

faith was the conviction that God had given Israel the inheritance of...the promised land. It is this axiom which Paul evokes and refers to the new Christian movement as a whole, Gentiles as well as Jews. *They* are the heirs of God; Israel's special relationship with God has been extended to all in Christ. And the promise of the land has been transformed into the promise of the *kingdom*.”<sup>60</sup>

Not enough contemporary Christian examiners see the establishment of the modern State of Israel, and the restoration of the descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob back to their homeland, as having anything to really do with God's plan—and instead focus their attention more on the Kingdom of God in general. Today's Messianic community, in rightly affirming that the Land of Israel is the inheritance of those descendants in perpetuity, does need to consciously balance this with how the inheritance of God's people—including the redeemed from the nations—is also witnessed throughout Scripture (cf. Numbers 26:55; Psalm 25:13; Isaiah 60:21; Matthew 5:5; Galatians 3:29; 4:7). With much more still to come in salvation history, the presence of the Holy Spirit, residing inside of redeemed men and women of God, is to be regarded as the initial guarantee of the full inheritance (2 Corinthians 1:22; 5:5; Ephesians 1:14).

**18 For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that is to be revealed to us. 19 For the anxious longing of the creation waits eagerly for the revealing of the sons of God. 20 For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of Him who subjected it, in hope 21 that the creation itself also will be set free from its slavery to corruption into the freedom of the glory of the children of God.**

**8:18** The Apostle Paul tells his Roman audience, “I consider that our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us” (NIV). He makes reference to *ta pathēmata tou nun kairou* (τὰ παθήματα τοῦ νῦν καιροῦ), “the sufferings of the present time,” which should rightly be viewed as some of the difficulties that Paul and his company had to endure in their ministry service. As Paul observed in 2 Corinthians 4:17, “For momentary, light affliction is producing for us an eternal weight of glory far beyond all comparison.” Also to be certain, though, is how the complete arrival of the Messianic Age, will be preceded by extreme difficulty for God's people. Yeshua Himself taught,

“Blessed are you when men hate you, and ostracize you, and insult you, and scorn your name as evil, for the sake of the Son of Man. Be glad in that day and leap *for joy*, for behold, your reward is great in heaven. For in the same way their fathers used to treat the prophets” (Luke 6:22-23).

As it would be stated in 2 *Baruch* 15:7-8 in the Pseudepigrapha, “And with regard to the righteous ones, those whom you said the world has come on their account, yes, also that which is coming is on their account. For this world is to them a struggle and an effort with much trouble. And that accordingly which will come, a crown with great glory.”<sup>61</sup> The future realities of the resurrection (1 Thessalonians 4:13-18), the Messianic Kingdom (Isaiah 11:5-9; 35:1-2, 5-7; 65:20, 25; Amos 9:13), and later the New Heavens and Earth (Revelation 21:1-22:5), will be preceded by hardship to be experienced by God's people.

**8:19** The adoption to which Paul has just referred (v. 15), involves much more than just the inclusion of redeemed men and women into the people of God. As he states it, “For the creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the children of God” (NRSV). The term *apokaradokia* (ἀποκαρραδοκία) can fully mean, “to watch with head erect or outstretched, to direct attention to

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<sup>60</sup> Dunn, 38a:462-463.

<sup>61</sup> Klijn, “2 (Syriac Apocalypse of) Baruch,” in *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*, Vol 1, 626.

anything, to wait for in suspense...*anxious (?) and persistent expectation*" (Thayer).<sup>62</sup> It appears in Philippians 1:20, where Paul expresses the thought, "according to my earnest expectation [*apokaradokia*] and hope, that I will not be put to shame in anything, but *that* with all boldness, Messiah will even now, as always, be exalted in my body, whether by life or by death."

