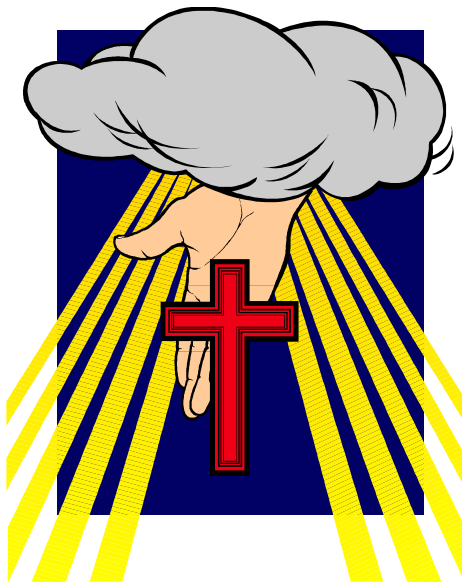


# THE BOOK OF ROMANS



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**"THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS"**

**INTRODUCTION**

**BRIEF OUTLINE (adapted from Dexter Sammons)**

**INTRODUCTION (1:1-17)**

**I. JUSTIFICATION BY FAITH (1:18-11:36)**

**A. Sin - the "Need" for Salvation**

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2. The Need of the Jews (2:17-3:8)
3. The Universal Need for Salvation (3:9-20)

**B. Justification by Faith - the "Provision" Made for Salvation**

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1. God Chooses to Save Believers (9:1-33)
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**II. THE TRANSFORMED LIFE (12:1-15:13)**

**A. In Relation to Overall Conduct (12:1-21)**

**B. In Relation to Civil Authority (13:1-7)**

**C. In Relation to Fellow Man (13:8-14)**

**D. In Relation to Weak Brethren (14:1-15:13)**

**III. CONCLUDING REMARKS, INSTRUCTIONS, AND BENEDICTION (15:14-16:27)**

**AUTHOR:** PAUL, both a servant and apostle of Jesus Christ (1:1)

**PLACE OF WRITING: CORINTH;** as evident from the greetings of Gaius, who lived at Corinth (16:23; 1 Corinthians 1:14), and of Erastus, who had settled down there (16:23; II Timothy 4:20). Also, Phoebe, who apparently accompanied the epistle (16:1-2), was from the church at Cenchrea which was a "suburb" of Corinth.

**TIME OF WRITING:** Late winter of 57-58 AD. during Emperor Nero's 4<sup>th</sup> year; while on his third journey (Acts 20:1-3), just prior to Paul's arrival to Jerusalem with the collection for the needy saints (15:25-26; Acts 20:16; 24:17). Therefore, Romans was not the first writing of Paul.

**BACKGROUND OF THE CHURCH AT ROME:** Nothing is revealed in the New Testament as to the start of the church in Rome. It is possible that visitors to Jerusalem on the day of Pentecost following the Lord's ascension were among the 3000 saved and later took the gospel with them back home (Acts 2:10). Or it could be that among those dispersed following Stephen's death were some that went to Rome and preached the gospel there (Acts 8:1-4).

The first we read of Christians from Rome is possibly that of Aquila and Priscilla, who along with all Jews were expelled from Rome by Emperor Claudius and were found by Paul at Corinth during his second journey (Acts 18:1-2). After travelling with Paul to Ephesus and working with the church there (Acts 18:18-19, 24-26; 1 Corinthians 16:19), we find them back at Rome and hosting a church in their house (16:3-5). No apostle had visited there (15:20).

From the greetings given by Paul in chapter sixteen, it appears that there were several churches in Rome meeting in various homes (16:5,14,15). The names of individuals would suggest that the Christians were primarily Gentiles along with a small number of Jews.

The reputation of the Christians in Rome was widespread; both their faith (1:8) and obedience (16:19). Paul had long wanted to see them (15:23; Acts 19:21), with the goal of sharing in mutual edification (1:11-12) and to be assisted on his way to Spain (15:22-24).

**PURPOSE OF WRITING:**

1. To warn against the legalistic corruption of Judaism.
2. To warn against Christian involvement in sedition and civil rebellion in the capital city.
3. To explain why it appeared that Israel was rejected by God.
4. To elaborate on the doctrine of salvation by grace.
5. To fully clarify the place of the law in man's relation with God.
6. To show that the person freely justified is also called to a holy walk.

## INTRODUCTION

This writing clearly explains sin and salvation, the Christian life and how we should live, the reasons for our life, faith and hope. This book once called “the constitution of Christianity” carefully unveils the doctrines that are key to understanding the Christian faith.

In doing so, Paul demonstrates how the gospel fulfills what is lacking in both heathenism and Judaism, thereby effectively replacing them as religious systems. Such an epistle would arm the church at Rome against those who would pervert the gospel or suggest that it was inadequate.

“It was the Swiss commentator, Godet, who pointed out that every movement of revival in the history of the Christian church has been connected with the teachings found in Romans.”

Edgar C. James  
*“Romans: Amazing Grace”*  
p. 1/2

“Viewed from our point in history, the New Testament may be divided into three major sections: a past, a present, and a future. The Gospels and Acts form the historical foundation upon which our faith is built. The four Gospels narrate the life of Christ, with each Gospel stressing a different aspect of His ministry. Together they present a fourfold picture of His life, death and resurrection. The book of Acts gives the history of the founding, establishment, and outreach of the early Church.

The Epistles explain the historical events recorded in the Gospels and Acts. They declare the meaning of the life and death of Jesus Christ and give reasons for the resurrection. They define the nature, make-up and mission of the Church which was founded on the Day of Pentecost. They instruct members in matters pertaining to their life and witness, and to their abilities and responsibilities. The Epistles give standards and instructions for believers today.

The book of revelation is the consummating book of the New Testament and of the entire Bible. It presents that which is yet future. So we see that the Christian faith is grounded upon historical fact, has carefully explained doctrines, and gives an outline of future events.”

Edgar C. James  
ibid

Romans stands as the gateway through which the other Epistles must pass through. It connects both the Gospels and the Book of Acts with all the other writings of the New Testament.

**THEME:**

*"For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes, for the Jew first and also for the Greek. 17. For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith; as it is written, 'The just shall live by faith.'"*

*Romans 1:16-17*

In these two verses Paul states his confidence in the gospel and the reasons for it. The bulk of his epistle is devoted to explaining why and how the gospel of Christ is God's power to save those who believe.

**STYLE**

Paul maintains a style of writing that was followed in the ancient world in common letter writing. Four main sections were followed

**A. The Greeting:** Romans 1:1; I Corinthians 1:1; II Corinthians 1:1; Galatians 1:1; Ephesians 1:1; Philippians 1:1; Colossians 1:1,2; I Thessalonians 1:1; II Thessalonians 1:1.

**B. The Prayer:** In every case Paul prays for God's grace to be manifested upon those whom he writes to: Romans 1:7; I Corinthians 1:3; II Corinthians 1:2; Galatians 1:3; Ephesians 1:2; Philippians 1:3; Colossians 1:2; I Thessalonians 1:1; II Thessalonians 1:2.

**C. The Thanksgiving:** Romans 1:8; I Corinthians 1:4; II Corinthians 1:3; Ephesians 1:3; Philippians 1:3; I Thessalonians 1:3; II Thessalonians 1:3.

**D. The Unique Contents of Each Letter:** This also the main body of the letter.

**E. The Final Salutations and Personal Greetings:** Romans 16; I Corinthians 1:16:19; II Corinthians 13:13; Philippians 4:20,21; Colossians 4:12-15; I Thessalonians 5:26.

The letters of Paul were normally dictated to a secretary who would also add their authenticating signature (Romans 16:22 - Tertius; cf. - Colossians 4:18; II Thessalonians 3:17). This explains the finished product that is sometimes hard to understand. It also explains why some sentences begin and yet don't seem to finish with the same thought. The secretary often had to wade through a torrent of words in an attempt to catch the main thought. No wonder the Holy Spirit needed to guide these writers.

## CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

Even though this epistle is considered as the masterpiece of the great apostle, it was not writing to the philosophers or the elite. It was rather written to the early church that composed largely of slaves and freedmen who had been delivered from the bondage of heathen practices and superstitions. Our generation has benefited greatly from this masterpiece that clearly presents the essential components of the gospel.

“Chrysostom had this Epistle read to him once a week. Luther speaks of it as *“the chief book of the New Testament.”* Coleridge calls it *“The profoundest book in existence.”* Melancthon, in order to become thoroughly acquainted, copied it twice with his own hand, and it was the book which he lectured on most frequently. Godet remarks that *“in studying the Epistle to the Romans we feel ourselves at every word face to face with the unfathomable.”* These testimonies indicate at once the importance of the study and the need of all possible guidance.”

Rev. W. H. Griffith Thomas D.D.  
*“St. Paul’s Epistle to the Romans”*  
 Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1956, p. 23

“It is the true masterpiece of the New Testament, and the very purest Gospel, which is well worthy and deserving that a Christian man should not only learn it by heart, word for word, but also that he should daily deal with it as the daily bread of men’s souls. For it can never be too much or too well read or studied; and the more it is handled the more precious it becomes, and the better it tastes.”

Martin Luther as quoted by Rev. W. H. Griffith Thomas D.D.  
*“St. Paul’s Epistle to the Romans”*  
 Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1956, p. 23

“Romans stands at the gateway to the Pauline Epistles. An understanding of this book is the key to all the writing of Paul and to all the church truth in general. Tucker says, *‘The Romans letter stands like a mighty tower before a city within which there are untold treasures for plunder, but the tower must first be taken.’*”

Charles Ratz  
*“Outlined Studies in Romans”*  
 College Press, 1948, pp. 1,2

## INTRODUCTION

Romans is the foundational doctrinal book of the Bible. Romans is also a legal or judicial book. To understand Romans the reader must think legally, in terms of the law of God. He or she must view God in His function as judge (for this is how the book of Romans presents Him). Each section of the book may be considered a legal brief, which presents a case for a given judicial conclusion. In Romans the legal is presented as a basic in man's relationship with God. Before God can be called "Father" His demands as judge must be satisfied.

