

Notes on the Greek New Testament Week 99 – Romans 8:1-30

Day 491: Romans 8:1-4

Romans 8

Romans 8 focusses on the blessings conveyed to the Christian by the Holy Spirit. Wright comments, "The first eleven verses of Romans 8 lie at the very heart of Romans 5-8 as a whole. They simultaneously complete the thought of the section that began with 7:1 and begin the majestic sequence that sweeps through to 8:30. As tightly argued as any piece of Pauline logic, they are at the same time suffused with a sense of exultation and celebration... We are still watching the unfolding of the Adam/Christ contrast of 5:12-21, and in particular the exposition of the great statement in the last verse of that seminal passage. 'As sin reigned in death' (and we must remind ourselves of the role of the law within that reign, as in 5:20), 'so grace also reigned through righteousness to eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.' From this tight-packed statement, the key contrast for this present passage is that between death and life: 'life' is the golden thread that runs through 8:1-11, the gift of God that the law wanted to give but could not, the gift that comes because God's Son has dealt with sin and death and God's life-giving Spirit has replaced sin as the indwelling power within God's people. The promise of resurrection with which the passage concludes is not added for extra effect at the end of the paragraph. It is where the whole argument is leading."

Verse 1

Οὐδὲν ἄρα νῦν κατάκριμα τοῖς ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ·

Looks back to 5:12-21, but also, in the light of the end of chapter 7, looks forward to what follows: "I serve God's law with my mind, but sin's law with my flesh; there is *therefore* no condemnation, *because* God has dealt with sin in the flesh, and provided new life for the body." So Wright who continues, "The verdict of the last day has been brought forward into the present. This is, quite simply, the solid foundation for Christian joy."

οὐδεις, οὐδεμα, οὐδεν no one, nothing;
οὐδεν not at all
κατακριμα, τος η condemnation

τοῖς ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ "offers not just a designation of the people for whom there is no condemnation, but, in compact form, the reason why this is the case." Wright.

A number of MSS include μη κατα σαρκα περιπατουσιν ἀλλα κατα σαρκα after Ἰησου. Metzger comments, "The shorter text which makes the more general statement without the qualification which is appropriate enough at verse 4 is strongly supported by early representatives of both the Alexandrian and the Western types of text."

Verse 2

ὁ γὰρ νόμος τοῦ πνεύματος τῆς ζωῆς ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ ἠλευθέρωσέν σε ἀπὸ τοῦ νόμου τῆς ἁμαρτίας καὶ τοῦ θανάτου.

Most commentators consider 'law' to be used here of a regulatory principle or power. Wright disagrees, arguing, "When scaling the sheer rock of Paul's thought it is important not to lose one's nerve and settle for an apparently easier path, a seemingly more natural route. The explanation of v, 2, after all, is found in vv. 3-4; and there, as the heart of the chapter so far, we find that the 'righteous verdict of the law,' τὸ δικαίωμα τοῦ νόμου (*dikaioma tou nomou*), is now fulfilled 'in us who walk ... according to the Spirit.' We then find, by implication, that whereas 'the mind of the flesh' does not submit to God's law, the mind of the Spirit actually does (v.7), and that by the Spirit God will do what the law wanted to do but, through no fault of its own, was unable to do (8:3, 10-11; cf. 7:10). It is not fanciful, then, but strictly in keeping with the thrust of the whole passage, to say that when Paul speaks of 'the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus' he is indeed referring to Torah, in a way for which we have only distantly been prepared by 3:27, 31. After all, *ho nomos* in vv. 3, 4, and 7 is clearly Torah. How obscure do we suppose Paul to have been?"

ἐλευθερω free, set free

"The Spirit exerts a liberating power through the work of Christ that takes us out of the realm of sin and the spiritual death to which sin inevitably leads." Moo.

Wright comments, "As we have already seen, talk of setting slaves free is exodus language: the present paragraph is describing how those who are in the Messiah, and indwelt by the Spirit, are brought out of the Egypt of sin and death and promised citizenship in the kingdom of life. There is no question but that Paul is referring in this verse to the same composite event that he has been describing in the previous chapters – namely, the messianic (and hence representative) death of Jesus and the gift of the Spirit."

σε Pronoun, acc s ου

ἠλευθερωσεν σε There are several textual variants here. In place of σε some mss read με or ἡμας and some omit the personal pronoun altogether. ἡμας would appear to be a secondary generalisation, but it is difficult to choose between σε and με. Metzger hesitantly chooses σε as the more difficult reading. Barrett prefers to omit the pronoun on the ground that σε may have crept in through repetition of the ending of ἠλευθερωσε. He suggests that the 'gnomic aorist' (expressing a timeless truth) should be translated, "The Spirit liberates from ...". Wright argues for 'you' singular, σε. "Like those old portraits whose eyes follow each onlooker around the room, this statement of freedom is aimed at every single hearer of the letter, whoever and wherever they may be."