The earnest expectation, while being experienced by all of Creation—**but most especially also for the people of God themselves**—is widely noted by 1 John 3:2: "Beloved, now we are children of God, and it has not appeared as yet what we will be. We know that when He appears, we will be like Him, because we will see Him just as He is." The need for God's sons and daughters to finally emerge on the scene, in the fullness of all they can be in Yeshua (11:12, 25) for the final stages of history before His Second Coming, is imperative given the fallen state of the world in the Twentieth and Twenty-First Centuries. As Edwards must sadly observe,

"Is not the past century a standing commentary on this verse? Our knowledge leaps exponentially and our problems no less so. Books proliferate and ignorance abounds, harvests increase and hunger spreads, production grows and poverty deepens. Mechanization makes our lives easier but threatens our worth as persons, and the time it saves us reveals only the meaninglessness of life around us. People live longer but fear growing old, they worship sex but fear getting pregnant. Counselors, clinics, and agencies abound, but the divorce rate soars and youth lose their way. Symbolic of it all is nuclear weaponry which, with each advance in technology, makes the world less secure."<sup>63</sup>

**8:20** It is observed how Creation "was made the victim of frustration, not by its own choice, but because of him who made it so" (NEB), as it was the intention of God for something wondrous and beautiful to come out of a disaster. The good Creation that God had made (Genesis 1:21), and the humans He has made in His image (Genesis 1:27), introduced sin and a level of difficulty for themselves (Genesis 3:17-18), which must experience resolution for His ultimate cosmic purposes—*such resolution ultimately being found in the sacrifice of Yeshua the Messiah, and His return to establish His Messianic Kingdom*. 4 Ezra 7:11-12 in the Apocrypha summarizes what has transpired:

"For I made the world for their sake, and when Adam transgressed my statutes, what had been made was judged. And so the entrances of this world were made narrow and sorrowful and toilsome; they are few and evil, full of dangers and involved in great hardships."

The "futility" or *mataiotēs* (ματαιότης), that humanity at large has experienced, is not just the dilemma portrayed by Psalm 39:6: "Surely every man walks about as a phantom; surely they make an uproar for nothing; he amasses *riches* and does not know who will gather them." The futility experienced by the Creation at large is people being subject to elemental spirits or demonic forces (Galatians 4:8-9), noted by Paul's word to the crowd in Lystra, which was preparing to worship both him and Barnabas as Hermes and Zeus: "Men, why are you doing these things? We are also men of the same nature as you, and preach the gospel to you that you should turn from these vain things [*tōn mataiōn*, τῶν ματαίων] to a living God, WHO MADE THE HEAVEN AND THE EARTH AND THE SEA AND ALL THAT IS IN THEM [Exodus 20:11; Psalm 146:6]" (Acts 14:15). The complete emergence, of the children of God onto the scene of history, should serve as a testimony that indeed the futile gods and goddesses of the pagans are false, and they have no power in light of the One True God and the Living Yeshua.

**8:21** Even though there are elemental forces at work in the universe which are evil, Paul details how "the creation itself will be set free from its bondage to corruption and obtain the freedom of the glory of the children of God" (ESV). The ultimate trajectory not only involves a restored Israel in the Millennium, but will then be attended by the Eternal State, and the scene depicted by Revelation 22:1-5,

<sup>62</sup> Thayer, 62.

<sup>63</sup> Edwards, 214.

“Then he showed me a river of the water of life, clear as crystal, coming from the throne of God and of the Lamb, in the middle of its street. On either side of the river was the tree of life, bearing twelve *kinds of* fruit, yielding its fruit every month; and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations. There will no longer be any curse; and the throne of God and of the Lamb will be in it, and His bond-servants will serve Him; they will see His face, and His name *will be* on their foreheads. And there will no longer be *any* night; and they will not have need of the light of a lamp nor the light of the sun, because the Lord God will illumine them; and they will reign forever and ever.”

