

# ROMANS

## 8:35-39

WHAT THEN SHALL WE SAY  
TO THESE THINGS?



ROMANS 8:31  
(Part II)

# ROMANS

## 8:35-39



Personal  
Assurance of  
God's Love  
in Christ  
Jesus Our  
Lord

*<sup>35</sup>Who will separate us from the love of Christ? Tribulation or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or danger, or sword? <sup>36</sup>As it has been written: "For the sake of you, we face death all the day; we are regarded as sheep of slaughter." <sup>37</sup>But in all these things, we more than conquer through the [One] having loved loved us. <sup>38</sup>For I am persuaded that neither death nor life; nor angels nor principalities; nor things present nor things to come; nor powers, <sup>39</sup>nor height nor depth, nor any other created thing, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.*



# ROMANS

## 8:35-39



### INTRODUCTION

There is now a shift in Paul's language, since the forensic language of 31-34 is left behind and there is a move to "separate" (χωρίζω) and "love" (ἀγαπάω). Thus, Paul begins a more personal and relational emphasis on the love of God, in Christ Jesus, for us! God's powerful, active love has already been articulated for us 31-34; He *"did not spare His own Son, but handed Him over in behalf of all"* and that His Son died, but was raised from the dead and is now at God's right hand, where Jesus continues to plead in our behalf!

# ROMANS

## 8:35



IN CHRIST'S  
LOVE, WE  
ARE  
VICTORIOUS  
IN ALL  
THINGS!

<sup>35</sup>“Who will **separate** us from the **love** of Christ? Tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or danger, or sword?”

The verb that Paul uses for “*separate*” (χωρίσει) gives the sense that the possibility is completely ruled out.

And “*love*” (ἀγάπης) is used by Paul to lead his hearers to the more personal and relational emphasis on the love of God in Christ Jesus.

We see these **truths** in v.34.



# ROMANS

## 8:35



IN CHRIST'S  
LOVE, WE  
ARE  
VICTORIOUS  
IN ALL  
THINGS!

<sup>35</sup>“Who will separate us from the love of Christ?  
**Tribulation**, or distress, or persecution, or famine,  
or nakedness, or danger, or sword?”

Paul then begins to list a series of nouns that could be potential separators that focus on outward tribulation. Following is a short exposition on each noun:

1. **θλίψις** (thlip'-sis): It can be translated as “*tribulation*”; however, in the proper, literal sense it means “*pressure*.” Thus, it carries the challenge of coping with the “*internal*” pressure of a “*tribulation*,” especially when feeling there is “*no way of escape!*”

# ROMANS

## 8:35



IN CHRIST'S  
LOVE, WE  
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THINGS!

<sup>35</sup>“Who will separate us from the love of Christ? Tribulation, or *distress*, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or danger, or sword?”

2. στενοχωρία (sten-okh-o-ree'-ah): Properly, a narrow place; (figuratively) a *difficult* circumstance - which God authorized and hence produces a *temporal sense of confinement*. However, through our Lord's in-working of faith, *internal* distress (sense of pressure, anguish) is ironically the way He shows His *limitless* work - in our “*limitations!*”



# ROMANS

## 8:35



IN CHRIST'S  
LOVE, WE  
ARE  
VICTORIOUS  
IN ALL  
THINGS!

<sup>35</sup>“Who will separate us from the love of Christ? Tribulation, or distress, or **persecution**, or famine, or nakedness, or danger, or sword?”

### 3. διωγμός (dee-ōgue-mos'):

Properly: *pursuit* (chase);  
*persecution* – literally, “the *hunt* to bring someone down like an animal;” trying to suppress (punish) their convictions and in Christian literature it always means to persecute for religious reasons.

# ROMANS

## 8:35



IN CHRIST'S  
LOVE, WE  
ARE  
VICTORIOUS  
IN ALL  
THINGS!

<sup>35</sup>“Who will separate us from the love of Christ? Tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or **famine**, or nakedness, or **danger**, or sword?”

4. λιμός (lee-mos'): The narrow sense, “*hunger*.” In the wide sense: “*famine*.”

5. γυμνότης (goom-not'-ace): “*Nakedness*.” More generally it refers to the lack of “*sufficient clothing*” or to be “*destitute*.”

6. κίνδυνος (kin'-doo-nos): “*Danger or risk*.” Of note, Paul uses this noun eight times 2 Cor. 11:26.



# ROMANS

## 8:35



IN CHRIST'S  
LOVE, WE  
ARE  
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THINGS!

<sup>35</sup>“Who will separate us from the love of Christ? Tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or danger, or sword?”

7. μάχαιρα (makh'-ahee-rah): Properly, a “*slaughter-knife*.” A short sword or dagger mainly used for stabbing. Figuratively: an instrument for exacting “*retribution*” or any “*violent death*” or, rarely, “*war*.”