ἁμαρτια, ας f sin
θανατος, ου m death

Verse 3

τὸ γὰρ ἀδύνατον τοῦ νόμου, ἐν ᾧ ἠσθένει διὰ τῆς σαρκός, ὁ θεὸς τὸν ἑαυτοῦ υἱὸν πέμψας ἐν ὁμοιωματι σαρκὸς ἁμαρτίας καὶ περὶ ἁμαρτίας κατέκρινεν τὴν ἁμαρτίαν ἐν τῇ σαρκί,

ἀδυνατος, ον impossible, weak

It was unable to deliver life – it offered it, but could not deliver.

ἀσθενεω be ill, be weak
σαρξ, σαρκος f flesh, physical body,
human nature

Note Paul's play on the word σαρξ in this verse. The weakness lay not in the law but in those who received it.

ὁ θεὸς τὸν ἑαυτοῦ υἱὸν πέμψας Cf. 8:32. The action is that of God, precluding any possibility of it being the action of a merciful Son placating an angry Father.

ἑαυτος, ἑαυτη, ἑαυτον him/her/itself
πεμπω send
ὁμοιωμα, τος n likeness

The word can express either identity or similarity. Here it must mean that Christ assumed a humanity like ours in every way except for sin.

περὶ ἁμαρτίας Christ was sent to deal with the problem of sin. Wright points out that this is a phrase used in the sacrificial language of the LXX.

κατέκρινεν Verb, aor act indic, 3 s
κατακρινω condemn, pass judgement
on

Wright comments on the phrase 'God ... condemned sin' saying, "No clearer statement is found in Paul, or indeed anywhere else in all early Christian literature, of early Christian belief that what happened on the cross was the judicial punishment of sin... For Paul, what was at stake was not simply God's judicial honour, in some Anselmic sense, but the mysterious power called sin, at large and destructive within God's world, needing to be brought to book, to have sentence passed and executed upon it, so that, with its power broken, God could then give the life sin would otherwise prevent. That is what happened on the cross."

Murray thinks that Paul's words reflect his argument in Rom 6:2-14 and refer to the condemnation of sin's reign over the flesh effected in the death of Christ, i.e. not only a sentence declared upon sin but executed upon sin. God executed this judgment and overthrew the power of sin: the law could only condemn sin in a declarative sense. "In that same nature which in all others was sinful, in that very nature which in all others was dominated and directed by sin, in that nature assumed by the Son of God but free from sin, God condemned sin and overthrew its power."

Verse 4

ἵνα τὸ δικαίωμα τοῦ νόμου πληρωθῇ ἐν ἡμῖν τοῖς μὴ κατὰ σάρκα περιπατοῦσιν ἀλλὰ κατὰ πνεῦμα.

δικαιωμα, τος n regulation, requirement

Moo draws attention to the fact that δικαίωμα is singular, not plural, saying, "The difference may not be great if Paul is thinking of the way that the Spirit enables Christians to obey the commandments of the law (note v.7). But the singular word, along with the passive form of 'fulfill,' suggests a different idea: God in Christ has fulfilled the entirety of the law's demand on our behalf."

Wright says that ἵνα "states God's intention: that the righteous verdict of the law might be fulfilled 'in us.' The life the Torah intended, indeed longed, to give to God's people is now truly given by the Spirit." Paul chooses to use the word δικαίωμα here rather than δικαίωσις because of its formal balance with κατάκρινα.

πληρωθῆ Verb, aor pass subj, 3 s πληρωω
fill, fulfill, accomplish
περιπατεω walk, walk about, live

"Those who will find Torah's righteous decree fulfilled in them – those, that is, who will share in the resurrection life (8:10-11) – are those who in the present do not 'walk' according to the flesh but according to the Spirit." Wright.

Day 492: Romans 8:5-11

Verses 5-11

Paul begins a section on the work of the Holy Spirit. Note the various terms which seem to be used synonymously: 'Spirit'; 'Spirit of God'; 'Spirit of Christ'; 'Christ in you'. The Holy Spirit is the one who makes Christ present to the believer. There is a parallel here to John's doctrine of the Paraclete.

Verses 5-8 introduce a series of contrasts between σαρξ and πνευμα – 'the sinful nature' versus the Spirit. The sinful nature brings death while the Spirit brings life.

Verses 5 and 6 both begin with γὰρ. Wright comments, "It seems to me more likely that both independently explain vv. 1-4, rather than that v. 6 is intended to explain something about v. 5.

Verse 5

οἱ γὰρ κατὰ σάρκα ὄντες τὰ τῆς σαρκὸς φρονοῦσιν, οἱ δὲ κατὰ πνεῦμα τὰ τοῦ πνεύματος.

σαρξ see v.3
φρονεω think, have in mind

"The lifestyle of the flesh flows from a mind oriented to the flesh, whereas the lifestyle of the Spirit comes from a mind oriented to the Spirit." Moo.

Verse 6

τὸ γὰρ φρόνημα τῆς σαρκὸς θάνατος, τὸ δὲ φρόνημα τοῦ πνεύματος ζωὴ καὶ εἰρήνη·

φρονημα, τος n way of thinking, mind,
mind-set

θανατος see v.2

Not merely causes or leads to death but is death – it is existence in separation from God. Equally, *life and peace* are the characteristics of life from and with God.

εἰρήνη, ης f peace

"It is the Christian *mind* that must become the initial, and transformative, locus of renewal (12:2, contrasting with 1:22, 28)." Wright.