While many of us today often tend to focus on the salvation of individual people—and not unjustifiably so—the Apostle Paul’s view of salvation is *significantly encompassing*. Redeemed people by being adopted and recognized as God’s own (vs. 14-16), with the future resurrection to be anticipated (vs. 10-11), have a grand redemption in which to participate. As Kruse describes it, “What is clear from all this is that Paul’s understanding of salvation is not restricted to humanity but encompasses the whole cosmos. Believers will enter their glorious freedom as children of God, and the cosmos too will be renewed.”<sup>64</sup> Wright further summarizes that when this grand redemption transpires, it is then that the human beings God created—who have obviously had to acknowledge the salvation available in His Son—can fully occupy the position for which He always intended for them:

“The answer, if the creator is to be true to the original purpose, is for humans to be redeemed, to take their place at last as God’s imagebearers, the wise steward they were always meant to be. Paul sees that this purpose has already been accomplished in principle in the resurrection of Jesus, and that it will be accomplished fully when all those in Christ are raised and together set in saving authority over the world (see 1 Cor 15:20-28). That is why, Paul says, creation is now waiting with eager longing.”<sup>65</sup>

**22 For we know that the whole creation groans and suffers the pains of childbirth together until now. 23 And not only this, but also we ourselves, having the first fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting eagerly for *our* adoption as sons, the redemption of our body.**

**8:22** The present condition is described by Paul in terms of the pains of childbirth: “We know that the whole creation has been groaning in labor pains until now” (NRSV). The verb *sunōdinō* (συνωδίνω) mainly means, “*to be in travail together*” (LS),<sup>66</sup> but can also regard “*metaphorically, to undergo agony* (like a woman in childbirth) *along with*” (Thayer).<sup>67</sup> Interestingly enough, God is depicted as undergoing the labor pains of a woman in Isaiah 42:14: “I have kept silent for a long time, I have kept still and restrained Myself. *Now* like a woman in labor I will groan, I will both gasp and pant.” What is principally intended by Paul in v. 22, though, in terms of God’s Creation going through some kind of birthing pains, is comparable to Yeshua’s own words describing His Second Coming (Matthew 24:8; Mark 13:8; cf. Revelation 12:2). In John 16:20-22, Yeshua details how while birthing pains can be quite agonizing and stressful, they ultimately result in the arrival of a child, which is to be seen as a great blessing:

“Truly, truly, I say to you, that you will weep and lament, but the world will rejoice; you will grieve, but your grief will be turned into joy. Whenever a woman is in labor she has pain, because her

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<sup>64</sup> Kruse, 344.

<sup>65</sup> Wright, in *NIB*, 10:596.

Do also consult the observations present in the FAQ, “Image of God, Rulership.”

<sup>66</sup> LS, 781.

<sup>67</sup> Thayer, 607.

hour has come; but when she gives birth to the child, she no longer remembers the anguish because of the joy that a child has been born into the world. Therefore you too have grief now; but I will see you again, and your heart will rejoice, and no one *will* take your joy away from you.”

**8:23** While Believers have the spirit of adoption (v. 15), meaning that they can already regard themselves as sons and daughters of God, such adoption involves the total culmination of the inheritance as witnessed by Paul’s assertion, “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” (NIV). Believers already have “a spirit of adoption” functioning inside of them as “firstfruits” (cf. Exodus 23:19), but more is still to come: *tēn apolutrōsin tou sōmatos hēmōn* (τὴν ἀπολύτρωσιν τοῦ σώματος ἡμῶν), “the redemption of our body” (NASU).

Mark Nanos gets it completely wrong when he states that such redemption means, “restoration at the place where human desire leading to defeat takes place.”<sup>68</sup> While various versions do take a liberty in rendering the singular *sōmatos* or “body,” with the plural “bodies” (RSV/NRSV/ESV, NIV), such an alteration is to draw attention, “to have our whole bodies redeemed and set free” (CJB). The ultimate culmination of a man or woman’s salvation will be seen at the resurrection of the dead, when all of the constituent parts of a human being will be brought to permanent vitality.

