, but God's love is greater than man's wickedness. The pain of that wickedness may remain, but love takes away the bitterness of it. Amidst the pain, we are radiant.

In the early centuries when Christians were severely persecuted, a martyr was smiling as he was being burned at the stake. His persecutor was annoyed by his smile and asked him what there was to be smiling about. He replied, "I saw the glory of God and was glad." The pain of the flames, the anger of the opponents of the gospel, had not separated him from the love of Christ.

Paul begins and ends this discussion of suffering by talking about the primacy of our relationship with Christ. In verse 17, he said we share in Christ's suffering, which is an affirmation of the fellowship of suffering. He ends by saying that nothing can separate us from our love relationship with Christ. This implies that when trials come our way, we should make it our first priority to cultivate our love relationship with God. We must look for a solution for the problem, but that is not what's most important. Our priority is to maintain our love relationship with God.

Psalm 42 begins with the words, "As the deer pants for streams of water, so my soul pants for you, O God." This is the heart cry of a person who is suffering. He has lost the sense of God's presence and now he prays to God to give him the joy that he once knew. It is a Psalm that shows the struggle of a sufferer who feels that God is far away. But it also shows the determination of the psalmist to get back to a warm relationship of love with God. In the same way, we, too, must seek first to deepen our relationship with God when we encounter difficulties.

Someone once asked Charles Spurgeon, "What persuasion are you of?" I suppose they expected a philosophical or intellectual answer. Today this would mean something like, "Are you a Calvinist or an Arminian—charismatic or a non-charismatic?" Spurgeon's response was: "I am persuaded that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord." That was the most important thing about Spurgeon. He was a person who was loved by God. And that is the most important thing about us too!

We may be called to suffer, but we are loved. And because we are loved, we are radiant.

## BIBLE STUDIES ON ROMANS 9–15

# How Can They Hear?

David Penman

## How, and Through Whom, Will They Hear the Message? (Romans 10:14–17)

For eight full mind-stretching chapters, the apostle Paul outlined the plan God had established for the redemption and salvation of humanity. He repeatedly makes it clear: Those who put their faith in Jesus the Messiah will be justified before God and given the power of the Holy Spirit to enable them to live a good and holy life. His language is complex, and the ideas are difficult, but there is no doubting their intention. Those who are in Christ, who accept and follow him, are the true people of God. Those who don't, whether Jew or Gentile, are *not* the people of God. This is painful, but the message and emphasis of Scripture is unequivocal on this point.

This great theological argument comes to a triumphant conclusion in Romans 8:35–39:

Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall trouble or hardship or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword? As it is written: "For your sake we face death all day long; we are considered as sheep to be slaughtered." No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Following the dramatic and exultant expressions of his own previous words, it is almost as if Paul is suddenly reminded of what he has been repeating for eight chapters about the glory, the wonder, the indescribable joy of recognition, and the potential adoption of all humankind into God's special precious family. Suddenly, he comes back to earth!

Alexander Whyte once wrote in response to this passage: "What will it be to be there?" Then suddenly and solemnly, he added, "And what will it be *not* to be there?"

"What if you are not there?" or, in the context of the passage, "What of the Jews?" Paul had already begun to face the implications of this question earlier, especially in chapters 3 and 4, but now he must do so again and at length, so there is no misunderstanding.

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*The late David Penman, Archbishop of Melbourne for the Anglican Church of Australia, died October 1, 1989. See page 15 for a fuller biographical statement.*