

God's Full Salvation in Romans 8

Romans 8 is an unveiling of God's full salvation. In order to carry out His plan of salvation, God sent His Son in the likeness of the flesh of sin and condemned sin in the flesh so that sinners could be reconciled to God and justified by Him in order to receive eternal life and thereby become children of God. The purpose of God's complete salvation, based upon the judicial redemption accomplished by Christ in His vicarious death on the cross, is to have Christ organically reproduced in millions of believers so that they may become sons of God and members of the Body of Christ. Romans 8 is a marvelous revelation of the Triune God and His purpose accomplished by the dispensing of the divine life into the tripartite believers so that they may be sons of God for His glorious expression. Christ in resurrection is the first-born Son of God, and the sons of God, as the many brothers of the Firstborn, are being conformed to His image for the corporate expression of the Triune God. Romans 8 is deep, profound, and mysterious, especially in its revelation of the believers' experience of the Triune God becoming life to their entire tripartite being.

The experience of the Triune God in Romans 8 is altogether related to the operation of the law of the Spirit of life, which address three organic consequences of the fall of humanity: the fallen nature of sin inherent in all humanity through our corporate heritage in Adam; the need for the life of God, to counteract the sin that dwells in the members of our body; and the separation and division that are the issue of continuing to live in the old nature of the old man, who was crucified with Christ. The law of the Spirit of life is intrinsically organic, being related to the life-giving Spirit and to life itself. Beginning in Romans 5:10 and culminating in Romans 8, Paul shifts his focus from the judicial aspect of God's salvation to its organic aspects. Paul's focus shifts from sinful acts that emanate from our fallen humanity to the sinful nature of our fallen humanity, from our judicial reconciliation to our experience of God's organic salvation involving the operation of the divine life, and from individual accountability before a righteous God to the corporate expression of the God of glory Himself. All these shifts are dependent upon the operation of the law of the Spirit of life in us, an organic operation that is situated in our regenerated human spirit and that is practically experienced in the midst of human tribulations and sufferings.

The law of the Spirit of life is activated when we set our mind on the spirit. When we set our mind on the spirit, our mind becomes life; that is, the eternal life of God resident in our spirit spreads into and becomes the source of our thoughts, evaluations, and considerations. When we set our mind on the spirit, we have an inward sense of satisfaction, a strengthening that comes from God's presence, and an inner sense of refreshment. The best way to set our mind on the spirit is to pray, and the basic foundation for our prayer is that we love the Lord. To set our mind on the spirit continually is to build up a habit of praying without ceasing, a habit of calling upon His name and conversing with Him continually in the most intimate way. The reality of all spiritual things depends on the Spirit of God, and the Spirit of God is in our spirit; hence, the reality of all spiritual matters depends on our mingled spirit.

Romans 8 underscores the integral means by which we may partake of God's full salvation—the divine Spirit joined to our regenerated human spirit to be the mingled spirit. The Spirit with our spirit is the focus of the economy of God's salvation to bring forth many sons for the constitution of the Body of Christ as His fullness. In our experience of salvation in the divine life, we are regenerated, renewed, sanctified, transformed, conformed, and glorified; we are delivered from sin, death, the flesh, worldliness, naturalness, self-likeness, and the slavery of corruption; and we become the same as the firstborn Son of God in life, nature, constitution, and expression but not in His Godhead. In order to partake of organic salvation, we must cooperate with the saving work of the Spirit within us by exercising our mingled spirit—crying to the Father in the spirit of sonship, walking according to our spirit, setting our mind on the spirit, and groaning in our spirit for the redemption of our body. The goal of our experience of God's organic salvation through the exercise of the mingled spirit is the fulfillment of God's will to obtain the Body of Christ. Our participation in God's salvation in life produces us as living, functioning, and coordinated members of the Body of Christ, which is a divine-human organism produced and maintained by the life union with Christ in our mingled spirit. **AF**

by the Editors