**24 For in hope we have been saved, but hope that is seen is not hope; for who hopes for what he already sees? 25 But if we hope for what we do not see, with perseverance we wait eagerly for it. 26 In the same way the Spirit also helps our weakness; for we do not know how to pray as we should, but the Spirit Himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words; 27 and He who searches the hearts knows what the mind of the Spirit is, because He intercedes for the saints according to the will of God.**

**8:24** Paul expresses *tē gar elpidi esōthēmen* (τῇ γὰρ ἐλπίδι ἐσώθημεν), “for~with this hope we were saved” (Brown and Comfort),<sup>69</sup> but also acknowledges how *elpis* (ἐλπίς), a “*hope, expectation*” (LS),<sup>70</sup> without anything further on the horizon, is not really hope. As the Phillips New Testament puts it, “We were saved by this hope, and let us remember that hope always means waiting for something that we do not yet see.” What awaits in the future, in terms of the adoption of Believers (v. 23), is not their being welcomed into the company of redeemed; it is their entering into the total purpose of God for redemptive history. This is the hope that is to motivate Believers in the present age, as they wait for the arrival of the Messianic Age.

**8:25** The hope of grand, ultimate redemption for the cosmos, which awaits the people of God, is something to which they are to wait patiently and with perseverance: “But if we hope for what we do not see, we wait for it with patience” (RSV). As The Message paraphrases v. 25, “But the longer we wait, the larger we become, and the more joyful our expectancy.” Much of what v. 25 communicates parallels Paul’s thought of 2 Corinthians 4:18, regarding faith: “we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen; for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal.” Stott observes, on this part of Paul’s letter, how “This whole section is a notable example of what it means to be living ‘in between times’, between present difficulty and future destiny, between the already and the not yet, between sufferings and glory.”<sup>71</sup> And indeed, while the power of

<sup>68</sup> Nanos, in *Jewish Annotated New Testament*, 269.

<sup>69</sup> Brown and Comfort, 553.

<sup>70</sup> LS, 252.

<sup>71</sup> Stott, 243.

the future age has been manifested and experienced in the lives of God's people via the gospel of salvation in Yeshua now, there is still much more to take place in the future.

**8:26-27** Just as God's people are to be looking toward the hope of the grand future which awaits in the eschaton, so do we see Paul's thought of how the presence of God's Spirit is to provide hope for the difficulties of the much more immediate future: "In the same way the Spirit also helps our weakness; for we do not know how to pray as we should, but the Spirit Himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words" (v. 26, NASU). His terminology *stenagmois alalētois* (στεναγμοῖς ἀλάλητοις), is variably rendered as "sighs too deep for words" (RSV), "groans that words cannot express" (NIV), "groanings that cannot be uttered" (LITV), "wordless groans" (TNIV), or "sighs that are beyond words" (Moffat New Testament)—among different English versions. The main term in view is *alalētos* (ἀλάλητος), "**unexpressed, wordless**" (BDAG),<sup>72</sup> or "**unutterable**" (LS).<sup>73</sup> Some associate this with the *glōssa* (γλῶσσα) or "tongue" of 1 Corinthians 14:2,<sup>74</sup> but others think what is being described is some form of inarticulate, verbal communication. In Moo's estimation,

"[T]he groans are not the believer's but the Spirit's. While we cannot...be absolutely sure (and we have no clear biblical parallels to go by), it is preferable to understand these 'groans' as the Spirit's own 'language of prayer,' a ministry of intercession that takes place in our hearts (cf. v. 27) in a manner imperceptible to us."<sup>75</sup>

We can consider what Psalm 38:9 communicates: "Lord, all my desire is before You; and my sighing [Heb. noun *anachah*, אָנַחָה];<sup>76</sup> Grk. LXX noun *stenagmos*, στεναγμός] is not hidden from You." Whatever such communication is to be regarded as, it is significant, as "he who searches our hearts knows what the Spirit means, for it pleads for God's people in accordance with his will" (v. 27, Goodspeed New Testament).

**28 And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose. 29 For those whom He foreknew, He also predestined to become conformed to the image of His Son, so that He would be the firstborn among many brethren; 30 and these whom He predestined, He also called; and these whom He called, He also justified; and these whom He justified, He also glorified.**

**8:28** Recognizing some of his present ministry difficulties, but perhaps also various difficulties in store for the First Century Roman Believers, and difficulties in store for the people of God in the future time prior to the Second Coming, Paul issues the significant word, "We know that in everything God works for good with those who love him, who are called according to his purpose" (RSV). A verse like this has been abused at times, when people who are going through or have gone through a tragedy are made to think that their tragedy was something less-than-horrific. While the Lord is bigger than our human crises, and ultimately His purposes will indeed prevail—the ability to see the bigger picture of His plan is often necessarily enjoined with inexpressible groans and the Holy Spirit searching our hearts and minds (vs. 26-27). The classic expression of Jeremiah 29:11, "For I know the plans that I have for you," declares the LORD, 'plans for welfare and not for calamity to give you a future and a

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<sup>72</sup> BDAG, 41.

