

# ***GOD'S TEAM WINS!***

Joe Slater

Christ's gospel does for us what the Law could not do for those who lived under it. Specifically, it frees us from the condemnation of sin (Romans 8:1-5), gives us spiritual life (8:6-13), makes us full-fledged sons of God (8:14-17), and provides us with genuine hope for resurrection unto eternal life (8:18-25). God provides everything we need to **be** saved and **stay** saved (8:16-30). In light of this magnificent truth, Paul asks five rhetorical questions which are well worth our consideration:

*"If God is for us, who can be against us?"* (8:31b). Of course the Devil and all his wicked forces are against us. The point is, who can succeed against us? As long as we are faithful to the Lord, our opposition is doomed to fail! Be not deceived – our adversary is formidable! But as John wrote, *"He who is in you is greater than he who is in the world"* (1 John 4:4).

*"He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?"* (8:32). Look at what God did in sending Jesus to die for us. He gave the very best – His own son; He sent Jesus to suffer unspeakable agony in our place. Is He going to turn His back, saying to us, "You'll have to make it the rest of the way on your own"? Ridiculous!

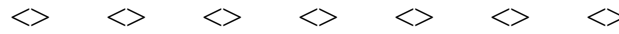
*"Who shall bring a charge against God's elect?"* (8:33a). Satan is *"the accuser of our brethren"* (Revelation 12:10). He is very good at what he does, and we have all sinned (Romans 3:23). As Paul points out in 8:33b, however, *"It is God who justifies."* When the Judge acquits us of the charges, the case is dismissed!

*"Who is he who condemns?"* (8:34a). Like a prosecutor, Satan seeks to condemn us. However, *"It is Christ who died, and furthermore is also risen, who is*

*even at the right hand of God, who also makes intercession for us"* (8:34b). In His death, Jesus paid the price for our sins; in rising from the dead, He conquered death for us. Now He intercedes on our behalf. Satan's best efforts fail miserably!

*"Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?"* (8:35a). The remainder of Romans 8 gives a long list of ways we might theoretically be removed from Christ's love. The conclusion of the matter, however, is that none of these things will succeed!

Paul's words are not comfort for the careless, but solace for the struggling! God loves you and wants you to succeed. He is on your side! Be sure you stay on His.



## **Optimists:**

- are seldom surprised by trouble.
- look for partial solutions even if an entire solution can't be found.
- believe God has control over their future.
- allow for regular renewal.
- derail their negative trains of thought.
- heighten their powers of appreciation.
- use imagination to rehearse success.
- are cheerful even when they can't be happy.
- think they have an almost unlimited capacity for stretching.
- build lots of love into their lives.
- like swapping good news.
- accept what cannot be changed

--Alan McGinnis (via Jacksonville, AL)

# ***Ways I Deepen My Faith*** **(when I read Revelation)**

**I enter worship more selflessly (chapters 4 and 5).**

My wife and I have six kids. Can I tell you what a typical Sunday morning looks like at my house? I'd like to say it's a focused time of joy and preparation, as my family smilingly helps each other get ready and then sings hymns in harmony on the van ride to church. But the reality is, Sunday mornings are crazy; it seems we're always running late, I can lose my cool with the kids, and too often I'm rushing into the auditorium with a pounding heart and irritated soul. I'm not focused on God.

It's easy to focus on so many other things during worship—family or work or the ball game or how someone's dressed or the music style or the misspelled PowerPoint slide. We can be thinking more about the excellence of the program than the excellence of God.

But not if I read Revelation. When you walk through the open door in Revelation 4, you enter the throne room of Heaven. You suck in your breath, shield your eyes from the dazzling light, and drop to your knees in fear and wonder. Incense fills your nostrils. An angelic host so vast you have to count it by the ten thousands shakes the very foundations of the sky with their praise. The countless thundering voices rumble in your chest. The noise is so loud you can't hear yourself think.

As you trace their attention, you find every being is focused on the throne. At the center of that throne is a majestic God—so glorious the only way John can paint him is by dipping his brush in thunder, lightning, rainbows, and jewels. At the center of the throne is a merciful Christ—the Lamb who gave his life as the ransom for men. And in the light of this sovereign God and this sacrificial Christ, we weep at our own pettiness. How can we have been thinking about anything else? All eyes are on the throne, and all anyone here is thinking about is the greatness of God and the goodness of Christ. When I catch a glimpse of God as I read Revelation, I enter worship more selflessly.

--Matt Proctor (via *Christian Standard*)