### REVIEW QUESTIONS FOR INTRODUCTION

- 1) Who wrote the epistle to the Romans?  
- The apostle Paul (1:1)
- 2) From where was it written?  
- Corinth
- 3) What is the approximate date of writing?  
- 57 or 58 AD.
- 4) What is the purpose of this epistle?  
- To set straight the design and nature of the gospel
- 5) Where is the theme of this epistle stated?  
- Romans 1:16-17

**"THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS"**

**CHAPTER ONE**

**OBJECTIVES IN STUDYING THIS CHAPTER**

- 1) To be impressed with the all-sufficiency of the gospel
- 2) To see how God's wrath may be directed toward our society today

**OUTLINE**

**PART ONE: THE DOCTRINAL SECTION (1-8)**

**I. THE DOCTRINE OF SIN (1:1-3:20)**

**A. The Prologue (1:1-17)**

1. The Apostle's Salutation (1:1-7)
2. The Apostle's Stewardship (1:8-16)
3. The Apostle's Statement of Purpose (1:17)

**B. Sinners are Guilty Before God (1:18-32)**

1. The Knowledge Revealed (1:18-20)
2. The Knowledge Rejected (1:21-23)
3. The Consequences of Rejection (1:24-32)

**ALTERNATE OUTLINE**

**A. Concerning Paul (1:1-5)**

1. His place in life: servant & apostle (1:1)
2. His story in life: the gospel of Christ (1:2-4)
3. His purpose in life: to produce obedience based on faith (1:5)

**B. Concerning the Romans (1:6-15)**

1. Paul's description of them (1:6-7)
2. Paul's report of them (1:8)
3. Paul's deep desire to visit them (1:9-10)
4. Paul's reason and eagerness to visit them (1:11-15)



**C. Concerning the Gospel (1:16-17)**

1. Its respectability: nothing to be ashamed of (1:16a)
2. Its nature: the power of God (1:16b)
3. Its aim: salvation (1:16c)
4. Its scope: for everyone who believes (1:16d)
5. Its content: the revelation of God's righteousness through faith (1:17)

**II. THE GENTILES' NEED OF SALVATION (1:18-32)****A. Wicked Man Dishonouring God (1:18-23)**

1. Wicked man stifling God's revealed truth (1:18-19)
2. Wicked man despising the testimony of nature (1:20)
3. Wicked man ungrateful and foolish (1:21-22)
4. Wicked man given to idolatry (1:23)

**B. Holy God "Giving Up" on Wicked Man (1:24-32)**

1. Giving them up to disgusting uncleanness (1:24-25)
2. Giving them up to lesbianism and homosexuality (1:26-27)
3. Giving them up to debased minds and all unrighteousness (1:28-32)

**PART ONE: THE DOCTRINAL SECTION (1-8)****I. THE DOCTRINE OF SIN (1:1-3:20)****A. The Prologue (1:1-17)****1. The Apostle's Salutation (1:1-7)**

**1:1 - "Paul, a servant of Christ Jesus, called to be an apostle and set apart for the gospel of God"**

*"Paul, a servant of Christ Jesus"* - This clearly points to the fact that Paul wrote this epistle. Paul had a double name, "Saulos Paulos," which was not unusual for the time. It gave him the benefit of access both to the Jews and the Greeks. When he began his ministry to the Greeks he used his Greek name, Paul (Acts 13:9).

The word *"servant"* which literally means *"slave"* or *"bond servant"* makes it clear that Paul recognized himself as the purchased possession of Jesus Christ. A bond servant voluntarily forfeited his personal liberty. He was not simply a hired servant (Greek *"misthios"*) but rather a slave *"doulos."* He answered to the "ear-bored slave" (Exodus 21:5,6; Deuteronomy 15:15-17). This is why he was willing to suffer such incredible forms of tribulation (II Corinthians 6:3-10).

## I. THE DOCTRINE OF SIN (1:1-3:20) (Contd.)

### A. The Prologue (1:1-17) (Contd.)

#### 1. The Apostle's Salutation (1:1-7) (Contd.)

*“called to be an apostle and set apart for the gospel of God”* - The word *“apostle”* means *“one who is sent forth”* which is different from a disciple which means *“one who is taught.”* These were gifted men who had seen the risen Lord (I Corinthians 9:1; Ephesians 2:20) and were sent forth to establish the Church. Their main duty was to proclaim the gospel in order that healthy churches be formed based upon truth. Paul attempts to quickly win their confidence.

One of the ways that the *“gospel”* was kept pure was by recording its message in these epistles. This is the longest epistle of Paul containing 7,114 words. In the very beginning of this wonderful treatise we find Paul identifying his Master, his office and his purpose.

*“of God”* - Romans is a book about God. It shows how He acted to bring about salvation to mankind, how He preserves His justice, and how He wishes His people to serve Him.

**1:2** - *“the gospel he promised beforehand through his prophets in the Holy Scriptures”* - The word *“gospel”* is used 8 of its 11 times in the book of Romans. This emphasises the fact that this epistle focuses around the gospel. The gospel (good news not good advice) that Paul preached did not originate in his mind (II Peter 1:20,21). He was given insight into the mysteries of God (Ephesians 1:9; 3:2-13). He built upon the revelation received from the Old Testament writers as promised by God (Isaiah 53:11; Jeremiah 23:6).

Another important truth in this book is that of the promises of God (see Romans 4). The gospel was promised through men like Moses (Acts 3:21-22) and David (Acts 2:30).

**1:3** - *“regarding his Son, who as to his human nature was a descendant of David”* - One of the most unique mysteries about Jesus Christ was how He could be fully man and fully God at the same time. Yet, in order to be the Saviour of the world He had to be both. In order to die He had to be fully man because God cannot die.

*“to his human nature”* - This phrase (*“according to the flesh”*) appears 21 times in the writings of Paul. We can never fully understand who Jesus is if we don't accept the fact that He manifested Himself *“in the flesh.”* One aspect of Jesus is never enough. These are definitely some of the *“hard sayings”* of Jesus in that He declared that He was the Son of God who came to earth in the likeness of man.

## I. THE DOCTRINE OF SIN (1:1-3:20) (Contd.)

### A. The Prologue (1:1–17) (Contd.)

#### 1. The Apostle's Salutation (1:1-7) (Contd.)

**1:4** - *“and who through the Spirit of holiness was declared with power to be the Son of God by his resurrection from the dead: Jesus Christ our Lord”* - Paul makes it clear that He was also fully God by living a holy life which gave Him the power even to rise from the dead. His resurrection was a vivid illustration of His deity. The Gospel rests upon the resurrection NOT the incarnation. Yet Jesus did not become the Son of God through His resurrection (Psalm 2:7). It simply made a clear statement that He was what He had always been, that is – the Son of God.

*“and who through the Spirit of holiness”* - This offers balance to the phrase *“to his human nature”* that was declared in the previous verse.

*“was declared with power”* - This verb is used 7 other times in the N.T. (Luke 22:22; Acts 2:23; 10:42; 11:29; 17:26, 31; Hebrews 4:7). It means *“to determine, appoint, fix.”*

*“to be the Son of God by his resurrection from the dead: Jesus Christ our Lord”* - He came to this earth fully as the Son of God who was clearly identified as the Messiah and therefore also the reigning, powerful Lord of all. The Lord's resurrection ushered in the clear fact that redemption for all had been established in heaven and on earth.

**1:5** - *“Through him and for his name's sake, we received grace and apostleship to call people from among all the Gentiles to the obedience that comes from faith”*

*“we received grace”*- Paul clearly shows the purpose of his apostolic calling. The grace of God is the unmerited favour that God offers to those who don't deserve it and cannot earn it through their good works.

*“and apostleship”* - There are three aspects to Paul's apostleship. First, he was called to declare that the byproduct of grace is obedience to do the will of God. The foundation of anything we do is based upon our faith in God and faith alone (not through our works).

Secondly, it is clear that he was called to declare the gospel to the Gentiles (“from among all the Gentiles”) in distinction from the Jews. Others (like Peter) would take up that calling.

Thirdly, he makes it clear that He is called to give glory to God. He is not so concerned about his own benefits but rather that God gains the benefit of all he does as declared in the phrase *“for his name's sake.”*

## I. THE DOCTRINE OF SIN (1:1-3:20) (Contd.)

### A. The Prologue (1:1-17) (Contd.)

#### 1. The Apostle's Salutation (1:1-7) (Contd.)

**1:6** - *“And you also are among those who are called to belong to Jesus Christ.”* - The Church was never intended to be an isolated group of believers. We have been given this wonderful blessing in order to share it with others. Being *“called”* is not simply being invited but responding positively to the invitation by actively receiving the message of salvation.

**1:7** - *“To all in Rome who are loved by God and called to be saints: Grace and peace to you from God our Father and from the Lord Jesus Christ.”*

*“To all in Rome”* - Notice that he did not write to the Church of Rome. At this point in time there was no distinct Church in Rome. Due the strong opposition against Christianity, Christians met in various homes. It was no easy task to live a life pleasing to God in Rome.

*“who are loved by God and called to be saints”* – It is the love of God that constrains us to live a life of separation from this world. It is not the judgement of God that withholds us from doing wrong. God changes our heart which in turn changes our actions. They were not called because they were saints, they were saints (separated; dedicated) because they were called. Both these phrases imply that they are God’s chosen people because both echo terms used to identify Israel in the O.T.

*“called to be saints”* - Paul uses *“saints”* at least 38 times to designate the N.T. Christians. This is the result of an effectual calling and conversion; it is not the result of good works. To say that only a few Christians make sainthood or that one must wait until he gets to heaven to attain “sainthood” is a direct denial of what Paul teaches here. To be designated a saint refers to the believers legal status before God based upon the righteousness of Christ, and not upon the condition of the saved sinner’s heart in this present life.

*“Grace and peace to you from God our Father and from the Lord Jesus Christ”* - Not only is the unmerited favour of God or grace important to us but there is also God’s peace. This peace represents a cessation of hostility, especially when it is in relation to the wrath of God. Peace can never be found outside of submission to the known will of God.