<sup>73</sup> LS, 32.

<sup>74</sup> "For one who speaks in a tongue does not speak to men but to God; for no one understands, but in *his* spirit he speaks mysteries" (1 Corinthians 14:2).

<sup>75</sup> Moo, pp 525-526.

<sup>76</sup> "sighing, groaning" (BDB, 58).

hope,” is often one that has to be preceded by a realization of people knowing that *only God* can work together the events of their lives for His purposes.

Paul’s thought in v. 28 is very much the thought of Joseph, who was sold into slavery by his brothers and thought dead by his father Jacob, but ultimately was brought to Egypt to be the deliverance of his family: “As for you, you meant evil against me, *but* God meant it for good in order to bring about this present result, to preserve many people alive” (Genesis 50:20). One of the most tragic events in human history was the brutal and unjust death of the Messiah Himself, but Peter concluded that this was a part of the Father’s plan for the redemption of all: “this *Man*, delivered over by the predetermined plan and foreknowledge of God, you nailed to a cross by the hands of godless men and put *Him* to death. But God raised Him up again, putting an end to the agony of death, since it was impossible for Him to be held in its power” (Acts 2:23-24).

It is common to hear “all things work together for good to those who love God” (NKJV), but loving God, as seen throughout the Torah, is something that is often associated with obedience to His Instruction (Exodus 20:6; Deuteronomy 5:10; 6:5; 7:9; 10:12). While God’s love for us as human beings is something that is offered freely by Him as a caring Creator and Heavenly Father—will those things in individuals’ lives *for good*, that they desperately desire and want and think about all the time, only come when they are committed to a proper course of obedience? While it is true that a significant component of things working together for good is proper timing, how many blessings do we see withheld from us, because we are either disobedient or undisciplined in our walk of faith?

8:29 Paul’s statement in v. 29 is one which has caused a variety of opinions to emerge among readers of Romans, certainly since the Protestant Reformation: “For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the first-born among many brethren” (RSV). While many Reformed readers of v. 29 would take this to be a predestination of individuals to salvation, it might not be. V. 29 could just as well be taken as a statement of the predestination of God’s people to spiritual transformation. And not to be overlooked as well, is how such predestination need not be individual specific, but instead corporately general.

It is stated that God “foreknew” how people were going to be conformed to the image of Yeshua. Here, the verb *proginōskō* (προγινώσκω) can mean either “**to know beforehand or in advance, have foreknowledge (of),**” or “**choose beforehand**” (BDAG).<sup>77</sup> Stott interjects, “the Hebrew verb ‘to know’ [*yada*, ידע] expresses much more than mere intellectual recognition; it denotes a personal relationship of care and affection.”<sup>78</sup> One can certainly think, for example, of the thought of Psalm 1:6, “For the LORD knows the way of the righteous, but the way of the wicked will perish.” Psalm 144:3 also states, “O LORD, what is man, that You take knowledge of him? Or the son of man, that You think of him?”<sup>79</sup> At the same time, God’s knowing does involve His care and concern for His corporate people, as seen in the Tanach regarding His watching over Israel:

“I knew you in the wilderness, in a parched land” (Hosea 13:5, ATS).

“You only have I known of all the families of the earth; therefore I will punish you for all your iniquities” (Amos 3:2, RSV).

That some kind of corporate selection for the transformation of God’s people, and not individual selection for salvation, could be in view for v. 29—is supportable per Paul’s further word, “God has not rejected His people whom He foreknew” (11:2). While the targeted issue here is the transformation of

<sup>77</sup> BDAG, 866.