Verse 7

διότι τὸ φρόνημα τῆς σαρκὸς ἔχθρα εἰς θεόν, τῷ γὰρ νόμῳ τοῦ θεοῦ οὐχ ὑποτάσσεται, οὐδὲ γὰρ δύναται·

διότι because, for, therefore

Here because.

ἐχθρα, ας f enmity, hostility, hatred

'Flesh-thinking' is hostile to God.

ὑποτασσω subordinate, put in subjection;
pass. be subject, submit to, obey

Verse 8

οἱ δὲ ἐν σαρκὶ ὄντες θεῷ ἀρέσαι οὐ δύνανται.

ἀρέσαι Verb, aor act infin ἀρεσκω please,
seek to please

"Despite its prominence in various Pauline passages, the idea that one can actually *please* God, or the Lord, is foreign to much thinking and writing on the apostle, perhaps because it suggests to some the thin end of a wedge that will end in works-righteousness. Paul has no such scruples (see, e.g. 12:2; 14:18; 1 Cor 7:32; 2 Cor 5:9; Eph 5:10; 1 Thess 4:1). Those in the flesh cannot please God; but, by strong and clear implication, those in the Spirit can and do." Wright.

Verse 9

ὑμεῖς δὲ οὐκ ἐστὲ ἐν σαρκὶ ἀλλὰ ἐν πνεύματι, εἴπερ πνεῦμα θεοῦ οἰκεῖ ἐν ὑμῖν. εἰ δέ τις πνεῦμα Χριστοῦ οὐκ ἔχει, οὗτος οὐκ ἔστιν αὐτοῦ.

Paul shifts the focus of attention to his readers.

ἐν πνεύματι Paul shifts between the images of being 'in the Spirit' and the Spirit being 'in you'. Wright says that "The latter is what Paul wants to emphasise at this point, using the image of 'indwelling' that evokes the idea of the *Shekinah* dwelling in the wilderness tabernacle and the Jerusalem Temple (cf. 1 Cor 3:16; 6:19, etc.). The formulation 'in the Spirit' is more of a technical description, formed ad hoc to contrast with 'in the flesh'."

εἴπερ since, if it is true that

"The nuance in the middle of v. 9 is hard to catch, since 'if' (NIV) appears too doubtful and 'since' (NRSV) too certain. The Greek εἴπερ (*eiper*) hovers in between these two, meaning something like 'if after all' or 'if, as is indeed the case'; we may compare its use in 3:30 or 8:17. If it contains a shadow of doubt it does so within a basic affirmation." Wright.

οἰκέω see 7:17

A Christian in whom the Holy Spirit does not dwell is a contradiction in terms.

Verse 10

εἰ δὲ Χριστὸς ἐν ὑμῖν, τὸ μὲν σῶμα νεκρὸν διὰ ἁμαρτίαν, τὸ δὲ πνεῦμα ζωὴ διὰ δικαιοσύνην.

σῶμα, τος η body
νεκρος, α, ον dead

τὸ μὲν σῶμα νεκρὸν διὰ ἁμαρτίαν
"Christians are subject to the laws of decay and death, still living as they do in 'the body of humiliation' (Phil 3:21)." Wright.

πνεῦμα Some commentators have interpreted this as spirit (Sanday & Headlam etc. – and NIV!). Barrett, however, argues that this is a reference to the Holy Spirit; "Paul is not interested in psychological duality." Murray also argues that this is a reference to the Holy Spirit since this is the subject of these verses and Moo agrees saying that Paul "here refers to the Holy Spirit, the power of 'life' that has come to reside in the believer. It is because of this power of life within us that we can be certain of future resurrection." So also Wright for whom the Spirit is the theme of these verses as characteristic of the new covenant.

δικαιοσύνη, ης f righteousness, what is right, what God requires

Murray says a reference to the righteous act of God in Christ's death and resurrection – the basis of our life. Wright argues that it refers to "God's faithfulness to the covenant, God's own righteousness."

Verse 11

εἰ δὲ τὸ πνεῦμα τοῦ ἐγείραντος τὸν Ἰησοῦν ἐκ νεκρῶν οἰκεῖ ἐν ὑμῖν, ὁ ἐγείρας Χριστὸν ἐκ νεκρῶν ζωοποιήσει καὶ τὰ θνητὰ σῶματα ὑμῶν διὰ τοῦ ἐνοικοῦντος αὐτοῦ πνεύματος ἐν ὑμῖν.

ἐγείραντος Verb, aor act ptc, m gen s
ἐγειρω raise

Χριστὸν ἐκ νεκρῶν there are a number of textual variants here, several assimilating to the earlier τον Ἰησοῦν.

ζωοποιεω give life, make alive

θνητος, η, ον mortal

"The God who raised the Messiah will also raise all the Messiah's people, you included." Wright.

ἐνοικεω live in

"This, then, is the answer to 7:24b, no longer as a bare assertion of faith (as by itself, is 7:25a), but as a tight theological argument. Who will deliver from this body of death? Who, in other words, will give life to the dead? The law, though holy, just and good, cannot do this; God will, through Christ and by the Spirit and will thereby do what the law held out (Lev 18:5; Deut 30:15-20) but could not perform." Wright.