**I. THE DOCTRINE OF SIN (1:1-3:20) (Contd.)****A. The Prologue (1:1-17) (Contd.)****2. The Apostle's Stewardship (1:8-16)****Paul's Longing to Visit Rome**

**1:8 - *"First, I thank my God through Jesus Christ for all of you, because your faith is being reported all over the world."***

There is no doubt that Paul had a deep love for those he served even though he was not always welcomed or treated properly. He kept a right attitude because he knew that God continues to work in and through those who put their trust in Him. Paul thanked **"my God"** (possessive pronoun) even though imperfection was evident because faith in God was being proclaimed.

**1:9 - *"God, whom I serve with my whole heart in preaching the gospel of his Son, is my witness how constantly I remember you"***

Some have questioned why up to this point that Paul had not visited Rome. This was to explain that after 20 years of ministering to the Gentiles that he had not yet arrived in Rome. After all if he was sent to preach to the Gentiles, shouldn't he have gone to their central city? Just because they were out of his sight did not mean that they were out of his mind. He constantly thought about them and prayed for them.

**1:10 - *"in my prayers at all times; and I pray that now at last by God's will the way may be opened for me to come to you."***

Spiritual service does not always have to be seen in order to be effective. Behind the scenes must also be a hidden prayer life that supports what is done in the open. Paul's prayer was constant, unceasing not sporadic. He was an intercessory prayer warrior. He reached more through his prayers than through his preaching. Prayer moves the arm of the One who that moves the world.

It is interesting how our prayers are answered. Paul did have his **"prosperous journey"** in the true Biblical sense of prosperity. Paul never would have thought that he would arrive at Rome as a prisoner and be given the freedom to preach while under Roman captivity (Acts 28:17-31). Yet it became **"God's will"** in which Paul lived in peace with no matter what his circumstances brought him.

**I. THE DOCTRINE OF SIN (1:1-3:20) (Contd.)****A. The Prologue (1:1-17) (Contd.)****2. The Apostle's Stewardship (1:8-16) (Contd.)**

**1:11 - *"I long to see you so that I may impart to you some spiritual gift to make you strong"***

There are three purpose statements that Paul declared (1:11,13,15). Paul wanted above all things that the church be established in its faith in God. The church in Rome was still in its early stage of growth. It had not as of yet exercised its freedom in using spiritual gifts. In and through these gifts Paul set a goal of establishing them in their faith in God through the use of spiritual gifts. We are not told what the gift(s) was. Once he better understood their needs, God could then direct him into what spiritual gift(s) would be needed.

**1:12 - *"that is, that you and I may be mutually encouraged by each other's faith"***

Paul never saw himself as the end all of wisdom and knowledge. He also recognized that he needed the church in Rome as much as they needed him. This pattern has never changed through the ages. We all need each other. We must get and give. No one is tower to themself.

**1:13 - *"I do not want you to be unaware, brothers, that I planned many times to come to you (but have been prevented from doing so until now) in order that I might have a harvest among you, just as I have had among the other Gentiles."***

God does not always grant us our desires when it doesn't match with His timing or divine will. Since Paul was God's slave, he took his orders from the Master.

Paul continued to focus upon soul winning. It was the spiritual plasma of his blood. Without winning souls for Christ he would rather be dead. Everywhere he went he wanted to witness fruit. He not only felt compelled but also obliged to preach the Gospel. Is this a desire of our life? Notice in the next few verses how the phrase "***I am***" occurs three times.

***"I might have a harvest among you"*** - This not only refers to an increase in the number of Christians in Rome but also a strengthening in the faith of those who had already accepted Christ as their personal Saviour.

**I. THE DOCTRINE OF SIN (1:1-3:20) (Contd.)****A. The Prologue (1:1–17) (Contd.)****2. The Apostle’s Stewardship (1:8-16) (Contd.)**

**1:14 - “*I am obligated both to Greeks and non-Greeks, both to the wise and the foolish.*”**

When Paul said “*I am obligated*” he was saying that he was under a strong obligation to pay an incurred debt to them.

“*Greeks and non-Greeks*” - Paul saw things pretty well cut and dry. You were either a Jew or a Greek (or barbaric); either wise or foolish. The term “*Greeks*” represented those within the culture of Hellenism. The term “*non-Greeks or barbarians*” encompasses the non-Hellenized people.

Paul’s indebtedness has nothing to do with any contribution of those cultures to him; rather, his reference is to the burden he feels because of the mandate of Christ to declare His Gospel. Paul saw himself gifted in order to fulfill a purpose that would effect the entire world, not just to the Jews or the Christians. We must always remember that we have also been called to share our faith with the entire world.

**1:15 - “*That is why I am so eager to preach the gospel also to you who are at Rome*” -**

Everything that Paul was taught and that he stood for was to be channelled into evangelistic preaching. His eagerness grew toward places that had not yet received apostolic preaching. He had a message to deliver to the world and his plans were to include Rome in that delivery. Any delay was not on his part but God used it to complete the writing of this epistle which has been called “*the chief book of the New Testament and the perfect gospel.*”

Paul considered the preaching of the gospel not just the initial message to bring people to Christ but also the ongoing teaching and discipleship that builds upon that initial evangelization. This eventually led to the establishing of many churches.

## I. THE DOCTRINE OF SIN (1:1-3:20) (Contd.)

### A. The Prologue (1:1-17) (Contd.)

#### 2. The Apostle's Stewardship (1:8-16) (Contd.)

**1:16** - *"I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes: first for the Jew, then for the Gentile."*

Up to this point Paul has been making contact with the people at Rome. He has been gaining their attention. Now the introduction is over and the main theme is clearly proclaimed.

*"I am not ashamed of the gospel"* - Paul was proud of the gospel (Mark 8:38; II Thessalonians 1:6-10). It is the "good news" of redemption from sin and the gift of eternal life. The precise message of the Gospel is nowhere more clearly stated than in I Corinthians 15:3-4. The essential facts of the Gospel include (1) the incarnation of the Son of God. (2) His atoning death on the cross for our sins. (3) His victorious resurrection for our justification. (4) The promise of His return for His people.

Its amazing that Paul was not ashamed even though he had been imprisoned at Philippi, chased out of Thessalonica, smuggled out of Berea and scoffed at in Athens. Paul was setting an example for those who were suffering in Rome.

*"it is the power of God"* - The idea is not authority, but the very power God possesses to regenerate and save sinners. God's power (Greek - "*dunamis*") is the driving force which energizes man to believe and receive the truth of the gospel and will always be active in the human heart prior to the act of faith. It totally comes from God and is directed toward mankind (notice - "*of God*").

*"for the salvation of everyone"* - Here we have the effect of the power of the gospel. The gospel of Christ saves men from the depravity of their human nature. Salvation includes a complete operational change into a new creation. Ultimate delivery from the power and presence of sin is assured.

1. It is a salvation from physical illness - Matthew 9:21
2. It is a salvation from danger - Matthew 8:25
3. It is a salvation from life's infections - Acts 2:40
4. It is a salvation from being lost - Matthew 18:11 (not in NIV - glossing)
5. It is a salvation from sin - Matthew 1:21
6. It is a salvation from the wrath of God - Romans 5:9
7. It is a salvation that is also eschatological in nature - Romans 13:11; I Peter 1:5



## I. THE DOCTRINE OF SIN (1:1-3:20) (Contd.)

### A. The Prologue (1:1–17) (Contd.)

#### 2. The Apostle's Stewardship (1:8-16) (Contd.)

*“who believes”* - Faith is the sole condition for receiving salvation offered in the gospel. Faith, as other texts indicate, includes the element of repentance, or turning from sin as a requirement for receiving the gospel. *“Believe”* and *“faith”* are both key words in Romans. They are particularly prominent in 3:21-4:25. We must always remember that salvation from first to last is God's work in which we simply respond favourably or negatively towards.

“Faith is a kind of vessel with which we come empty and with the mouth of our soul open to seek God's grace.”

John Calvin

*“first for the Jew, then for the Gentile”* - It is a fact that the Jews believed the message of the Gospel first in Jerusalem (Acts 2:5); in Cyprus (Acts 13:5) and in Thessalonica (Acts 17:1-2). **They were granted the Gospel by precedence but not priority.** God wanted the Gospel to be preached to both the Jews and the Gentiles (Acts 13:46).

One of the keys to understanding the Book of Romans is untangling the two connected strands of universalism – *“for all who believe”* – and particularism – *“first for the Jew.”*

#### 3. The Apostle's Statement of Purpose (1:17)

**1:17 - *“For in the gospel a righteousness from God is revealed, a righteousness that is by faith from first to last, just as it is written: ‘The righteous will live by faith.’”***

This is the key verse in this Epistle. It explains the purpose of Paul's writing to those in Rome. He was called to reveal (meaning *“to uncover”*) the righteousness of God to those who read his letter. This righteousness is what God gives to every sinner who confesses his sin so that he will be able to meet the demands of God. Righteousness grants us the right to stand perfectly in the sight of God in response to our faith. This is what the message of the Gospel is all about.

The basis of how this comes about is by faith and faith alone. This quote from Habakkuk 2:4 is repeated with a different emphasis in three separate passages.

**THE JUST** shall live by faith (Romans 1:17)  
The just **SHALL LIVE** by faith (Galatians 3:11)  
The just shall live **BY FAITH** (Hebrews 10:38)

**I. THE DOCTRINE OF SIN (1:1-3:20) (Contd.)****A. The Prologue (1:1-17) (Contd.)****3. The Apostle's Statement of Purpose (1:17) (Contd.)**

The main theme of the Book of Romans is “*our righteousness in God by faith*,” the theme of Galatians is “*our life in God*” while the theme of Hebrews is “*our life in faith*.”

Westcott and Hort's text reads “*resulting from faith and leading on to faith*.” That is the essence of growing “*from faith to faith*.” It is built solely upon faith and it grows mature in faith. Let us grow from righteousness to righteousness, from faith to faith that we may some day go from death to life, from deserved shame to undeserved glory.