<sup>78</sup> Stott, 249.

<sup>79</sup> Cf. 1 Corinthians 8:3; Galatians 4:9.

God's people in Messiah, the contents of vs. 29-30 describe a predestination to purpose, and with it the corporate mission and function of God's own—not a predestination of individuals to salvation. In Keener's view,

"When modern readers encounter terms like 'chose' and 'predestine' (Rom 8:29-30) we tend to read them in light of later theological debates...Paul's own audience would think of Israel as the people God had chosen [e.g., Neh 9:7; Jer 33:24; Sir 46:1; 2 Macc 1:25; *Jub.* 1:29; 22:9-10; 2 *Bar.* 48:20], and recognize that Paul's argument was designed to show that God was so sovereign that he was not bound to choose (with regard to salvation) based on Jewish ethnicity."<sup>80</sup>

From this vantage point, then, readers should be more focused on the inclusive nature of those predestined: *hous* (οὓς), "those," and *pollois adelphois* (πολλοῖς ἀδελφοῖς) or "many brothers and sisters" (TNIV), "a large family" (NRSV). If there is any major distinction to be intended, it is between the redeemed in Messiah being conformed to His image, and the resultant glory of Yeshua being recognized as "firstborn" because of those being conformed to His image, the title "firstborn" being one of significant prominence (Colossians 1:15, 18; Hebrews 1:6; Revelation 1:5). Stott comments to this end:

"[W]e should be *conformed to the likeness of his Son*. In the simplest possible terms, God's eternal purpose for his people is that we should become like Jesus. The transformation process begins here and now in our character and conduct, through the work of the Holy Spirit [2 Cor. 3:18], but will be brought to completion only when Christ comes and we see him [1 Jn 3:2f.], and our bodies become like the body of his glory [1 Cor. 15:49; Phil. 3:21]. The second purpose of God's predestination is that, as a result of our conformity to the image of Christ, *he might be the firstborn among many brothers*, enjoying both the community of the family and the pre-eminence of the firstborn [*Cf.* Col. 1:18]."<sup>81</sup>

Witherington, who identifies as an Arminian, and who does not support the view that God has predestined various individuals to salvation and others to damnation, describes some of the historical handling of v. 29:

"Is Paul then talking about a pretemporal election plan of God where the outcome is predetermined because of God's sovereign hand in and on every step of the process? This of course is how Augustine and his offspring read the text, but it is not how some of the crucial Greek Fathers that came before Augustine read it, including most importantly Chrysostom. Paul is speaking about God foreknowing and destining in advance Christians to be fully conformed to the image of Christ."<sup>82</sup>

The collective people of God is obviously composed of regenerated individuals. But, even while it may be more common for us to encounter Christian readers of v. 29 today who take this verse as speaking of a predestination of individuals to salvation, such a view can be legitimately challenged. V. 29 appears instead to be speaking about the corporate predestination of God's people to sanctification and future glory. God has known this collective group of people, just as He knew Ancient Israel—yet the community of men and women to be found in His Son compose the redeemed from both Israel proper and the nations at large.

**8:30** Paul states what the predestination involves: "And those whom he predestined he also called; and those whom he called he also justified; and those whom he justified he also glorified" (RSV). Historically, this statement has been taken as individuals being predestined to salvation. Interestingly enough, though, Calvin would conclude here that "the word *predestine* does not refer to election, but to that purpose or decree of God by which He has ordained that His people are to bear the cross."<sup>83</sup> This would concur with the thought that vs. 29-30 describe more the corporate selection and predestination of God's people being transformed in Yeshua.

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<sup>80</sup> Keener, pp 109-110.

<sup>81</sup> Stott, 252.

<sup>82</sup> Witherington, 228.

<sup>83</sup> Calvin, 181.

