

Romans 8:35

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?

Analysis

Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? (Tís hēmās chōrísei apò tēs agápēs toû Christou)—Chōrízō means separate, divide, put space between. Paul asks: what can sever believers from Christ's love? The question shifts from legal standing (vv. 31-34) to relational union. Christ's love isn't mere affection but covenant commitment, electing grace that chose us in eternity and saves us in time.

Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? (thlipsis è stenochōría è diōgmòs è limòs è gumnótēs è kíndunos è máchaira)—Paul lists seven trials believers face: thlipsis (pressure, affliction), stenochōría (distress, being hemmed in), diōgmós (persecution), limós (famine), gumnótēs (nakedness, destitution), kíndunos (danger), máchaira (sword, violent death). These aren't hypotheticals—Paul experienced all (2 Corinthians 11:23-28). The implied answer: none can separate from Christ's love.

Historical Context

Paul wrote during relative peace (AD 57), but Nero's persecution began AD 64. Within a decade, Christians faced sword and flame. Tradition says Paul was beheaded, Peter crucified. Their confidence wasn't naive optimism but tested faith: suffering doesn't prove God's absence but provides opportunity to experience His sustaining love.

Related Passages

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

1 John 4:8 — God is love

Romans 2:1 — Judging others

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Study Questions

1. Which of the seven trials listed have you experienced—how did you sense Christ's love in the midst?
2. How does Christ's love differ from human affection that often depends on circumstances?
3. What does it mean that suffering cannot separate from Christ's love—how is love demonstrated through trials?

Interlinear Text

τίς	ἡμᾶς	χωρίσει	ἀπὸ	τῆς	ἀγάπης	τοῦ	Χριστοῦ
Who	us	shall separate	from	G3588	the love	G3588	of Christ
G5101	G2248	G5563	G575		G26		G5547
Θλίψις	ἢ	στενοχωρία	ἢ	διωγμὸς	ἢ	λιμὸς	ἢ
shall tribulation	or	distress	or	persecution	or	famine	or
G2347	G2228	G4730	G2228	G1375	G2228	G3042	G2228
γυμνότης	ἢ	κίνδυνος	ἢ	μάχαιρα			
nakedness	or	peril	or	sword			
G1132	G2228	G2794	G2228	G3162			

Additional Cross-References

John 10:28 (Parallel theme): And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand.

Psalms 103:17 (Parallel theme): But the mercy of the LORD is from everlasting to everlasting upon them that fear him, and his righteousness unto children's children;

John 16:33 (Parallel theme): These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world.

2 Corinthians 4:17 (Parallel theme): For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory;

Romans 8:39 (Love): Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

2 Timothy 1:12 (Parallel theme): For the which cause I also suffer these things: nevertheless I am not ashamed: for I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day.

1 Corinthians 4:11 (Parallel theme): Even unto this present hour we both hunger, and thirst, and are naked, and are buffeted, and have no certain dwellingplace;

Romans 8:17 (References Christ): And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together.

Acts 14:22 (Parallel theme): Confirming the souls of the disciples, and exhorting them to continue in the faith, and that we must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God.

Jeremiah 31:3 (Love): The LORD hath appeared of old unto me, saying, Yea, I have loved thee with an everlasting love: therefore with lovingkindness have I drawn thee.