**B. Sinners are Guilty Before God (1:18-32)****1. The Knowledge Revealed (1:18-20)****God's Wrath Against Mankind**

**1:18 - “*The wrath of God is being revealed from heaven against all the godlessness and wickedness of men who suppress the truth by their wickedness,*”**

Paul (as directed by the Spirit of God) began this section of thought by setting the record straight. He wanted his readers to understand that they were born as sinners and needed God to save them. The subject of man's sin and God's righteousness keeps coming up in these first three chapters.

“To show the universality of sin, Paul begins by dividing all mankind into three different groups. He then marches each of these groups before the court of God, marshals the evidence against each group, and then shows that God pronounces each group guilty. All stand as condemned sinners before God. These groups are the heathen (Romans 1:18-32), the good people (2:1-16), and the religious people (2:17-3:8). A summary is then given showing that all mankind is sinful (Romans 3:9-20).”

Edgar C. James  
“*Romans: Amazing Grace*”  
Moody Bible Institute Correspondence School  
p. 2/6

## I. THE DOCTRINE OF SIN (1:1-3:20) (Contd.)

### B. Sinners are Guilty Before God (1:18-32) (Contd.)

#### 1. The Knowledge Revealed (1:18-20) (Contd.)

*“The wrath of God is being revealed from heaven”* - No one can truthfully say that they didn't know they were sinning. Man cannot use the excuse of ignorance when referring to God's attitude toward sin.

God directed His wrath first against His chosen people who turned from His Law (Numbers 16:43-50; 25:3). God also directed His wrath against those who came against His people such as the Babylonians (Jeremiah 50:13; 51:24). The Scriptures are filled with verses containing the subject of the God's wrath (Isaiah 13:9; Ezekiel 7:19; Zephaniah 3:8). It is a past action, a present reality and a future event.

We all find it difficult to accept the fact that God is not only a God of love but also a God of wrath. Martin Luther called it *“God's strange work.”* God's righteousness demands God's wrath.

*“godlessness”* - the state of a soul which leaves God out of one's life – disregard, defiance. This type of sin arrogantly faces God and defies Him to do anything about it.

*“wickedness”* - sins against mankind. This includes all kinds of acts of injustice. Our courts are filled to overflowing with these kinds of cases.

*“who suppress the truth by their wickedness”* - The Revised Standard Version translates this as *“hold down the truth.”* It means to hinder the truth from having an impact upon our lives. This suppression foolishly attempts to keep truth from having an affect upon our lives. No attempt to withhold truth will be successful in the end.

“Immorality in life proceeds from apostasy in doctrine.”

S. L. Johnson  
*“Paul and the Knowledge of God”*

Although we all know about the wrath of God toward sin, we continue to live in unrighteous ways in our speech, thoughts and actions. Not one person can claim innocence when it comes to rejecting the truth of God. We have all failed at one time or another. We often refer to a “hopeless sinner” and forget that we all have come from the same root of sin. Its just that some have turned from their sin and **confessed it** before God instead of **suppressing it**.

**I. THE DOCTRINE OF SIN (1:1-3:20) (Contd.)****B. Sinners are Guilty Before God (1:18-32) (Contd.)****1. The Knowledge Revealed (1:18-20) (Contd.)**

**1:19** - *“since what may be known about God is plain to them, because God has made it plain to them.”*

As I said in the previous verse no one can stand before God and claim innocency when it comes to sin. God not only created us but also set within our hearts the ability to know the difference between good and evil ever since the fall of Adam (Genesis 2:17; 3:5). Sin is a willful refusal to accept the truth that God has made plain. Those who continually walk in disobedience will sear their consciences.

**1:20** - *“For since the creation of the world God’s invisible qualities—his eternal power and divine nature—have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that men are without excuse.”*

*“being understood from what has been made”* - It has been said that nature constitutes a universal Bible. It clearly reflects the Creator God through *“his eternal power and divine nature.”* No one can doubt the intricate design that went into every aspect of the creation and sustaining of our universe. Its evidence is deafening for any who has an ear to hear and a heart to receive its truth. Creation clearly reveals God’s omnipotence and omniscience.

*“so that men are without excuse”* - No one can claim ignorance on the day of God’s judgment. Those without the light of God’s revelation (Gentiles) have had the works of creation to preach to them. People often act contrary to their knowledge because of their carnal motives.

**2. The Knowledge Rejected (1:21-23)**

**1:21** - *“For although they knew God, they neither glorified him as God nor gave thanks to him, but their thinking became futile and their foolish hearts were darkened.”*

*“For although they knew God”* - Arguments are often brought forth about those who never have heard the message contained in the Bible. We forget that God has made Himself known to each and every one who has ever breathed the breathe of life. As one writer put it, *“They knew all the time that there is a God”* - Phillips.

**I. THE DOCTRINE OF SIN (1:1-3:20) (Contd.)****B. Sinners are Guilty Before God (1:18-32) (Contd.)****2. The Knowledge Rejected (1:21-23) (Contd.)**

*“they neither glorified him as God nor gave thanks to him”* - Knowing God was not the problem. Knowledge must lead to relevance and gratitude. Man has rejected God’s revelation.

In the Book of Hebrews the three stages of evil are unveiled. First, comes neglect (chap. 2) followed by rejection (chap. 6) and lastly comes scorn/contempt for sacredness (chap. 10).

*“but their thinking became futile and their foolish hearts were darkened”* - Mankind foolishly thought of new ways to exclude God from their thinking until their hearts lost the wondrous illumination of God’s revelation. Only the light of the gospel can penetrate the darkness that sin creates. There are five things mentioned in these 2 verses that uncover their downward spiral. Evil is progressive. Our heads follow our heart.

**1:22** - *“Although they claimed to be wise, they became fools”* - A fool is one who has intelligence but abuses it. To recognize and surrender to the known will of God is the beginning of wisdom (Proverbs 1:7; 9:10; 15:33). Those who turn away to embrace false gods indicate the foolishness of their hearts and their futile thinking.

No one can reach a level of wisdom while excluding God from the equation. Man foolishly worships himself and what he has made forgetting that everything he has is a gift from God.

**1:23** - *“and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images made to look like mortal man and birds and animals and reptiles.”*

*“and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images”* - Rational mankind foolishly exchanged the worship of their glorious Creator for idols. The very root of idolatry is selfishness and greed along with rebellion which is the parent of immorality. Since we can’t get something from God we attempt to bypass Him and get something else to grant us our sinful desires.

*“Has a nation ever exchanged its gods . . . But my people have exchanged their (or my) Glory for worthless idols.”*

*Jeremiah 2:11*

*“made to look like mortal man and birds and animals and reptiles”* - We may start with worshipping man but it declines to fetishism. The final stage in religious degeneracy is idolatry.

## I. THE DOCTRINE OF SIN (1:1-3:20) (Contd.)

### B. Sinners are Guilty Before God (1:18-32) (Contd.)

#### 3. The Consequences of Rejection (1:24-32)

**1:24** - *“Therefore God gave them over in the sinful desires of their hearts to sexual impurity for the degrading of their bodies with one another.”*

*“Therefore God gave them over”* - There are three stages of degeneration that are marked by this leading phrase. When God has had enough, He can choose to give us over to revel in our manmade pit of lawlessness. God has given to man the right to choose but there is always a consequence for wrong choices.

Those who are “handed over” are already immersed in sin. God not only allows our boat to be dragged away by the current, but it can reach a point where He also gives the boat a push since that is the way we have clearly decided to go. God allows and even respects our free-will even though it rejects Him and His Word. It sometimes allows mankind to do unspeakable things (Ephesians 4:17-19).

Whoever desires to walk a life of purity will be granted the power to do so. Whoever chooses to walk the pathway of impurity will find the door open to walk through. It is imperative that we choose to walk a life that is pleasing to the Lord.

*“in the sinful desires of their hearts to sexual impurity”* - No one can neglect the worship of God without falling into the pit of evil thoughts and impure desires. The word *“desires”* (Greek - *“epithumia”*) has been defined as *“reaching out after pleasure.”* It is *“the passionate desire for hidden pleasure.”* It will cause someone to do things that they would never have done if this desire had not taken away their sense of honour and decency.

*“for the degrading of their bodies with one another”* - The Stoics referred to it as reaching out after pleasure that defies all reason. It will degrade a person to inhabit an abyss.

**I. THE DOCTRINE OF SIN (1:1-3:20) (Contd.)****B. Sinners are Guilty Before God (1:18-32) (Contd.)****3. The Consequences of Rejection (1:24-32)**

**1:25** - *“They exchanged the truth of God for a lie, and worshiped and served created things rather than the Creator—who is forever praised. Amen.”*

*“They exchanged the truth of God for a lie”* - When we spurn truth we have only one avenue to take - the roadway of deception. False worship always leads to false living.

*“This is the verdict: Light has come into the world, but men loved darkness instead of light because their deeds were evil.*

*20. Everyone who does evil hates the light, and will not come into the light for fear that his deeds will be exposed.*

*21. But whoever lives by the truth comes into the light, so that it may be seen plainly that what he has done has been done through God.”*

*John 3:19-21*

*“and worshiped and served created things rather than the Creator”* - There is a God-shaped vacuum in every man according to Pascal. We have been created to worship. Some worship themselves; others worship God and Him alone (I Thessalonians 1:9).

**1:26** - *“Because of this, God gave them over to shameful lusts. Even their women exchanged natural relations for unnatural ones.”*

*“Because of this, God gave them over to shameful lusts”* - The second level of degradation was that of becoming victims of the most abnormal lusts and the most degrading vices. The word used that is translated *“gave them over”* (*“abandoned”* - KJV) does not carry with it a level of anger. Its not even condemnation or judgement. It is like the sorrowful regret of the father in the Parable of the Prodigal Son (Luke 15:11-32). Yet this word does not avoid the fact that judgement will take place based upon the facts presented. If one willfully turns from God and enters a life of sinful lusts, they can expect judgement to follow if they choose not to repent.

*“Even their women exchanged natural relations for unnatural ones”* - This is referring to lesbianism. Its unfortunate that the sinner believes that her action will make her happy. In the end, it will ruin both her life and the life of another both in this world and in the world to come.