**31 What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who is against us? 32 He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him over for us all, how will He not also with Him freely give us all things? 33 Who will bring a charge against God's elect? God is the one who justifies; 34 who is the one who condemns? Messiah Yeshua is He who died, yes, rather who was raised, who is at the right hand of God, who also intercedes for us.**

**8:31** Paul offers the appropriate direction of attention to his audience, “What then are we to say about these things? If God is for us, who is against us?” (HCSB). Thoughts of Psalm 23:4, “Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I fear no evil, for You are with me; Your rod and Your staff, they comfort me,” or of Psalm 56:11, “In God I have put my trust, I shall not be afraid. What can man do to me?”, could certainly be present. As witnessed throughout the Book of Psalms, for sure, God is certainly *for His own* (Psalm 56:9; 118:6-7).

While God is witnessed to demonstrate His protection and favor to righteous individuals, we should also consider how many times the Tanach communicates how God stood against an ancient power which opposed Israel. These included, but were not limited to, God’s opposition toward Assyria and Nineveh (Nahum 2:13; 3:5), Babylon (Jeremiah 50:31; 51:25), Egypt (Ezekiel 29:3, 10; 30:22), Tyre and Sidon (Ezekiel 26:3; 28:22), and Edom (Ezekiel 35:1-2).

Paul writes the word, “So, what do you think? With God on our side like this, how can we lose?” (The Message), as one who has Jewish opponents, Roman opponents, and has set his eyes going to an unknown place in Spain. Surely, with a God who has demonstrated great power and steadfastness toward the enemies of His people, He will see *His people* through to the end—all the while accomplishing His purposes (v. 28).

**8:32** The significance of what it means to trust the intention and purposes of the God of Israel is highlighted in Paul’s acknowledging, “He who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all—how will he not also, along with him, graciously give us all things?” (NIV). If Yeshua the Messiah, the Son of the Heavenly Father, can be provided as an atoning sacrifice for human beings—then surely the Lord will be generous with His own! V. 32 likely includes some kind of an echo of the Lord’s word to Abraham regarding Isaac, “...because you have done this thing and have not withheld your son, your only son” (Genesis 22:16).

**8:33** The power of God is most serious. Paul asks, “Who shall bring any charge against God’s elect? It is God who justifies” (RSV). Those in view are notably identified by the plural *eklektōn Theou* (ἐκλεκτῶν θεοῦ), also rendered as “those whom God has chosen” (NIV) or “God’s chosen people” (CJB). These are people who are to be found justified from their sins in Messiah. Not to be dismissed from what v. 33 says, is how the Messiah Himself, in His role as a Servant for Israel, functions as though He is the corporate people of God, serving as their representative:

“He who vindicates Me is near; who will contend with Me? Let us stand up to each other; who has a case against Me? Let him draw near to Me. Behold, the Lord GOD helps Me; who is he who condemns Me? Behold, they will all wear out like a garment; the moth will eat them” (Isaiah 50:8-9).

The elect or chosen of v. 33, again being focused on God’s corporate people being transformed—and not necessarily individuals predestined to eternal salvation—is something rooted within the language of the Tanach. Psalm 105:6, 43 declares, “O seed of Abraham, His servant, O sons of Jacob, His chosen ones [Heb. MT: *bechirayv*, בְּחִירָיִי; Grk. LXX: *eklektōi*, ἐκλεκτοῖ!...]...And He brought forth His people with joy, His chosen ones [*bechirayv*; *eklektous*, ἐκλεκτοῦς] with a joyful shout.”

**8:34** With the Messiah present in the lives of His people, who are justified by His work, who can condemn them? Paul asserts, “Who is to condemn? Christ Jesus is the one who died—more than that,

who was raised—who is at the right hand of God, who indeed is interceding for us” (ESV). There a definite allusion in v. 34 made to the Psalm 110:1 declaration of the Messiah seated at the right hand of the Father: “The LORD says to my Lord: ‘Sit at My right hand until I make Your enemies a footstool for Your feet,” with possibly also a passing reference to the Isaiah 53:12<sup>84</sup> expectation of the Messiah’s intercession for sinners. Yeshua’s being seated at His Father’s right hand, not only should serve as a vindication of His defeat of sin and death, but it is from His present reign from Heaven that the redeemed in Him can be supplied with all (Ephesians 1:20-23).

