

NT 632 NLS: Romans – Spring 2021

Professor: Dr. Glen Shellrude

Week 8 Summary: Grant Osborne and Aaron Sherwood, Romans 8

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Osborne and Sherwood divide Romans 8 differently, according to the emphases they choose to highlight. Osborne divides the chapter into four parts, whereas Sherwood divides his into five, and each gives his chosen subheadings. Osborne's divisions and sub-titles are – Verses 1-11, "The Victorious Life in the Spirit"; Verses 12-17, "Adoption of the Believer as God's Heir"; Verses 18-30, "New Hope of Glory in the Spirit"; and Verses 31-39, "The Security and Victory of the Believer in the Midst of Earthly Struggles." Sherwood's divisions incorporate Chapter 7:21-25, "Summary and Transition to Freedom from Sin and Death by the Spirit." It continues with Verses 1-11, "The Spirit's role in the Gospel: Freedom from Sin"; Verses 12-17, "The Spirit's Role in the Gospel (continued)"; Verses 18-30, "The Spirit's Role in the Gospel (continued); Verses 31-39, "Paul's Selective Elaboration on the Gospel (resumed)"

Osborne

In **Verses 1-11** of Chapter 8, Osborne's subject is the victorious life in the Spirit. He notes that the term "Spirit" is used twenty-times in the chapter and proceeds to cite Moo in the latter's reflection where he noted, "Here the Spirit becomes the active force in believers' lives and enables them to defeat the flesh and live in victory" (P. 192). In mentioning the condemnation that sin and the law produced along with the hope of freedom, Osborne, in reference to the thrust of Verses 1-11 employs terms such as "life of victory and hope" and

states, "In him we are free from the power of sin as we give ourselves over to God in obedience and right living" (p. 193). This challenges the argument that the term the "the victorious life" is relegated to a questionable way of interpreting the believer's new experience after Romans 7, particularly 21-25.

Osborne sees the emphasis of **Verses 12-17** placed on the adoption of the believer as God's heir. As heir, the believer is called to a life of "the mortification of the flesh" (p. 202). While Osborne stresses the *believer's obligation* to live according to the Spirit, Sherwood places a greater weight on the empowering of the Spirit, thus bringing the *Spirit's role*, in the new life of freedom, squarely into the spotlight.

"New Hope of Glory" is what Osborne titles **Verses 18-30**, and it is in this section that he addresses the much-debated subject of pre-destination and the free-will of man. He cites several commentators as viewing "foreknowledge" and "predestination" as interchangeable terms. The election that these two terms connote, he says, "In this context ... deals more with sanctification than with justification, with conformity more than conversion" (p. 222). Osborne makes reference to Marshall's belief that the "election language in the New Testament does demonstrate that God takes the initiative and calls people to himself, but this is not effectual. Rather, it places people in a position to accept or reject that call" (p. 222). The question is that if God calls someone, is He not able to make His call effectual? The tension is between God's part and man's part in soteriology. Moo states that Paul's focus on God's part "in no way mitigates the importance of human response." (p. 224). He points to a balance between the divine and the human response. I would interject that if God has the sole power to draw man to Himself, He also has the power to make His call irresistible for those whom He elected . It is indeed a

blend of God's initiative and man's response which both the Calvinist and the Armenian have conceded to. This calls for humble acknowledgement, on the believer's part, that in man's limited understanding, he is unable to grasp the magnitude of this reality. It is only an infinite God who is able to fully comprehend mind-boggling doctrines such as this and the Trinity. It behooves man to let God be God and accept his limitations in grasping such matters.

Sherwood

The fact that the title, of all but one part of Sherwood's division, of Chapter 8 speaks of the Spirit's role in the Gospel, reveals the emphasis he places on the role of the Holy Spirit in the whole experience of resolving the struggle of Chapter 7. The main thought that Sherwood draws from **Verses 1-11** is that the Spirit frees from death those who were caught in its vice-like grip. The power of sin, noted in Chapter 7, and its condemnation has been broken. The solution is that in the Spirit, the believer has been freed (p. 414). Sherwood has no qualms about using the term victory to denote the experience of the believer in his struggle against defeat. **Verses 12-17** puts the spotlight on the partnering of man with the Spirit. Sherwood uses the word "empowers" again and again, in his depiction of the primary work of the Spirit, in the life of the believer after he belongs to Christ. The main idea presented in this second to last section, **Verses 18-30**, says the believer's suffering is not the entire picture of his life and should be kept in perspective, when compared to the glory that will be his. Paul resumes his elaboration on the gospel in **Verses 31-39**, by showing that Christ will and does overcome all that would threaten the believer's salvation.

In conclusion, God, in His faithfulness, provided victory over the defeat that the Torah and sin afforded. He did this by the “no condemnation”, of Chapter 8, that the Spirit introduced. The Spirit is the one who empowers the believer to live a righteous (dikaiosune) life of victory over the conflict between the sin without and the self within. Ultimately, nothing can succeed that threatens the believer’s salvation.