## I. THE DOCTRINE OF SIN (1:1-3:20) (Contd.)

### B. Sinners are Guilty Before God (1:18-32) (Contd.)

#### 3. The Consequences of Rejection (1:24-32)

**1:27** - *“In the same way the men also abandoned natural relations with women and were inflamed with lust for one another. Men committed indecent acts with other men, and received in themselves the due penalty for their perversion.”*

*“In the same way the men also abandoned natural relations with women and were inflamed with lust for one another”* - Homosexuality has always been a sin in God’s sight. It is a choice and not a condition. One is not a born a homosexual – one chooses to be.

*“Men committed indecent acts with other men, and received in themselves the due penalty for their perversion”* - These acts will grow worse and worse. Man can be given no greater form of slavery than to be under the control of his own lusts. It is a downward spiral that is very difficult to be released from. History records that idolatry leads to gross immorality.

*“and received in themselves the due penalty for their perversion”* - Men will commit all kinds of sexual sins even though they are fully aware that it will kill them (i.e. - AIDS). They need our prayers and warnings based upon loving truth to escape this terrible plague.

**1:28** - *“Furthermore, since they did not think it worthwhile to retain the knowledge of God, he gave them over to a depraved mind, to do what ought not to be done.”*

*“Furthermore, since they did not think it worthwhile to retain the knowledge of God, he gave them over to a depraved mind”* - In this last stage man enters a place where the distinction between what is right and what is wrong is not just confused but totally lost from their memory. A depraved mind has no sense of God.

**1:29** - *“They have become filled with every kind of wickedness, evil, greed and depravity. They are full of envy, murder, strife, deceit and malice. They are gossips,”*

*“They have become filled with”* - Paul begins to name off twenty-one examples of sinful actions. Mankind can not only be filled with the Holy Spirit if he remains true to God, He can also choose to be filled with the unholy spirit of the devil if he turns away from God. These are sins of thought, word and deed. They act out toward self, neighbours and God.

These sins are as much a sign of man’s loss of God as is any form of sexual perversion. Some have tried to categorize this list but it appears that Paul is not interested in their order.



**I. THE DOCTRINE OF SIN (1:1-3:20) (Contd.)****B. Sinners are Guilty Before God (1:18-32) (Contd.)****3. The Consequences of Rejection (1:24-32) (Contd.)**

**“wickedness”** - This word describes not only the person who is bad but also the kind that wants to make everyone else as bad as himself. It is a destructive badness.

**“evil”** - This word is precise opposite of justice. To the Greek a just person was one who gave both to God and men their due. The evil man is the kind of person who robs both men and God of their rights.

**“greed”** - This Greek word is built of two words which mean **“to have more.”** They saw it as the accursed love of having but yet never being satisfied. Those controlled by this nature pursue their own interests and totally disregard the rights of others.

**“and depravity”** - This type of sinful nature includes all other vices and is the forerunner of all other sins. It is that degenerate attitude and actions that all other sins grow from and flourish.

**“envy”** - There is a good kind of envy as well as a bad kind. A good kind reveals our own weakness and inadequacy and inspires us to do greater. The bad envy tends to look at others grudgingly and resent them for what they have gained in life.

**“murder”** - Jesus took murder to a higher level when He noted that we must remove even the spirit of anger and hatred toward another. Thomas Aquinas noted *“Man regardeth the deed, but God seeth the intention.”*

**“strife”** - This sin finds its heart in jealousy. This kind of contention is born out of envy, ambition; desire for prestige, place and prominence.

**“deceit”** - The corresponding verb of this word describes the act of debasing metals and of adulterating wines. This word describes someone who is always devious and underhanded. He always has an ulterior motives to his actions.

**“malice”** - Jeremy Taylor said that it is *“a baseness of nature by which we take things by the wrong handle, and expound things always in the worse way. It is the kind of spirit that always thinks the worse of others.”*

**“They are gossips”** - This kind is worse than the slanderer. They spread their accusations in listeners ears through their whispers. Its harder to defend this kind of action.

## I. THE DOCTRINE OF SIN (1:1-3:20) (Contd.)

### B. Sinners are Guilty Before God (1:18-32) (Contd.)

#### 3. The Consequences of Rejection (1:24-32) (Contd.)

**1:30** - *“slanderers, God-haters, insolent, arrogant and boastful; they invent ways of doing evil; they disobey their parents;”*

*“slanderers or maligners”* refers to one who speaks against another in an open setting.

*“God-haters”* - those who speak against God’s creation find it no problem to hate their Creator. He finds God a barrier to his pleasures. He continues to seek a godless world where one can practise *license* rather than *liberty*.

*“insolent”* - is another way of saying they are boastfully proud. It could be noted that those who are *“insolent”* focus on their own activities; while those who are *“arrogant”* focus on their own thoughts and *“boastful”* focus on their own words.

*“they invent ways of doing evil”* - They find even more hateful methods of hurting and destroying their fellow man

*“they disobey their parents”* - few would argue that this is not on the rise in our society.

**1:31** - *“they are senseless, faithless, heartless, ruthless.”*

*“they are senseless”* - another way to express these 4 items is by saying they are without . . . sense. In other words their actions are difficult to understand.

*“faithless”* - they are without faith when it comes to maintaining covenants and treaties. Their word cannot be trusted.

*“heartless”* - they are without affection. This may be in relation to other family members.

*“ruthless”* - No violent action is beyond what these people would do.

**I. THE DOCTRINE OF SIN (1:1-3:20) (Contd.)****B. Sinners are Guilty Before God (1:18-32) (Contd.)****3. The Consequences of Rejection (1:24-32) (Contd.)**

**1:32** - *“Although they know God’s righteous decree that those who do such things deserve death, they not only continue to do these very things but also approve of those who practice them.”*

*“Although they know God’s righteous decree that those who do such things deserve death”* - Once again we are reminded that these people knew they were doing wrong but chose to continue doing wrong. Sin starts with a neglect of the light and in turn leads down a pathway that rejects the light and is followed by a darkened pathway that leads to death and destruction.

*“they not only continue to do these very things but also approve of those who practice them.”* - What we do is one thing; what we approve of is quite another. We must never take side with the spirits of error. What we tolerate today; we embrace tomorrow. No action is an action in itself. We must take a stand against those things that we believe will destroy our society. Yet this must be done in an attitude of strength blended with humility.

It was said that during the Reformation, one of the great leaders once said in seeing a murderer carried off to die, that there went John Brantford but for the grace of God. We need to call upon the mercy of God as sinners before a righteous God (Luke 18:13).

If mankind is to be saved, it must come about through the power and purpose of One greater than ourselves in cooperation with our feeble hands and lack of eloquent speech.. Our weakness will be made perfect through the strength of Christ ( II Corinthians 12:10).

## SUMMARY

As is the custom in most of his epistles, Paul begins by extending greetings and offering thanks. Identifying himself as a bond-servant of Christ, he mentions his apostleship and his mission in the gospel of God concerning His Son: to bring about the obedience of faith among all the Gentiles (1:1-6).

Addressing the recipients of his epistle as "*all who are beloved in Rome, called as saints,*" he extends to them the popular two-fold greeting of that day: "*grace*" and "*peace*" (1:7). He is thankful for their well-known faith and reveals his desire to visit Rome and to proclaim the gospel there (1:8-13). The motivation behind that desire is his sense of obligation and bold conviction that the gospel is God's power to save (1:14-17).

The mention of "*salvation*" naturally leads to the need for all men to be saved. Paul begins to demonstrate this need on the part of the Gentiles. He explains that because of the Gentiles' failure to acknowledge the eternal power and divine nature of God as revealed in the world around them, and for their subsequent pride and idolatry, they were therefore exposed to God's wrath from heaven (1:18-23).

This wrath manifested itself in God simply letting them reap the fruits of their sinful vanity. By giving them over "*to uncleanness, in the lusts of their hearts,*" "*to vile passions,*" and "*to a debased mind,*" the result was such corruption that even those who knew better were caught into its clutches (1:24-32).

## WORDS TO PONDER

**"gospel"** - literally, "*good news;*" in the NT it denotes the good tidings of the kingdom of God and of salvation through Christ (VINE)

**"grace"** - "*favour, goodwill, loving kindness;*" as used in reference to God's favour toward man, it's freeness is stressed; i.e., unmerited favour

**"faith"** - "*trust, conviction;*" produced by God's Word (Romans 10:17), it expresses itself through obedience and love (Romans 1:5; Ga 5:6)

**"power"** - from the Greek word "*dunamis*" (from which is derived "*dynamite*"); "*strength, ability*"

**"righteousness of God"** - 1) God doing that which is right (cf. Romans 3:25- 26); or  
2) God's way of making one right with Him (related to the concept of "*justification,*" declaring one to be "*not guilty;*"  
cf. Romans 4:6-8)

**REVIEW QUESTIONS FOR CHAPTER 1**

- 1) List the two main points of this chapter
  - Introduction (1:1-17)
  - The Gentiles' Need of Salvation (1:18-32)
- 2) How was Jesus declared to be the Son of God? (1:4)
  - With power, through His resurrection from the dead
- 3) What was the objective of Paul's apostleship? (1:5)
  - To bring about the obedience of faith among all nations
- 4) Why did Paul want to go to Rome? (1:11-12)
  - To see them and share in their faith together
- 5) To whom was Paul obligated? (1:14)
  - Both to Greeks and barbarians, both to wise and unwise
- 6) What is God's power to save? (1:16)
  - The gospel of Christ
- 7) Why is it God's power to save? (1:17)
  - In it the righteousness of God is revealed
- 8) What two invisible attributes of God are revealed in nature? (1:20)
  - His eternal power and Godhead (divine nature)
- 9) How does God express His wrath? (1:24,26,28)
  - By "*giving people up*" to their own sinful passions
- 10) What one sin in particular is an indication that God's wrath toward man is in full force? (1:26,27)
  - Idolatry which leads to homosexuality

**"THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS"**

**CHAPTER TWO**

**OBJECTIVES IN STUDYING THIS CHAPTER**

- 1) To see how people without a direct revelation of God's Will can still be lost
- 2) To see how people who may have a written Law from God are also in need of salvation