**35 Who will separate us from the love of Messiah? Will tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? 36 Just as it is written, “FOR YOUR SAKE WE ARE BEING PUT TO DEATH ALL DAY LONG; WE WERE CONSIDERED AS SHEEP TO BE SLAUGHTERED” [Psalm 44:22]. 37 But in all these things we overwhelmingly conquer through Him who loved us. 38 For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, 39 nor height, nor depth, nor any other created thing, will be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Messiah Yeshua our Lord.**

**8:35** With the intercession of Yeshua the Messiah at the right hand of the Father in Heaven, “Who will separate us from the love of the Messiah? Trouble? Hardship? Persecution? Hunger? Poverty? Danger? War?” (CJB). While there are elements to be considered that are salvation-historical (vs. 18-25), there are also more immediate elements per the Romans’ and Paul’s own faith experience (vs. 26-27). One needs to really consider some of Paul’s significant ministry difficulties in the First Century Mediterranean, as detailed in 2 Corinthians 11:23-29:

“Are they servants of Messiah?—I speak as if insane—I more so; in far more labors, in far more imprisonments, beaten times without number, often in danger of death. Five times I received from the Jews thirty-nine *lashes*. Three times I was beaten with rods, once I was stoned, three times I was shipwrecked, a night and a day I have spent in the deep. *I have been* on frequent journeys, in dangers from rivers, dangers from robbers, dangers from *my* countrymen, dangers from the Gentiles, dangers in the city, dangers in the wilderness, dangers on the sea, dangers among false brethren; *I have been* in labor and hardship, through many sleepless nights, in hunger and thirst, often without food, in cold and exposure. Apart from *such* external things, there is the daily pressure on me *of* concern for all the [assembly]. Who is weak without my being weak? Who is led into sin without my intense concern?”

**8:36** Paul makes light of the significance of the Messiah and His grand beneficence, by stating, “As the *Tanakh* puts it, ‘For your sake we are being put to death all day long, we are considered sheep to be slaughtered’” (CJB). God’s faithful people implore Him to redeem them, as more fully witnessed when Paul’s quotation of Psalm 44:22 is decompressed from Psalm 44:17-26:

“All this has come upon us, but we have not forgotten You, and we have not dealt falsely with Your covenant. Our heart has not turned back, and our steps have not deviated from Your way, yet You have crushed us in a place of jackals and covered us with the shadow of death. If we had forgotten the name of our God or extended our hands to a strange god, would not God find this out? For He knows the secrets of the heart. **But for Your sake we are killed all day long; we are considered**

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<sup>84</sup> “Therefore, I will allot Him a portion with the great, and He will divide the booty with the strong; because He poured out Himself to death, and was numbered with the transgressors; yet He Himself bore the sin of many, and interceded for the transgressors” (Isaiah 53:12).

**as sheep to be slaughtered.** Arouse Yourself, why do You sleep, O Lord? Awake, do not reject us forever. Why do You hide Your face *and* forget our affliction and our oppression? For our soul has sunk down into the dust; our body cleaves to the earth. Rise up, be our help, and redeem us for the sake of Your lovingkindness.”

In Psalm 44:17-26, there is no indication that God’s people have been unfaithful to Him or to His ways—even though there is a need for Him to decisively intervene and take action to assist them.

**8:37-39** Even with peril or difficulty facing the Romans, Paul, or even worse things on the horizon for the First Century Believers, it is stated, “in all these things we are more than victorious through Him who loved us” (v. 37, HCSB). The broad-sweeping power and love of God is something which the Apostle Paul must have believed entirely, as he can actually say, “For I am convinced that there is nothing in death or life, in the realm of superhuman powers, in the world as it is or the world as it shall be, in the forces of the universe” (v. 38, REB) which can nullify the supremacy of God. He goes on to describe, “neither powers above nor powers below, nor any other created thing will be able to separate us from the love of God which comes to us through the Messiah Yeshua, our Lord” (v. 39, CJB), with these same themes more fully unpacked in Ephesians 3:17-19,

“[S]o that Messiah may dwell in your hearts through faith; *and* that you, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, and to know the love of Messiah which surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled up to all the fullness of God.”