Verse 1-11 – Postscript

"At the end of this central passage we may reflect on the nature of Paul's achievement so far. This is the heart of his argument for assurance (those whom God justified, them God also glorified). For the Jew – for Paul himself prior to his conversion – the basis of assurance was membership in the covenant, whose outward badges were circumcision and Torah. The story of the exodus formed the backdrop to the Jewish expectation that the covenant God would once again act within history to deliver Israel. Paul has retold the story of the exodus, the freedom story, demonstrating that the Egypt of sin and death has been decisively defeated through the death of the Messiah, and that the Spirit is now leading God's redeemed people to their promised inheritance. Baptism has marked out God's renewed people; the Spirit is now 'the one thing that distinguishes those who are Christ's from those who are not.' [G Fee, *God's Empowering Presence*, 553.] The sign of the Spirit's work is first and foremost faith (1 Cor 12:3) and indeed faithfulness; and the fruit of the Spirit's work is the final resurrection. Thus is the path from justification to glorification, from 'passover' to the 'promised land,' laid out in this passage. Paul will now develop this picture, drawing on several interlocking images from the exodus story, and widening the angle of vision to include, not just humans, but the whole created order." Wright.

Day 493: Romans 8:12-17**Verse 12**

Ἄρα οὖν, ἀδελφοί, ὀφειλέται ἐσμέν, οὐ τῇ σαρκὶ τοῦ κατὰ σάρκα ζῆν·

The presence of the Spirit has ethical consequences.

ὀφειλετης, ου m **debtor, one indebted**

'Under obligation.' Christians are debtors to God.

ζαω **live, be alive**

The 'flesh' has done nothing for us to render us under obligation to render service to it.

Verse 13

εἰ γὰρ κατὰ σάρκα ζῆτε μέλλετε ἀποθνήσκειν, εἰ δὲ πνεύματι τὰς πράξεις τοῦ σώματος θανατοῦτε ζήσεσθε.

μελλω **be going, be about, be destined**

μελλω signifies an event which will surely happen because it has been determined by God. Hence Barrett translates the phrase as 'doomed to die'.

ἀποθνησκω **die, face death, be mortal**
πραξις, εως f **deed, action, practice**
σωμα, τος n **body**
θανατω **kill, put to death**

Refers to an activity which must be pursued by the believer. The fact that the Christian has died to the law and to sin in Christ does not release him/her from the obligation of putting to death sinful actions and behaviour, rather it enables the Christian to do so. Our response is not optional, it is necessary. "Paul never suggests that the inheritance of future life requires that we stop sinning altogether. What he demands in this verse is clear, long-term progress in becoming less like the world (i.e., 'the flesh') and more like Christ." Moo. Wright comments, "As in Col 3:5-11, which explains Paul's meaning in more detail, he sees that there are styles of behaviour that, like weeds left to grow unchecked, have the capacity to take over the garden and choke all the flowers. There is only one way with such things: they must be uprooted, killed off. This is, of course, impossible for those who are still 'in the flesh'; but those who are led by the Spirit will find that the Spirit's inner agency enables them, if they will, to say 'no' to the practices that carry the smell of death with them."

ζήσεσθε Verb, fut midd dep indic, 2 pl ζαω

Verse 14

ὅσοι γὰρ πνεύματι θεοῦ ἄγονται, οὗτοι υἱοὶ θεοῦ εἰσιν.

ὅσος, η, ον **as much as; pl. as many as, all**

"In popular speech, Christians often use such language as 'led by the Spirit' to refer to guidance... But this is probably not what Paul means here. As in Galatians 5:18, where the same connection occurs, 'being led by the Spirit' means 'having the basic orientation of your life determined by the Spirit.' The phrase is a way of summing up the various descriptions of the life of the Spirit in 8:4-9." Moo.

Wright says, "The image here is taken from the wilderness wanderings of Israel, led by the pillar of cloud and fire (Exod 13:21-22; cf. Exod 14:19, 24; 40:38; Num 9:15-23; 10:34; 14:14; Deut 1:33; Neh 9:12; Pss 78:14; 105:39)." The Spirit, "now does for God's people that which the tabernacling presence of God did in the wilderness, assuring them of divine adoption and leading them forward to their inheritance."

υἱοὶ θεοῦ A picture taken from the OT (Deut 14:1; Is 43:6; Hos 1:10 etc.), but now given a Christological focus.

Verse 15

οὐ γὰρ ἐλάβετε πνεῦμα δουλείας πάλιν εἰς φόβον, ἀλλὰ ἐλάβετε πνεῦμα υἰοθεσίας, ἐν ᾧ κράζομεν, Ἀββα ὁ πατήρ·

ἐλάβετε Verb, aor act indic, 2 pl λαμβανω
δουλεια, ας f **slavery**

πνευμα δουλεια the mind set of a slave which marked Paul and others before the Holy Spirit brought liberation – and which harks back to Israel's pre-exodus condition.

παλιν **again, once more**

φοβος, ου m **fear**

υἰοθεια, ας f **adoption, sonship**

"The legal act of adoption was not practiced by the Jews, so almost certainly Paul uses the image of the Greco-Roman practice whereby a man could formally confer on a child all the legal rights of a birth child. This, Paul suggests, is what God's Spirit confers on every believer – the rights and privileges of God's own children." Moo.