**BRIEF OUTLINE (adapted from Jim McGuigan)**

**PART ONE: THE DOCTRINAL SECTION (1-8)**

**I. THE GENTILES' NEED OF SALVATION (2:1-16)**

**A. Even the "Judges" Will Be Judged (2:1-11)**

1. The inconsistent judge judges himself (2:1)
2. The hypocritical judge is judged by truth (2:2)
3. The foolish judge reasons poorly (2:3)
4. The presumptuous judge treasures up wrath (2:4-11)

**B. Not Having a "Written" Law Does Not Exempt One from Judgment (2:12-16)**

1. Those who sin will still perish (2:12)
2. The Gentiles DO have a law (2:13-15)
3. Jesus Christ will judge accordingly (2:16)

**II. THE JEWS' NEED OF SALVATION (2:17-29)**

**A. The Jews Are Condemned by Their Own Law (2:17-24)**

1. The Jewish self-portrait (2:17-20)
2. The Jewish inconsistency and dishonour of God (2:21-24)

**B. The Limitation of Circumcision (2:25-29)**

1. Voided by transgressing the Law (2:25-27)
2. The true Jew is one circumcised in the heart, in the Spirit (2:28-29)

**PART ONE: THE DOCTRINAL SECTION (1-8)****I. THE GENTILES' NEED OF SALVATION (2:1-16)****A. Even the "Judges" Will Be Judged (2:1-11)****1. The Inconsistent Judge Judges Himself (2:1)**

Few of us would disagree that those who choose to continue in a downward spiral as noted in the previous chapter deserve to receive God's wrath. But they are not the only ones that we should consider. What about those who consider themselves as good, moral people?

Paul appears to look at people in three distinct groups; the heathen, the good, and the religious. This third group has consistently created a great deal of problem for the kingdom of God. Unfortunately, a large part of our world's religions seems to consist of this group of people who are ready to find fault in others.

This section is not designed to prove that men are sinners because that fact is already plain to see. It is rather to unfold the terrible consequences as a result of that sin.

**2:1 - "You, therefore, have no excuse, you who pass judgment on someone else, for at whatever point you judge the other, you are condemning yourself, because you who pass judgment do the same things."**

**"you who pass judgment on someone else"** - Anytime we place ourselves in the seat of judgement, we put ourselves in a precarious position. If we criticize others, it shows that we have a conscience which in turn should be guiding our own actions as well. It is so easy to become self-righteous moralizers. Paul was most likely addressing the Jews in these next verse.

**"for at whatever point you judge the other, you are condemning yourself"** - It is true that the heathen chose not receive the truth, but those who judge must be careful that they don't get caught not responding to the truth that they have already received. The Jews seemed to constantly oppose the fact that they might be seen as self-righteous (cf. John 8:31-59).

**"because you who pass judgment do the same things"** - Before any long lasting changes can take place, the arrogance of the Jews had to be abased. People have often tried to hide behind their own guilt by judging others.

**I. THE GENTILES' NEED OF SALVATION (2:1-16) (Contd.)****A. Even the "Judges" Will Be Judged (2:1-11) (Contd.)****2. The Hypocritical Judge Is Judged by Truth (2:2)**

**2:2** - *“Now we know that God’s judgment against those who do such things is based on truth.”*

*“God’s judgment against those who do such things”* - God will equally pass judgement on both the Jew and the Greek. It is directed at ALL those who commit ANY form of sin. The Jews were taught that Abraham sat at the gates of hell and would not permit any wicked Israelite to go through. They were accepting this false teaching which had an effect upon how they responded to others.

*“is based on truth”* - God keeps His records straight when it comes to unrepentant sin (Romans 2:6; Revelation 20:12). God’s thoughts on the matter are much different than our thoughts (Isaiah 55:8).

Even the Jews who pride themselves upon receiving the truth from God will not be shielded from the consequences of their sins. God is a God of truth and that is the only way He is able to judge (John 17:3; I John 5:20). There is only one rule book that God uses in the “game of life” to judge ALL the players.

**3. The Foolish Judge Reasons Poorly (2:3)**

**2:3** - *“So when you, a mere man, pass judgment on them and yet do the same things, do you think you will escape God’s judgment?”*

*“So when you, a mere man, pass judgment on them and yet do the same things”* - Man can never sit in the place of judgement (while living on this earth) because he cannot even judge himself rightly. He also is unable to pass on the sentence for any crime (sin) committed.

*“do you think you will escape God’s judgment?”* - The Mosaic covenant never protected the Jews from exemption from God’s judgement. No amount of self-righteousness will allow ANYONE to escape the judgement of God. People find it easy to speak about the love of God but find it difficult to declare that God is just and therefore will have to judge anyone who sins.



## I. THE GENTILES' NEED OF SALVATION (2:1-16) (Contd.)

## A. Even the "Judges" Will Be Judged (2:1-11) (Contd.)

## 4. The Presumptuous Judge Treasures up Wrath (2:4-11)

**2:4** - *“Or do you show contempt for the riches of his kindness, tolerance and patience, not realizing that God’s kindness leads you toward repentance?”*

*“Or do you show contempt for the riches of his kindness”* - Anyone who thinks they can sin and not face God’s judgement are showing contempt for God’s mercy. This is not a new problem. The Jews in the O.T. period leaned upon a false sense of security within their covenant even though their prophets often warned them to repent.

*“tolerance”* - This is a word that is often translated *“truce.”* It means *“the cessation of hostility”* but it does have a limit. God’s delay is an opportunity for righteous action not an excuse to continue sinning.

*and patience* - An early writer defined this virtue as the characteristic of a man who has the power to avenge himself but deliberately chooses not to exercise it. It is a shameful thing to go on testing the patience of the Lord. The mercy and love of God are not meant to make us feel that we can continue to get away with sinning but rather to melt our hearts so that we seek to never sin again.

*“not realizing that God’s kindness leads you toward repentance?”* God’s kindness is not to excuse sin but rather to simulate people to repentance. Paul realized that coming to Christ required a stronger action than simply repenting. It required more than words. It required action.

**2:5** - *“But because of your stubbornness and your unrepentant heart, you are storing up wrath against yourself for the day of God’s wrath, when his righteous judgment will be revealed.”*

*“you are storing up wrath”* - Just because someone doesn’t receive God’s wrath immediately for what they have done wrong does not mean that He will withhold it forever (Ecclesiastes 8:11). The blackest sin is not righteousness violated , but mercy despised. Mercy does not eliminate the storing up of judgement against unrepentant sin.

*“against yourself for the day of God’s wrath”* - Paul is referring to the climactic outpouring of God’s wrath at the end of time.

*“when his righteous judgment will be revealed”* - God can never be accused of pouring out His wrath because of an uncontrolled anger. He judges righteously (Genesis 18:25).

**I. THE GENTILES' NEED OF SALVATION (2:1-16) (Contd.)****A. Even the "Judges" Will Be Judged (2:1-11) (Contd.)****4. The Presumptuous Judge Treasures up Wrath (2:4-11) (Contd.)**

**2:6 - "God will give to each person according to what he has done."**

**"God will give to each person according to what he has done"** - This reflects both the O.T. teaching (Job 34:11; Proverbs 24:12; Jeremiah 17:10; 32:19) as well as the N.T. teaching (Matthew 16:27; I Corinthians 3:8; II Corinthians 5:10; Revelation 2:23; 20:12; 22:12). A faith that does not accomplish something for God is a travesty of that entrusted faith. One of the most dangerous ways to walk is to believe that faith and works are totally independent of each other.

**2:7 - "To those who by persistence in doing good seek glory, honor and immortality, he will give eternal life."**

**"To those who by persistence in doing good seek glory, honor and immortality"** - This must not be mistaken as believing that we can work our way into heaven. Paul is simply stating that obedience to the will of God is indicative of one's true level of spirituality (cf. 1:5; 2:25-27; 6:15-23). Even Peter had to have his eyes opened to this fact (Acts 10:34f).

**"he will give eternal life"** - God rewards a persistent lifestyle of godly living. Salvation is the work of God. Choosing to live within its boundaries (with God's help) is our work.

**2:8 - "But for those who are self-seeking and who reject the truth and follow evil, there will be wrath and anger."**

**"But for those who are self-seeking and who reject the truth"** - There are really only two kinds of people in the sight of God – those who do good and follow after God and those who do evil and follow after their selfish ways. The word for **"self-seeking"** refers to someone who works solely for their own benefit which indicates a selfishness on their part.

**"and follow evil"** - The word for **"follow"** means **"to be convinced, persuaded or depend upon."**

**"there will be wrath and anger"** - Those who do not receive the eternal life that God offers will receive God's punishment and eternal judgement. There is no mention of purgatory in the Scriptures. Good men are headed for judgement as surely as the ungodly are.

## I. THE GENTILES' NEED OF SALVATION (2:1-16) (Contd.)

### A. Even the "Judges" Will Be Judged (2:1-11) (Contd.)

#### 4. The Presumptuous Judge Treasures up Wrath (2:4-11) (Contd.)

**2:9** - *“There will be trouble and distress for every human being who does evil: first for the Jew, then for the Gentile;*

*“first for the Jew, then for the Gentile”* - Just as the Jews thought that they would be first in receiving the blessings of God, Paul indicates that they would also be first in judgement.

**2:10** - *“but glory, honor and peace for everyone who does good: first for the Jew, then for the Gentile.”*

*“for everyone who does good”* - It really doesn't matter whether we are Jew or Gentile when we stand before God. Each will be judged fairly based upon what they have been blessed to receive.

This does not conflict with other teaching such as that found in 3:20. It must also be noted that Paul does teach that Christians will be judged based upon what they do while living in their body (II Corinthians 5:10).

The doctrine of the universal powerlessness of humankind under sin is clear. No one can truly live consistently good and seeking after God, therefore they cannot fully receive the promises of God by observing the Law.