# ROMANS

## 8:36



IN CHRIST'S  
LOVE, WE  
ARE  
VICTORIOUS  
IN ALL  
THINGS!

<sup>36</sup>*As it has been written: 'For the sake of you, we face death all the day; we are regarded as sheep of slaughter.'*

The formula that Paul uses to begin this verse is also seen in 4:17, where it's used to introduce a quote from the Old Testament; and he does the same here with a quote from Ps.

44:22. What Paul is getting at is the suffering endured on account of God, for the sake of Jesus Christ, for His Gospel and Kingdom. Jesus speaks similar words in St. Mark 8:35!



# ROMANS

## 8:36



IN CHRIST'S  
LOVE, WE  
ARE  
VICTORIOUS  
IN ALL  
THINGS!

<sup>36</sup>As it has been written: 'For the sake of you, we face death all the day; we are regarded as sheep of slaughter.'

*"...[W]e face death all the day..."*  
does not mean that we are being put to death daily; yet, daily and continually, we are facing hazards that could potentially or eventually be fatal. Paul also discusses this paradoxical existence in 2 Cor. 4:11 with our existence being centered on our Lord Jesus!

# ROMANS

## 8:36



IN CHRIST'S  
LOVE, WE  
ARE  
VICTORIOUS  
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THINGS!

<sup>36</sup>*As it has been written: 'For the sake of you, we face death all the day; we are regarded as sheep of slaughter.'*

The image here is strikingly similar to Is. 53:7. Recall, the Son, whom we have discussed in 8:32, who was not spared, but handed over to death...for our sake!

“If the world hates you, you know that it hated Me before it hated you” (St. John 15:18);

“The Son of Man must suffer many things, and be rejected by the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised the third day” (St. Luke 9:22); and,

“Do not marvel, my brethren, if the world hates you” (1 John 3:13).



# ROMANS

## 8:36



IN CHRIST'S  
LOVE, WE  
ARE  
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THINGS!

<sup>36</sup>As it has been written: 'For the sake of you, we face death all the day; we are regarded as sheep of slaughter.'

Lastly, this OT citation functions to verify that the sufferings previously listed in v.35 have always characterized the life of the faithful Christian, past and present. The sufferings of these afflictions are also exemplified by our Lord Jesus, the Lamb who was slain (cf. Revelation 5:6, 12).

# ROMANS

## 8:37



IN CHRIST'S  
LOVE, WE  
ARE  
VICTORIOUS  
IN ALL  
THINGS!

<sup>37</sup>But in all these things, *we more than conquer* through the [One] having loved us."

The main verb in this verse is *ὑπερνικῶμεν* (*hoop-er-nik-o'-main*). The prefix ὑπερ (hyper) is an intensifier of the verb νικάω, to "*be victorious!*" Therefore, you are an *exceedingly* conqueror, being "*more than a conqueror,*" i.e., a "*super-conqueror*" who is "*completely and overwhelmingly victorious!*"



# ROMANS

8:37



IN CHRIST'S  
LOVE, WE  
ARE  
VICTORIOUS  
IN ALL  
THINGS!

<sup>37</sup>But in all these things, *we more than conquer*  
through the [One] having loved us."