The parallel with Gal 4:6 requires us to understand πνευμα υἰοθεσίας as a reference to the Holy Spirit which is the proof and anticipation of our adoption (v.23).

To retain the parallelism between the two occurrences of πνευμα, some have understood both to refer to the spirit of man. On the other hand, Murray understands both to refer to the Holy Spirit and says that the first half merely states what the Holy Spirit is not (so also Moo). Paul could, however, be making use of the same term in different senses in the same verse (cf. his use of πνευμα in verse 16).

κραζω cry out, call out

Αββα does this imply that Greek speaking churches used this Aramaic term in prayer? "What is most important is that the Spirit enables us to experience the same kind of intimate relationship to the Father that Jesus did, who also called God 'Abba' (Mark 14:26). Not only does the Spirit confer on us this status; he also is the one who, testifying with our own spirits, gives us the inner certainty of knowing that we truly are God's dearly loved children." Moo.

πατηρ, πατρος m father

Verse 16

αὐτὸ τὸ πνεῦμα συμμαρτυρεῖ τῷ πνεύματι ἡμῶν ὅτι ἐσμὲν τέκνα θεοῦ.

συμμαρτυρεω show to be true, give evidence in support of

τέκνον, ου n child; pl descendants

Verse 17

εἰ δὲ τέκνα, καὶ κληρονόμοι· κληρονόμοι μὲν θεοῦ, συγκληρονόμοι δὲ Χριστοῦ, εἴπερ συμπάσχομεν ἵνα καὶ συνδοξασθῶμεν.

κληρονομος, ου m heir, one who receives what is promised (by God)

"This is the real reason why he implied that Christians were indebted to God (8:12), and it indicates the substance of the paragraph to come." Wright.

συγκληρονομος, ου sharing together, sharing together God's blessings

συγκληρονόμοι δὲ Χριστοῦ This term explains the way in which we have become heirs of God (cf Gal 3:6-4:7). What belongs to Christ by right as *the* Son of God, is ours by grace as those who are sons/children of God in him. "Though legally part of a new family, adopted children do not yet possess all the benefits of their new status. Thus, Paul reminds us, we Christians must still await the consummation of that new status. One day we will enter into the inheritance, following the Son who has gone ahead of us. We will share in his own glorious state. In the meantime, however, we must follow him in the road he himself walked on the way to glory – the road of suffering." Moo.

εἴπερ since, if it is true that

συμπασχω suffer together, share the same suffering

συνδοξασθῶμεν Verb, aor pass subj, 1 pl
συνδοξαζομαι share in another's glory

Christ had to face suffering before he could enter upon glory. Christians should not expect a different pattern, for they are called to follow him (cf. 2 Cor 1:5; Phil 3:10; Col 1:24; 2 Tim 2:11; 1 Peter 4:13; Mk 10:39).

Day 494: Romans 8:18-25

Verses 18-30

"The theme of 8:18-30 is the believer's future glory. The passage begins ('the glory that will be revealed in us,' v.18) and ends ('those he justified, he also glorified,' v.30) on this note. "In between, Paul makes two basic points about glory. (1) It is the climax of God's plan both for his people and for his creation generally. Since we have not reached that climax, we must eagerly and patiently wait for it (vv.18-25). (2) God himself provides what we need in order to wait eagerly and patiently. The Spirit helps us pray (vv.26-27), and God promises to oversee everything for our good (v.28) according to his unbreakable plan for us (vv. 29-30)." Moo.

Verse 18

Λογίζομαι γὰρ ὅτι οὐκ ἄξια τὰ παθήματα τοῦ νῦν καιροῦ πρὸς τὴν μέλλουσαν δόξαν ἀποκαλυφθῆναι εἰς ἡμᾶς.

λογίζομαι reckon, count, calculate

γὰρ looks back to v.17.

ἄξιος, α, ον worthy, deserving, fitting
παθημα, τος n suffering, passion, desire
καιρος, ου m time, season, age

του νυν καιρου this age, in contrast with the age to come.

μέλλουσιν Verb, pres act ptc, f acc s
μελλω (before an infin) be going, be about

δοξα, ης f glory

ἀποκαλυφθῆναι Verb, aor pass infin
ἀποκαλυπτω reveal, disclose

εἰς ἡμᾶς The glory that now characterises Christ will be ours also; it will "reside 'in' us, transforming us into Christ's own image (see Rom 8:29)." Moo.

"The way Paul now justifies this opening statement is to describe that future glory, and the present situation in waiting for it, in order to explain both his calculation and the present in-between situation both of creation and of the Christian – and, we might even say, of God." Wright.

Verse 19

ἡ γὰρ ἀποκαραδοκία τῆς κτίσεως τὴν ἀποκάλυψιν τῶν υἰῶν τοῦ θεοῦ ἀπεκδέχεται·

ἀποκαραδοκία, ας f eager longing, deep desire

κτίσις, εως f creation, what is created

"With most modern commentators, we conclude that Paul refers to all of subhuman creation: plants, animals, rocks and so on." Moo. "The whole creation is on tiptoe with excitement." Wright. Cf. 4:13.

