In accordance with the contrast between the old and new realms in Rom 7:5–6, Paul has dealt with the miserable conditions of those who are in the old realm in Rom 7:7–25. Then, he begins to articulate the counter situation in Rom 8:1. In this sense, Rom 8:1–39 has a close connection with the preceding section. Nonetheless, Rom 8:1–39 can be considered as a discrete discourse unit, because the reference of the Holy Spirit provides a new topical boundary. The frequency of the appearance of the term, πνεῦμα, is a very noticeable change from the previous argumentations. While there are only three occurrences of πνεῦμα prior to Rom 8:1 (Rom 2:29; 5:5; 7:6), it is used twenty-one times in Rom 8:1–39.¹ Moreover, the depiction of the Spirit is distinguished from the previous sections. Unlike what Paul has argued previously, the Spirit in Rom 8:1–39 is now described as having a significant role in both the transfer of believers into the new salvific realm and their life in it. Thus, Romans 8 can be viewed as another discourse unit, which deals with the significance of the Spirit in respect to the life of believers.

Regarding the inner structure, Rom 8:1–39 can be divided into three sub-units. At the outset, Rom 8:1–17 is connected to Rom 8:18–30 by the temporal sequence of present suffering and future glory mentioned in v. 17. Yet such temporal scheme also makes them two distinct sub-units. Focusing on the present situation, most of Paul’s arguments in Rom 8:1–17 is made in regard to the comparison between the past situation in the old realm and the present condition in the new realm. However, Rom 8:18–30 does not mention any of the past situation. Instead, it only focuses on the comparison between the present and future conditions. Thus, Rom 8:1–17 and 18–30 could be viewed as two discrete sub-units. Moreover, the use of vivid rhetorical questions in Rom 8:31–39 signifies its distinction from Rom 8:18–30. Therefore, the overall division of Romans 8 is (1) Rom 8:1–17, (2) Rom 8:18–30, and (3) Rom 8:31–39.

¹ Rom 8:2, 4, 5 (x2), 6, 9 (x3), 10, 11 (x2), 13, 14, 15 (x2), 16 (x2), 23, 26 (x2), 27.
1. Rom 8:1–17: The Holy Spirit and believers’ new identity and life in the new realm

A. Text analysis of Rom 8:1–17