# ROMANS

## 8:37

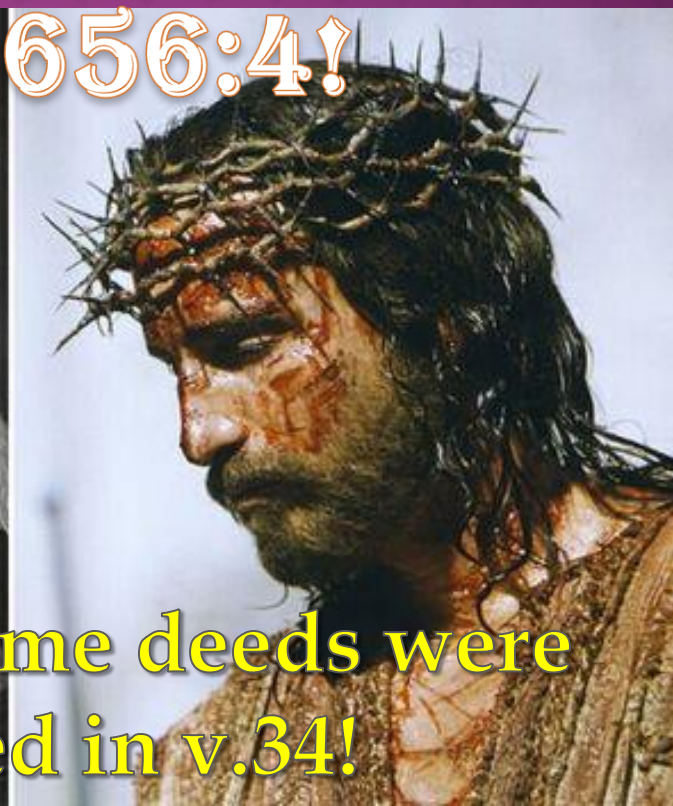
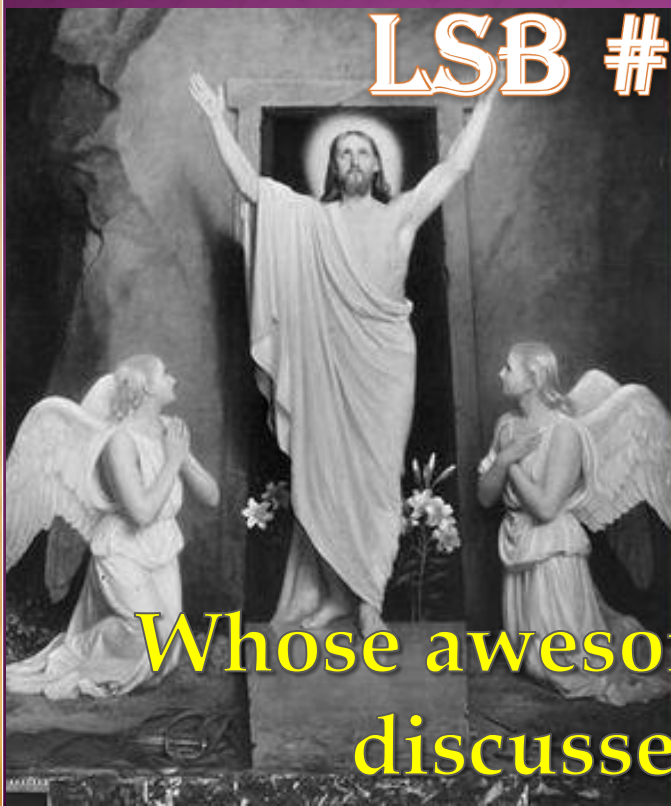


IN CHRIST'S  
LOVE, WE  
ARE  
VICTORIOUS  
IN ALL  
THINGS!

<sup>37</sup>But in all these things, *we more than conquer through the [One] having loved us.*"

However, we also know that this victory is NOT won by us, but for us! The victory is accomplished by Christ Jesus, our Lord, "...*the [One] who loved us.*"

LSB #656:4!



Whose awesome deeds were  
discussed in v.34!



# ROMANS

## 8:38-39a



NOTHING  
WILL  
SEPARATE  
US FROM  
GOD'S LOVE

<sup>38</sup>“For I am persuaded that *neither* death *nor* life *nor* angels *nor* principalities *nor* things present *nor* things to come *nor* powers <sup>39a</sup>*nor* height *nor* depth *nor* any other created thing....”

What follows in vv. 38-39<sup>a</sup>, is a list of ten items introduced and separated by ten uses of the Greek conjunction, *οὔτε*, “*neither/nor*.” In Greek grammar, when this conjunction is repeated it begins with “*neither*” and all succeeding uses are “*nor*.”

# ROMANS

## 8:38-39a



**NOTHING  
WILL  
SEPARATE  
US FROM  
GOD'S LOVE**

<sup>38</sup>“For I am persuaded that [neither death nor life] [nor angels nor principalities] [nor things present nor things to come] [nor powers] <sup>39a</sup>[nor height nor depth] [nor any other created thing]....”

You will also notice that the ten items are grouped in pairs, even though there is no punctuation in Greek, with the exception of “powers [δυνάμεις]. Such groupings are called “*merism*” (a figure of speech, where two elements that are diametrically opposites are combined to cover the whole spectrum).



# ROMANS

## 8:38-39a



NOTHING  
WILL  
SEPARATE  
US FROM  
GOD'S LOVE

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

A closer look at the merism and we see that the first pair: *neither death nor life*, represents two “states of existence;” the second: *nor angels nor principalities*, embraces the spirit world; the third: *nor things present nor things to come*, addresses the temporal or worldly dimension; next is a noun that lacks a partner: *nor powers*, in accord with this form this noun is also seen in Col 1:16 and refers to angels, as excelling in power, and are called δυνάμεις!

# ROMANS

8:38-39a



**NOTHING  
WILL  
SEPARATE  
US FROM  
GOD'S LOVE**

<sup>39a</sup>*[nor height nor depth] [nor any other created thing]...."*

**The fourth pair** *nor height nor depth*, refers to the spatial dimension and both Greek nouns are technical astronomical terms; **the final element is:** *nor any other created thing...*," effectively draws the list to its conclusion and is an all-inclusive term that encompasses any other relevant item which may be perceived as being omitted from the list!