ἀποκαλυψις, εως f revelation
ἀπεκδεχομαι look for, wait for

Verse 20

τῇ γὰρ ματαιότητι ἡ κτίσις ὑπετάγη, οὐχ ἐκούσα ἀλλὰ διὰ τὸν ὑποτάξαντα, ἐφ' ἐλπίδι

ματαιότης, ητος f worthlessness, futility
ὑπετάγη Verb, aor pass indic, 3 s
ὑποτασσω subordinate, put in subjection; pass. be subject, submit to

I.e., by God. "Creation itself is in bondage, in slavery, and needs to have its own exodus." Wright.

ἐκῶν, ουσα, ον of one's own free will

I.e., not on its own account.

ὑποτάξαντα Verb, aor act ptc, m acc s
ὑποτασσω

ἐλπις, ιδος f hope, ground of hope, what is hoped for

I.e. this subjection to 'vanity' was not in itself, the goal. "God did this precisely in order that creation might point forward to the new world that is to be, in which its beauty and power will be enhanced and its corruption and futility will be done away." Wright.

"The fate of creation is bound up with that of humanity. As it was through them that creation was marred, so it is through the glorified children of God that it will be restored again." Moo.

Verse 21

ὅτι καὶ αὐτὴ ἡ κτίσις ἐλευθερωθήσεται ἀπὸ τῆς δουλείας τῆς φθορᾶς εἰς τὴν ἐλευθερίαν τῆς δόξης τῶν τέκνων τοῦ θεοῦ.

ἐλευθερω free, set free

δουλεία, ας f slavery

φθορά, ας f decay, corruption, depravity

Decay which is the shadow of death.

ἐλευθερία, ας f freedom, liberty

τέκνον, ου n child; pl descendants

The liberty enjoyed by the children of God in glory. "The thought seems to be not that creation and Christians will simply all be free and glorious in the same way, together, but that the freedom for which creation longs, and which it will be liberated into, is the freedom that comes about through the glorification of the children of God." Wright.

Verse 22

οἶδαμεν γὰρ ὅτι πᾶσα ἡ κτίσις συστενάζει καὶ συνωδίνει ἄχρι τοῦ νῦν·

οἶδα know, understand

An incontestable fact. So Phillips translates, "It is plain to anyone who has eyes to see that at the present time all created life groans in a sort of universal travail."

συστεναζω groan together

συνωδινω suffer great pain together (as of a woman in labour)

See Matt 24:8; Mk 13:8; Jn 16:20-22. "It is a most suitable similitude; it shows that the groaning of which he speaks will not be vain and without effect; for it will at length bring forth a joyful and blessed fruit." Calvin. Wright comments that Paul, "draws once more on Jewish tradition, this time the theme of the great tribulation, the great woes, that would come upon the world in order for the new world to be born."

ἄχρι until, as far as

Verse 23

οὐ μόνον δέ, ἀλλὰ καὶ αὐτοὶ τὴν ἀπαρχὴν τοῦ πνεύματος ἔχοντες ἡμεῖς καὶ αὐτοὶ ἐν ἑαυτοῖς στεναζόμεν υἰοθεσίαν ἀπεκδεχόμενοι, τὴν ἀπολύτρωσιν τοῦ σώματος ἡμῶν.

μονον adv only, alone

ἀπαρχη, ης f firstfruit, first portion (set apart to God)

ἀπαρχὴν τοῦ πνεύματος probably means the firstfruits of our redemption, namely the Spirit (cf. 2 Cor 1:27; 5:5) rather than the firstfruits that the Spirit gives.

The meaning could be either:

- i) 'although we have the firstfruits of the Spirit' i.e. despite our present blessings we groan; or
- ii) 'since we have the firstfruits of the Spirit' i.e. the firstfruits have given us a longing for the full harvest.

The second is preferred by Moo, Dunn *et al.*

στεναζω sigh, groan, grumble
υἰοθεσια, ας f adoption, sonship

Cf. v.16. Adoption has elements both of 'already' and 'not yet.' In particular, we have not yet entered into our inheritance.

ἀπεκδεχομαι see v.19

ἀπολυτρωσις, εως f redemption, deliverance, setting free

Another 'exodus' motif.

Verse 24

τῇ γὰρ ἐλπίδι ἐσωθημεν· ἐλπίς δὲ βλεπομένη οὐκ ἔστιν ἐλπίς· ὃ γὰρ βλέπει τίς ἐλπίζει;

ἐλπις, ιδος f hope, ground of hope, what is hoped for

ἐσωθημεν Verb, aor pass indic, 1 pl σωζω save, rescue, heal

Salvation is a reality in the present but it is not yet complete: the salvation which is ours now brings with it the hope of perfect redemption to come – including the resurrection of the body.

βλεπω see

Many MSS read τις, τι και 'for what one sees, why does he also hope for it?' The UBS text follows p⁴⁶ B* and a few other MSS and versions in reading τις, "and regarded the other readings as expansions of a strikingly terse and typically Pauline type of question."

ἐλπίζω hope, hope for, hope in, expect

"One does not anxiously scan the horizon for a boat already in port." Wright.

