

Romans 32 – Who is Praying: You or the Spirit?

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Romans 8:26-30

Prologue: Creation in Groaning

- Paul segues from Creation to believers who also groan awaiting their full redemption; i.e., their new bodies
 - Believers have the *firstfruits* of their salvation, seal of the indwelling Holy Spirit, but still suffer in the world
 - Like Creation, believers await their final redemption in *hope* believing the promises of God has made
 - Christ, as *firstfruit*, revealed the truth of bodily redemption and our adoption as sons of God
(1Co 15:20-28; Titus 3:3-7)

Prologue: Empirical Picture

Creation (κτίσις ktisis)

God created to nurture man to salvation
(Ro 12:13-18)

Managed by angels (Job 38:4-7)

Submits to God though groans awaiting renewal

World (κόσμος kosmos)

Satan's system fostering sin and rebellion vs. God
(Da 7:1-8; Re 12:17-3:1, 11-12)

Managed by demons (Ep 6:12)

Rages against God though controlled by Him (Isa 8:22-25)

Prologue: Salvation Picture

Saved

- God will not stop until all He has called are saved (Ep 3:10)
- Believers shine into world the gospel of God (2Co 4:3-6)
- All believers enter New Earth by grace (Re 21:1-5)

Lost

- Lost do not want God but love their sin to death (Jo 3:19; Ro 3:10-18)
- Those of the Darkness hate the Light (Jo 1:1-5)
- Sinners consigned to Lake of Fire by works (Re 20:11-15)

Empiricism Limits Understanding

When God sent Samuel to anoint Saul's replacement, He did not tell Samuel which one was chosen (1Sa 16:7)

Samuel as us, looks at the outside for our senses are limited to the empirical (Je 17:9)

God looks at the heart, the true nature of a person which cannot be hid from Him

God searches us via peirasmoi, teaching us the truth of our soul hindered by the flesh (Je 17:10)

Childish Perspective

No matter how mature we believe ourselves, compared to God we are barely infants in understanding (Je 55:8-9)

Christ told His Apostles that unless one becomes like a child, eager to learn, one cannot enter Heaven (Mt 18:1-4)

Christ compared the Jews of His coming as foolish children refusing to humble themselves to hear God (Mt 11:16-19)

Paul Continues This Theme

- Paul comes to the conclusion that spiritual growth is like physical growth (1Co 13:11-12)
 - A child thinks and acts as a child; i.e., learning
 - Child should grow in understanding as one matures; wise to understand one is still learning
 - Paul compares this to spiritual growth admitting he will not attain spiritual maturity while in the body of flesh

Flesh is Morally Weak

Paul has taught that the flesh is morally weak, sinful (Ro 5:6-8)

The weakness of the flesh cannot be undone, it is inherent to the flesh; hence, sin (1Co 4:6-7)

Man cannot control his flesh; only the Spirit can successfully strive against the flesh, if we comply (Ro 8:1-6)

Man either sets his mind on the flesh, sin, or on the Spirit, life; often we facilitate between the two: children

Spirit is Our Parakletos

As Christ stated, the Spirit is our advocate, guiding us in the way we should go (Jo 14:15-17)

Once received, the Spirit remains with us forever

Spirit speaks *only* truth which the immature does not wish to hear, willingly and lost not at all

It is the Spirit that teaches us truth via the Word (1Co 2:14)

Immature disdain to study the Word to grow (He 5:11-14)

Conclusion: We are Ignorant

Though saved, our often prideful, arrogant perspective masks our ignorance from ourselves

People believe they have spiritual maturity & knowledge

Truly, we know little of spiritual matters because of the cloud of sinful flesh, prideful attitudes and poor prayers

We do not know what we do not know and would be wretches indeed if God did not give us the Spirit

Spirit: Agent of Prayer

- The most important ministry of the Spirit is the interface between the believer and the Father and Son
 - The Spirit is the matrix organizing the believers in the body of Christ (1Co 12:12-13)
 - Spirit is our direct spiritual link to Christ, our Head
 - Since we do not know how to pray, the Spirit takes our prayers to Christ, even when all we can do is groan under the burden of our flesh and sin

Spirit-Member of Trinity

The Spirit is also one with God, knowing the mind of God yet distinct from Him in a manner unfathomable

Father is spoken of as a person - Anthropomorphism

Son is observed in the Bible as a person representing us

Hard to grasp the Spirit as an entity: incorporeal

In the Bible the Spirit is in the neuter form emphasizing His ministry to point only to Christ, not itself (1Co 16:12-15)

Focus of the Trinity: Growth

God saved each person for a specific purpose

Only the saved love God; lost {ἀσέβεια} hate God

Everything that has and will occur in your life refines you for the purpose to which you were called

We do not sin deliberately to bring good; however, God brings good out of our sin via peirasmoi (Ro 3:7-8)

Satan seeks our harm; God uses it to develop us

God's Election Apparent

Though unpopular today, God works through election since no one would be saved otherwise (Ro 3:10-18)

Foreknew {προγινώσκω proginōskō}: Prior knowledge, not because He knows what occurs but because He plans and guides all that does occur despite sin & Satan (De 50:15-20; Ps 33:11; Dn 4:34-35; 1Pe 5:6-11)

Predestined {προορίζω proorizo}: Determined by God to be made into the image of Christ - God's Purpose

Christ, the Firstborn

Christ is the *firstborn* {πρωτοτόκος prototokos} of all who will be saved

Firstborn speaks of His being born in the flesh as He was always eternally God (Col 1:15-20; He 1:6-14; 1:14-18)

Just as He reflects the very image of the Father, so also will we reflect the image of Christ

He is the firstborn from the dead giving us hope of our coming resurrection (Ro 1:4-5)

Progression of God's Work

God has a plan, there is always a plan for God is not the author of confusion but of order (1Co 14:33)

God predestined us from before Creation those whom He would save for His purposes which work together for our good in all things (Ep 1:3-14)

Then in His order each is called to salvation for predestination is meaningless without being called at the specific time under the ministry of another person (EPe 1:12)

Progression Continues

Just as God predestined and called each person ever saved, He continues the Plan to its desired end point

Those called will be justified, acquitted of all charges based on Christ's sacrifice for sin as sin

The acquitted do not earn righteousness, works, but are covered in Christ's righteousness for eternity

This is our glorification, Christ in us the hope of glory (Col 1:27)

Epilogue: Childish Perspective

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Quenching the Spirit

Spirit is a vital element of our salvation and New Covenant experience for eternity

When one attempts to live without the Spirit, in one's own strength, sin quickly ensues

Living apart from the Spirit means one has no prayer life with the Father or Son but act like petulant children rather than as grateful, obedient children of God willing to learn as taught from His word by the Spirit