**2:11** - *“For God does not show favoritism.”*

*“For God does not show favoritism”* - The word *“favoritism”* literally means *“lifting the face.”* Whether God's will was known through the Law of Moses (Jew) or the voice of conscience (Gentile), knowledge is not enough; it is doing the will of God that counts (James 1:22).

God does not show partiality (Matthew 5:45). God has no favourites - no special seating arrangement is prepared for us. God will reward faithful servants not nice guys. Our favour on earth among men will have no affect upon our placement in heaven.

**I. THE GENTILES' NEED OF SALVATION (2:1-16) (Contd.)****B. Not Having a "Written" Law Does Not Exempt One from Judgment (2:12-16)****1. Those Who Sin Will Still Perish (2:12)**

**2:12** - *“All who sin apart from the law will also perish apart from the law, and all who sin under the law will be judged by the law.”*

*“All who sin apart from the law will also perish apart from the law”* - Paul is not accusing the Gentiles as being Lawless but rather as being law-less. The principle which is here laid done is that men are judged according to the light that is available to them not according the light that is not available.

The Law had a more complete revelation of God compared to nature and conscience. Therefore, the Jews will be judged on a different scale than the Gentiles. But here Paul is speaking of those (whether Jew or Gentile) who keep on sinning that they will perish no matter how they received the revelation of God's will. Sin is the cause of death – not election or predestination, not lack of knowledge or ignorance of Christ, but voluntary, willful sin, disobedience to Law, unfaithfulness to the light that has shone upon our pathway.

*“and all who sin under the law will be judged by the law”* - The Jews thought they would escape any judgement of God because they lived under the domain of the Law. The Law in and of itself does not assure salvation to the Jews. A man will be judged by his fidelity to the highest level of the knowledge of God that is possible for him to know.

**2. The Gentiles DO Have a Law (2:13-15)**

**2:13** - *“For it is not those who hear the law who are righteous in God's sight, but it is those who obey the law who will be declared righteous.”*

*“but it is those who obey the law who will be declared righteous”* - The Law can only justify those who obey it (Leviticus 18:5). We can read it, hear it being taught or preached and even study it, but that in and of itself will not justify us before God. The Jews had to be doers of the Law not just hearers only (James 1:22-25).

**I. THE GENTILES' NEED OF SALVATION (2:1-16) (Contd.)****B. Not Having a "Written" Law Does Not Exempt One from Judgment (2:12-16) (Contd.)****2. The Gentiles DO Have a Law (2:13-15) (Contd.)**

The Law CAN lead people to salvation but Paul is quick to declare that no one is capable of “doing” the Law to the degree that is required to obtain that salvation. The power of sin prevents anyone, whether Jew or Gentile from actually achieving justification in this manner.

Jews incorrectly believed that good intentions were all that mattered. When they failed they believed all they had to do was repent and offer the sacrifice required for their atonement. Paul argues that only if the Law is done “perfectly” will their election based upon the Mosaic Covenant be of any value when it comes to their eternal security.

**2:14 - “(Indeed, when Gentiles, who do not have the law, do by nature things required by the law, they are a law for themselves, even though they do not have the law,”**

“*who do not have the law*” - To say that the Gentiles “*do not have the Law*” is one thing, to say that “*they do not have law*” is quite another. God will not condemn mankind without first giving them an understanding of the demands placed upon them. Even though the Gentiles did not possess the Law of Moses, they did have the knowledge of God’s will for their lives. Even the Jews had a consciousness of right and wrong before the Mosaic Law was instituted. The Law highlighted God’s demands – it didn’t introduce the demands.

**2:15 - “since they show that the requirements of the law are written on their hearts, their consciences also bearing witness, and their thoughts now accusing, now even defending them.)”**

“*the requirements of the law are written on their hearts*” - Solomon spoke of the Law of God written on the hearts of the Jews (Proverbs 3:3;7:3).

“*their consciences also bearing witness*” - If the Law was able to bear witness upon their conscience, then how much more will the Holy Spirit through the work of grace speak to our hearts (Romans 9:1)?

**I. THE GENTILES' NEED OF SALVATION (2:1-16) (Contd.)****B. Not Having a "Written" Law Does Not Exempt One from Judgment (2:12-16) (Contd.)****3. Jesus Christ Will Judge Accordingly (2:16)**

**2:16** - *“This will take place on the day when God will judge men’s secrets through Jesus Christ, as my gospel declares.”*

*“This will take place on the day when God will judge men’s secrets”* - As is the degree to which the Jews do not conform to the requirements of the Law become their basis for judgement (vv. 12b-13), so the extent to which the Jews do conform to the Law they possess to be their standard to receive God’s blessing.

In God’s final judgement even the secret thoughts of our hearts will be used as evidence. God will also reward those who do His will in secret (Matthew 6:4,6,18).

*“as my gospel declares”* - This is not some new gospel that only Paul had access to. It is the common gospel that he had been entrusted to preserve and proclaim in its purity to avoid heresy from taking over.

**II. THE JEWS' NEED OF SALVATION (2:17-29)****A. The Jews Are Condemned by Their Own Law (2:17-24)****1. The Jewish Self-portrait (2:17-20)**

**2:17** - *“Now you, if you call yourself a Jew; if you rely on the law and brag about your relationship to God;”*

*“if you call yourself a Jew”* - The word Jew means *“praise.”* The true Jew is the one whose life is praiseworthy by the standards of God. The true Jew is pure in his heart. His circumcision is that which is inward.

*“if you rely on the law”* - There is no doubt that the possession of the Law was a great blessing to the Jews, but it also had its consequences. The Jews were mistakenly relying upon it further than it could protect them. Perhaps it was because of the words recorded in the Apocryphal writings of their day.

## II. THE JEWS' NEED OF SALVATION (2:17-29) (Contd.)

### A. The Jews Are Condemned by Their Own Law (2:17-24)(Contd.)

#### 1. The Jewish Self-portrait (2:17-20)(Contd.)

*“For even if we sin we are thine, knowing thy power; but we will not sin, because we know that we are accounted thine. For to know thee is complete righteous, and to know thy power is the root of immortality.”*

*Wisdom 15:2,3*

**“and brag about your relationship to God”** - There is nothing wrong in boasting about God unless it has its root in a boastful pride and arrogance (cf. Philippians 3:3).

**2:18 - “if you know his will and approve of what is superior because you are instructed by the law;”**

**“because you are instructed by the law”** - The Jews were instructed in the Law as they attended the synagogues and listened to the teaching of the Rabbis. The great opportunities that they were given made them inseparable to the great obligations placed upon them. They were given much and therefore much was required of them in its return.

**2:19 - “if you are convinced that you are a guide for the blind, a light for those who are in the dark;”**

**“if you are convinced”** - This is the first of four prerogatives that Paul addresses. The word **“convinced”** is used in the perfect tense of the verb. This means that they once were convinced (in a time past) and it is still having an affect upon them.

**“that you are a guide for the blind”** - Isaiah declared that the Jews were called to be a light to the Gentiles (Isaiah 42:6,7; 49:6; cf. Acts 26:18). Jesus shocked His disciples by stating that the Pharisees had become blind guides (Matthew 15:14).

**2:20 - “an instructor of the foolish, a teacher of infants, because you have in the law the embodiment of knowledge and truth---”**

**“because you have in the law the embodiment of knowledge and truth”** - Even though everyone has access to knowledge and truth (1:18,19,25,28,32), the Jews had it embodied in a more clearer and detailed manner than the Gentiles had.

## II. THE JEWS' NEED OF SALVATION (2:17-29) (Contd.)

### A. The Jews Are Condemned by Their Own Law (2:17-24)(Contd.)

#### 2. The Jewish Inconsistency and Dishonour of God (2:21-24)

**2:21** - *“you, then, who teach others, do you not teach yourself? You who preach against stealing, do you steal?”*

*“you, then, who teach others”* - The quality of any teacher is found in their sincere and consistent obedience to what they declare to be truth.

**2:22** - *“You who say that people should not commit adultery, do you commit adultery? You who abhor idols, do you rob temples?”*

*“that people should not commit adultery”* - Both adultery and stealing are prohibited in the Ten Commandments (Exodus 20:14,15).

*“You who abhor idols, do you rob temples?”* - It is well documented that idolatry was virtually eliminated from Jewish practise after their Babylonian captivity. The only thing that would resemble robbing of temples was in a relaxing and therefore disobedience of the Law (Deuteronomy 7:25,26) prohibiting the use of precious metals obtained from idolatrous articles.

Another possibility was that they had failed to be consistent in paying the required “temple tax”(cf. Leviticus 27). This was widespread at this point in time.

Some believe that this may refer to a scandalous incident that took place in AD 19 and was recorded by the historian, Josephus. It took place in Rome by four Jews who convinced a wealthy Roman woman to convert to Judaism. They took the money that she was intending to give to the Temple and exploited it for their own purposes. When emperor Tiberius heard about it, he expelled all Jews from Rome. It created a scandal that remained in the minds of the people for a considerable time.

**2:23** - *“You who brag about the law, do you dishonor God by breaking the law?”*

*“You who brag about the law”* - It is not boasting in the Law that gives honour to God but rather obedience to it.

*“do you dishonor God by breaking the law?”* - Does our world see the irony of God who lovingly reached out to an unloving world and then do they gaze upon the Church that He founded with disgust and bewilderment as it acts in a manner totally contrary to His teaching?



## II. THE JEWS' NEED OF SALVATION (2:17-29) (Contd.)

### A. The Jews Are Condemned by Their Own Law (2:17-24)(Contd.)

#### 2. The Jewish Inconsistency and Dishonour of God (2:21-24)(Contd.)

**2:24** - *“As it is written: “God’s name is blasphemed among the Gentiles because of you.”*

*“As it is written”* - This is most likely a quote from Isaiah 52:5.

*“God’s name is blasphemed among the Gentiles because of you”* - This blasphemy is not one of words but rather of their disobedience to God’s known will. It is unfortunate that many Gentiles were turned away from serving God because of the legalism of the Jews.

Real religion is one of an open door and an open heart. Those trapped into Judaism closed themselves off from the world that they were to be a light to. We must be careful that we don’t follow in their misguided footsteps believing that God will be pleased with our wrong actions.