Additionally, it communicates that any other beings, other than the persons of the Holy Trinity, owe their existence to the Creator! Therefore, everything, without exception, is under God's power and authority.



# ROMANS

## 8:39b



God's Love  
Is Ours in  
Christ Jesus

<sup>39b</sup>“... will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.”

In accord with Paul's continuing literary style, he adds a significant qualifying phrase. The dominant witness to “*the love of God*” as defined by Paul's final axiom, is literally the love which is “in Christ Jesus our Lord!” Thus, it is only in Jesus that the love of God is fully manifest!

This is true, since God the Father “handed Him over [to death] in behalf of us all” (8:32); **and** “salvation is not in any other” (Acts 4:12); (cf. St. John 14:6).

CONCORDIA



Widerholte einmütige Bekenntnis  
nachbenannter Churfürsten / Fürsten vnd  
Stände Augspurgischer Confession / vnd derselben  
Theologen Lehre vnd glaubens:

Als angeheftet / in Gottes wort / als der einigen Richte-  
schnur / wolgegründter erklerung etlicher Artikel / bey  
welchen nach D. Martin Luthers seligen absterben /  
Disputation vnd streit vorgefallen.

Aus einhelliger vergleihung vnd  
beuehl obgedachter Churfürsten / Fürsten vñ Stenden /  
derselben Landen / Kirchen / Schulen vnd Nachkommen /  
zum vnderricht vnd warnung in Druck  
verfertigt.



Als Churf. S. zu Sachsen befreihung.  
Dresden. M. D. LXXX.

39b “... will be able to separate us from the love of  
God in Christ Jesus our Lord.”

Therefore, the Formula of  
Concord explains how Romans 8  
provides a “beautiful and glorious  
comfort that God was so deeply  
concerned about every individual  
Christian’s conversion,  
righteousness, and salvation and so  
faithfully minded about it” (FC SD XI  
45):

God’s Love  
Is Ours in  
Christ Jesus



CONCORDIA



**Widerholte einmütige Bekenntnis**

nachbenannter Churfürsten / Fürsten vnd  
Stände Augspurgischer Confession / vnd derselben  
Theologen Leere vnd glaubens:

Als angeheftet / in Gottes wort / als der einigen Richte-  
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verfertigt.



Wit Churf. S. zu Sachsen befreihung.  
Dresden. M. D. LXXX.

“God wanted to insure my salvation so firmly and certainly---for due to the weakness and wickedness of our flesh it could easily slip from our fingers, and through the deceit and power of the devil and the world it could easily be snatched and taken from our hands---that He ordained my salvation in His eternal purpose, which cannot fail or be overthrown, and put it for safekeeping into the mighty hand of our Savior, Jesus Christ, out of which no one can pluck us (John 10:28). For this reason, too, Paul asks, since we are called according to the purpose of God [Rom 8:28], “who will separate us from the love of God in Christ?” (Rom. 8:35). [FC SD XI 46-47]

**God's Love  
Is Ours in  
Christ Jesus**

# ROMANS

## 8:35-39



Romans 8 begins with the declaration that “...*nothing [is] condemnation for the ones in Christ Jesus*” (v.1); it ends with the blessed assurance that nothing, that is, no “*other created thing*” (v.39) will be able to “*separate us from God’s love*” (v.35) and that God’s love is “*for us*” (v.31) “*in Christ Jesus our Lord*” (v.39).

However, Paul does not belittle the real and painful struggles of life that come from our sinful nature and world: “...*we face death all the day; we are regarded as sheep of slaughter*” (v.36).

Even so, these verses are of the greatest comfort to those who are suffering and dying.

## Conclusion



# ROMANS

8:35-39



Such struggle, however, does not lead us to despair; rather, we are *“hyper-conquering”* through Jesus Christ who loved us, since NOTHING, once again, can separate YOU from *“the love of God in Christ Jesus your Lord!”*

**Conclusion**

# ROMANS

8:35-39



## Conclusion



# ROMANS

## 8:35-39



You have now reached the mountaintop; the peak from which you can look back clearly over the terrain that we have covered thus far and REJOICE that a high point on the hike through Romans has been reached! This section of Romans 8 is a high and secure perch from which you can ponder your Heavenly Father, who handed over His Only-begotten Son, in your behalf, in order to declare you righteous and grant you eternal life in Him! However, the journey continues...and we still have a ways to go! So next week...

## Conclusion

# ROMANS



9:1-5



Paul's  
Anguish

AND

Israel's  
Advantage





**I Wonder if they have any  
Questions?**

