

Romans 8:38

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come,

Analysis

For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life (pépeismai gār hóti oúte thánatos oúte zōē)—Pépeismai is perfect tense passive: "I have been persuaded and remain persuaded"—settled conviction, not wishful hope. Paul begins listing potential separators: thánatos (death, the last enemy, 1 Corinthians 15:26) and zōē (life, with its trials and temptations). Neither temporal state can sever believers from God's love.

Nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers (oúte ánggeloi oúte archaì oúte dunámeis)—Ánggeloi (angels) likely refers to fallen angels (demons), given the context of threats. Archaí (principalities) and dunámeis (powers) are ranks of spiritual beings (Ephesians 6:12; Colossians 1:16). No spiritual force, however powerful, can separate believers from God's love. Satan's accusations (v. 33), demons' attacks—all are impotent against electing love.

Nor things present, nor things to come (oúte enestōta oúte mélonta)—Enestōta (present things) and mélonta (future things) cover all temporal categories. Present trials and future fears cannot separate. This includes unforeseen circumstances, unanticipated sins, unexpected persecutions—nothing in time can break the bond.

Historical Context

The list of spiritual powers reflects first-century cosmology, which recognized various ranks of angels/demons. Paul's point is comprehensive: whatever spiritual hierarchy exists, none can overcome God's love. This combats fear of fate, astrology, and demonic forces prevalent in Greco-Roman religion.

Related Passages

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

Study Questions

1. How does Paul's "persuasion" (settled conviction) differ from mere optimism or positive thinking?
2. Why include both "death" and "life" as potential separators—what threats does life pose?
3. How does confidence that spiritual powers cannot separate you from God's love affect fear of Satan or demons?

Interlinear Text

πέπεισμαι	γὰρ	ὅτι	οὐτε	θάνατος	οὐτε	ζωὴ	οὐτε
I am persuaded	For	that	neither	death	neither	life	neither
G3982	G1063	G3754	G3777	G2288	G3777	G2222	G3777
ἄγγελοι	οὐτε	ἀρχαὶ	οὐτε	δυνάμεις	οὐτε	ἐνεστῶτα	
angels	neither	principalities	neither	powers	neither	things present	
G32	G3777	G746	G3777	G1411	G3777		G1764
οὐτε	μέλλοντα						
neither	things to come						
G3777	G3195						

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.

Romans 14:8 (Parallel theme): For whether we live, we live unto the Lord; and whether we die, we die unto the Lord: whether we live therefore, or die, we are the Lord's.

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.

Colossians 1:16 (Parallel theme): For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him:

1 Peter 3:22 (Parallel theme): Who is gone into heaven, and is on the right hand of God; angels and authorities and powers being made subject unto him.

Romans 4:21 (Parallel theme): And being fully persuaded that, what he had promised, he was able also to perform.

Colossians 2:15 (Parallel theme): And having spoiled principalities and powers, he made a shew of them openly, triumphing over them in it.

2 Corinthians 4:13 (Parallel theme): We having the same spirit of faith, according as it is written, I believed, and therefore have I spoken; we also believe, and therefore speak;

Ephesians 1:21 (Parallel theme): Far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come:

2 Corinthians 11:14 (Parallel theme): And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light.