Verse 25

εἰ δὲ ὃ οὐ βλέπομεν ἐλπίζομεν, δι' ὑπομονῆς ἀπεκδεχόμεθα.

ὑπομονη, ης f patience, endurance

Patience is endurance or continuance; it describes the attitude which hope engenders. "This word suggests the ability to bear up under the trials that come our way (cf. Rom 5:3-4; Heb 10:36; 12:1; James 1:3-4; 5:11)."

ἀπεκδεχομαι see v.19

Suggests a craning of the neck to spot someone or something coming. This patience has nothing in common with indifference or stoicism.

Day 495: Romans 8:26-30**Verse 26**

᾿Ωσαύτως δὲ καὶ τὸ πνεῦμα συναντιλαμβάνεται τῇ ἀσθενείᾳ ἡμῶν· τὸ γὰρ τί προσευξομεθα καθὼς δεῖ οὐκ οἶδαμεν, ἀλλὰ αὐτὸ τὸ πνεῦμα ὑπερεντυγχάνει στεναγμοῖς ἀλαλήτοις·

Now Paul answers the question, "But where is God in all this?"

ὡσαυτως adv in the same way, likewise

Moo argues that the link is to vv.24,25: "As hope sustains us in our time of suffering (vv.24-25), so also the Spirit sustains us in our time of weakness."

συναντιλαμβανομαι help, come to help

Cf. Lk 10:40. This is what Martha says that Mary should have been doing for her.

ἀσθενεια, ας f weakness

"Those who cannot see that for which they eagerly hope need assistance to peer into the darkness ahead and to pray God's future into the present." Wright.

προσευχομαι pray

καθο adv as, according as, in so far as
δει impersonal verb it is necessary, must, should, ought

This is part of the weakness of our present condition.

ὑπερεντυχανω intercede, plead (for someone)

Some MSS add ὑπερ ἡμῶν after ὑπερεντυγχάνει. Metzger says, "the longer reading makes explicit what is implicit in the decisively supported shorter reading."

"The children of God have two divine intercessors. Christ is their intercessor in the court of heaven (Rom 8:34; Heb 7:25; 1 Jn 2:1). The Holy Spirit is their intercessor in the theatre of their own hearts (Jn 14:16,17)." Murray.

Wright comments, "Here, as in vv. 15-16, Spirit-inspired prayer is a key part of the experience of inaugurated eschatology (cf. Zech 12:10, where in the context of the coming great eschaton, God pours out upon the house of David, and upon Jerusalem, 'the spirit of grace and supplication,' producing mourning in the midst of the promised glory). It is God's intention that redeemed human beings should be set in authority over the world, should indeed thereby be the agents through whom the cosmos that still groans in travail should be set free. At the moment, however, these human beings are weak, since their own bodies, that part of creation for which they have the most immediate responsibility, are still subject to decay and death. In this condition they do not even know what to pray for, how it is that God will work through them to bring about the redemption of the world. Paul here assumes both that the church is called to the task of intercession and that the church finds this very puzzling – a double truth that most great teachers of prayer from that day to this would endorse. But, just as it is the Spirit's task to inaugurate genuine humanness within the Christian in the form of holiness (vv. 12-14) and the *Abba*-prayer (vv. 15-16), so here it is the Spirit's task to enable genuine humanness, that stance of humbly trusting God and so being set in authority over the world, which is to be anticipated in the life of intercessory prayer."

στεναγμος, ου m groaning, sigh
ἀλαλητος, ον that cannot be expressed
in words

Either unspoken or unable to be spoken. Barrett prefers the former, in harmony with v.27. Others suggest that Paul is referring to unintelligible utterances – a form of speaking in tongues. The sense is probably of a burden beyond expression. "The Spirit's own very self intercedes within the Christian precisely at the point where he or she, faced with the ruin and misery of the world, finds that there are no words left to express in God's presence the sense of futility (v. 20) and the longing for redemption. It is not (as some very early scribes added to the text, followed by the NIV) that the Spirit intercedes 'for us'; that misses the point, and makes Paul repeat himself in the following verse. What Paul is saying is that the Spirit, active within the innermost being of the Christian, is doing the very interceding the Christian longs to do, even though the only evidence that can be produced is inarticulate groans." Wright.

Verse 27

ὁ δὲ ἐραυνῶν τὰς καρδίας οἶδεν τί τὸ φρόνημα τοῦ πνεύματος, ὅτι κατὰ θεὸν ἐντυγχάνει ὑπὲρ ἁγίων.

ἐραυνῶ search, examine, try to find out
φρονημα, τος η way of thinking, mind
ἐντυγχανῶ turn to (God on behalf of),
plead, appeal
οἱ ἅγιοι God's people

The Spirit places desires and longings in the heart of the believer which we cannot express in words. But God, who searches the heart, discerns and understands these longings and answers them, for they cannot fail to be in accord with his will. In this manner the Spirit intercedes from within on our behalf.

Verse 28

οἶδαμεν δὲ ὅτι τοῖς ἀγαπῶσιν τὸν θεὸν πάντα συνεργεῖ εἰς ἀγαθόν, τοῖς κατὰ πρόθεσιν κλητοῖς οὖσιν.

The thoughts here pick up that of v. 17b.

ἀγαπαῶ love, show love for

The call to love God was the most basic demand of Torah. It becomes a description of the Christian, cf. 1 Cor 2:9; 8:3; Eph 6:24.

συνεργεῶ work with, work together with,
help

ἀγαθος, η, ον good, useful, fitting

παντα συνεργει εἰς ἀγαθον can be translated in one of two ways according to whether παντα is taken as subject or object of the verb:

i) "All things work together for good ...";

ii) "He (i.e. God, or the Spirit) works together all things to produce good ...".

To remove the ambiguity, some mss add ὁ θεος after συνεργει.

Wright argues that God must be the subject of the verb; he is the one who directs all things to the ultimate good of the believer. "All things' – not just the groanings of the previous verses, but the entire range of experiences and events that may face God's people – are taken care of by the creator God who is planning to renew the whole creation, and us along with it."

προθεσις, εως f purpose, plan, will
κλητος, η, ον called, invited
οὔσιν Verb, pres ptc, m & n dat pl εἶμι

This provides confident ground for the promise. The God who planned and purposed all things from the beginning will see it all through to completion. His calling of his people is part of that unshakable plan.

"Through faith in Jesus Christ 'all things' assume the form of a relationship in which the activity of God is not a mere stage play enacted for our observation, but is an activity in which we are intimately involved. This is the background of Romans 8 in which Paul explains that nothing either possible or conceivable can thwart the salvation of Christ." Berkouwer.

Christians, "like Israel, are assured that they are called for a purpose – namely, to show forth the praises of the one true God in all the world (cf. Eph 1:11-12; 1 Pet 2:9). And – this is still the thrust of v. 28 – those who find themselves in this category can be assured that the purpose will be fulfilled. God will accomplish it." Wright.

Verse 29

ὅτι οὗς προέγνω, καὶ προωρισεν
συμμόρφους τῆς εἰκόνης τοῦ υἱοῦ αὐτοῦ,
εἰς τὸ εἶναι αὐτὸν πρωτότοκον ἐν πολλοῖς
ἀδελφοῖς·

προέγνω Verb, aor act indic, 3 s
προγινωσκω know already, know
beforehand, choose beforehand

'Foreknow' does not mean simply that God knew beforehand who would believe. This foreknowledge is not God's response to something which he sees in us but is God's act by which he distinguishes between one person and another (cf. 11:26). It speaks of a relationship established in eternity – God setting his love on his people before time began (cf. Jer 1:5; Amos 3:2; Acts 2:23; Rom 11:2; 1 Peter 1:2; 3:17, also Gal 1:15.).

"Foreknowledge is a form of love or grace." Wright.

προοριζω decide from the beginning,
predestine

This is distinguished from προεγνω which is equivalent to God's act of election, in that it focusses on the *destiny* which God has determined for his people.

συμμορφος, ον having the same form,
sharing likeness

εἰκων, ονος f likeness, image
πρωτοτοκος, ον first-born, first

The aim of the conformity spoken of is firstly that Christ should be preeminent, but secondly that he should be preeminent among many brethren.

"This process will bring God's renewed people to the point where they reflect the Son's *image*, just as the Son is the true image of God (2 Cor 4:4; Col 1:15; 3:10). They are, that is, to become true, because renewed, human beings.

This is the point, at last, to which the long argument beginning with 1:18 was looking forward. The image of God, distorted and fractured through idolotry and immorality, is restored in Jesus the Messiah, the Son of God; and the signs of that restoration are visible in those who, like Abraham, trust in God's life-giving power and so truly worship and give glory to God (4:18-22). But the purpose is never simply that God's people in Christ should resemble him, spectacular and glorious though that promise is. As we saw in vv. 18-21, it is that, as true image-bearers, they might reflect that same image into the world, bringing to creation the healing, freedom, and life for which it longs. To be conformed to the image of God, or of God's Son, is a dynamic, not a static, concept. Reflecting God into the world is a matter of costly vocation...

Conformity to the Son means, of course, conformity to his death." Wright.

Verse 30

οὓς δὲ προωρισεν, τούτους καὶ ἐκάλεσεν·
καὶ οὓς ἐκάλεσεν, τούτους καὶ
ἐδικαίωσεν· οὓς δὲ ἐδικαίωσεν, τούτους
καὶ ἐδόξασεν.

δικαίω justify, acquit, declare & treat as
righteous

δοξάζω glorify, exalt

The aorist signifies the inevitable completion of the purpose and plan of God: it is settled. "All has been accomplished in Christ: the fore-shaping of Christ's people to be his younger siblings; their call through the gospel that announces his lordship; their justification by faith in the God who raised him from the dead; their glorification so that they are now already seated in the heavenly places in him (see Eph 2:6, and in the light of that, Eph 1:20-22; Col 3:1-4)... All these things, including 'glorification,' have happened already to and in Jesus, the Messiah; and what is true of the Messiah is true of his people... The steady beat of the verbs within Paul's solemn rhetoric underscores the steady beat of God's unshakable purpose set forth in the Messiah and completed by the Spirit." Wright.