### B. The Limitation of Circumcision (2:25-29)

#### 1. Voided by Transgressing the Law (2:25-27)

**2:25** - *“Circumcision has value if you observe the law, but if you break the law, you have become as though you had not been circumcised.”*

*“Circumcision has value if you observe the law”* - Later Judaism taught that *“no person who is circumcised will go down to Gehenna.”* Paul wrote to the church at Galatia that all the Law had to be followed (Galatians 5:3,4) in order to be justified before Christ.

*“you have become as though you had not been circumcised”* - When the Jews transgressed the Law they were in no better standing than a Gentile who had transgressed it (Deuteronomy 10:16). The Jewish teachers proclaimed that only a radical decision to renounce the covenant would invalidate their circumcision. Paul argues that a simple transgression had the same effect.

**2:26** - *“If those who are not circumcised keep the law’s requirements, will they not be regarded as though they were circumcised?”*

*“will they not be regarded as though they were circumcised?”* - Not only does disobedience to the Law endanger the circumcised Jew, but now Paul boldly declares that obedience to the Law can bring salvation even to the uncircumcised Gentile. Disobedience brings condemnation while obedience brings salvation despite one’s position.

## II. THE JEWS' NEED OF SALVATION (2:17-29) (Contd.)

### B. The Limitation of Circumcision (2:25-29)

#### 1. Voided by Transgressing the Law (2:25-27)

**2:27** - *“The one who is not circumcised physically and yet obeys the law will condemn you who, even though you have the written code and circumcision, are a lawbreaker.”*

*“will condemn you”* - It was a widespread teaching that those who lived a righteous life would sit in judgement of those who didn't. But it was interesting to note that the Jews always saw themselves as being the *“righteous”* while they always considered the Gentiles as being *“unrighteous.”*

The Jews quickly forgot that Jesus taught that the men of Nineveh along with the Queen of Sheba would rise up in judgement and condemn them (Matthew 12:41,42; Luke 11:31,32).

*“even though you have the written code and circumcision”* - The answer to the problem is not a greater understanding of the Law, but rather a greater faith in Christ. This will bring about a greater indwelling of the Holy Spirit (not a quenching of His influence) that will break the stranglehold of sin (Galatians 5:16; I John 1:7) over our lives.

*“are a lawbreaker”* - Disobedience to the Law cancels out the undeniable advantages that it afforded.

#### 2. The True Jew Is One Circumcised in the Heart, in the Spirit (2:28-29)

**2:28** - *“A man is not a Jew if he is only one outwardly, nor is circumcision merely outward and physical.”*

*“A man is not a Jew if he is only one outwardly”* - Even the Law was able to unveil the hidden secrets of one's heart (2:16) based upon one's outward actions. No one can fool all the people all the time. In time God will expose the hidden secrets of our hearts.

**2:29** - *“No, a man is a Jew if he is one inwardly; and circumcision is circumcision of the heart, by the Spirit, not by the written code. Such a man's praise is not from men, but from God.”*

*“No, a man is a Jew if he is one inwardly”* - The name Jew is derived from the name given to one of the sons of Israel named *“Judah.”* Both Judah's mother and father spoke of his name (Genesis 29:35; 49:8). A true Jew is not one that rests upon his pedigree but rather on his godly character.

**II. THE JEWS' NEED OF SALVATION (2:17-29) (Contd.)**

**B. The Limitation of Circumcision (2:25-29)**

**2. The True Jew Is One Circumcised in the Heart, in the Spirit (2:28-29)**

*“and circumcision is circumcision of the heart, by the Spirit”* - The trust that God placed into our hands and heart is indeed our treasure. It was deposited by the Holy Spirit. The final test of character and conduct is our attitude toward God which will greatly affect how we see others.

## SUMMARY

Having vividly depicted the condition of the Gentile world in chapter one, Paul addressed his comments to those who passed judgment on others when they themselves were guilty of the same things (1). He pointed out that they were in danger of God's righteous judgment, who *"will render to each one according to his deeds"* (2-6). This judgment offered either eternal life or wrath and indignation, given without partiality. The decision was based on whether one does good or evil (7-11).

To justify the condemnation of Gentiles who did not have a written Law (like the Jews), Paul affirmed that the Gentiles could *"by nature do the things contained in the law"* and that their own consciences would bear witness of their guilt on the day of judgment. In this way Paul demonstrated the Gentiles' need of salvation (12-16) as well.

Lest the Jews thought that their having the Law freed them from condemnation, Paul proceeded to demonstrate that they too were in need of salvation. Though they had the Law, their failure to keep it perfectly caused them to dishonour God and blaspheme His Name (17-24). Introducing a thought he will expand upon later in the epistle, he pointed out that a true Jew was one who was circumcised in his heart, and not just in the flesh (25-29).

## WORDS TO PONDER

**"judgment"** - in some places, the idea is *"discernment;"* in other places *"condemnation"* is the idea - the context must determine

**"wrath"** - anger (in God's case, a just displeasure in response to sin)

**"Law"** - when preceded by the definite article "the" (in the Greek) it usually refers to the Law of Moses, otherwise it may refer to the principle of law in general; there are exceptions, and the context must determine

**"by nature"** - *"a mode of feeling and acting which by long habit has become nature"* - THAYER

**"conscience"** - that faculty of thought which makes moral judgments (either excusing or condemning our actions); developed through training

**REVIEW QUESTIONS FOR CHAPTER 2**

- 1) List the main points of this chapter
  - The Gentiles' Need Of Salvation (2:1-16)
  - The Jews' Need Of Salvation (2:17-29)
  
- 2) Why is one who passes judgment without excuse? (2:1)
  - They are normally guilty of the same thing and so condemn themselves
  
- 3) How does God try to lead one to repentance? (2:4)
  - Through kindness, forbearance, and longsuffering
  
- 4) What is the reward given to those who do good? To those who do evil? (2:9,10)
  - Eternal life to those who do good; wrath and indignation, tribulation and anguish to those who do evil
  
- 5) How will God judge those who do not have a "*written*" law? (2:14-16)
  - The law of their conscience will condemn them when God judges the secrets of their hearts by Jesus Christ
  
- 6) Without a "*written*" Law, how did the Gentiles know the difference between right and wrong? (2:14,15)
  - "*by nature*" (note the definition above); they are able to do the things contained in the Law, for they have the "*work of the Law*" written in their hearts
  
- 7) Why were the Jews in need of salvation? (2:21-24)
  - Through inconsistency and disobedience to the Law, they dishonoured God

**THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS"**

**CHAPTER THREE**

**OBJECTIVES IN STUDYING THIS CHAPTER**

- 1) To understand the particulars of God's righteousness: grace, redemption, propitiation, faith in Jesus, and justification
- 2) To see the difference between a law of works and the law of faith

**BRIEF OUTLINE (adapted from Jim McGuiggan)**

**PART ONE: THE DOCTRINAL SECTION (1-8)**

**I. THE PROBLEM - THE JEWS' NEED OF SALVATION (3:1-20)**

**A. The Jewish Advantage (3:1-2)**

1. In many respects (3:1)
2. Especially in having the "Oracles of God" (3:2)

**B. Answers to Possible Objections (3:3-8)**

1. Unbelieving Jews will not make the faithfulness of God without effect (3:3-4)
2. God is right to be angry, even if "unrighteousness" demonstrates His Own righteousness (3:5-6)
3. Though sin might increase God's truth and give Him glory, people will still be judged for their sins (3:7-8)

**C. The Jews Indicted as Sinners by Their Own Scriptures (3:9-20)**

1. Despite advantages, Jews like Greeks are under sin (3:9)
2. Biblical proof (3:10-18)
3. Application and conclusion (3:19-20)
  - a. The Law condemns all, especially to whom it was given (3:19)
  - b. Law cannot justify, but only reveal the knowledge of sin (3:20)

**II. THE PROVISION: JUSTIFICATION BY FAITH (3:21-31)**

**A. God's Righteousness Revealed (3:21-23)**

1. Apart from law, but witnessed by the Law (3:21)
2. A righteousness through faith in Jesus (3:22a)
3. For all who believe, for all have sinned (3:22b-23)

**B. God's Righteousness Explained (3:24-26)**

1. Justification by grace through redemption in Christ (3:24)
2. Jesus' blood offered by God as a propitiation through faith (3:25a)
3. This demonstrates God's righteousness toward the one who has faith in Jesus (3:25b-26)

**C. Implications of God's Righteousness (3:27-31)**

1. Boasting on man's part is excluded (3:27a)
2. For justification is based on faith, not deeds of law (3:27b-28)
3. God is God of the Jews and Gentiles, for He justifies both by faith (3:29-30)
4. This does not void the need for law, but rather meets the requirements of the law (3:31)

**PART ONE: THE DOCTRINAL SECTION (1-8)****I. THE PROBLEM - THE JEWS' NEED OF SALVATION (3:1-20)****A. The Jewish Advantage (3:1-2)****1. In Many Respects (3:1)**

Scholars agree that Romans 3:1-8 is one of the most difficult to comment on in this Epistle. Paul fires a number of fast paced questions at his readers. It's sometimes difficult to know which statements he finds false and which ones are the thoughts he is defending.

**3:1 - "What advantage, then, is there in being a Jew, or what value is there in circumcision?"**

**"What advantage, then"** - This is a common way that Paul raises questions about what he had already taught in order to further explain his arguments. He basically asks his own questions in order to make his viewpoints clear to the Romans.

**"is there in being a Jew"** - This part of the question is answered throughout his dialogue.

**2. Especially in Having the "Oracles of God" (3:2)**

**3:2 - "Much in every way! First of all, they have been entrusted with the very words of God."**

**"Much in every way!"** - The Jews were given a number of advantages that are addressed in 9:4,5 such as their adoption, the glory, the covenants, the giving of the Law, their worship, the promises of God, the patriarchs, and their distinctive race.

Paul agreed that the Jews were given a special place before God. He saw that they had a special *responsibility* while the Jews saw it as a special *privilege*.

**"First of all"** - Paul begins to address a series of advantages awarded to the Jews but it is difficult to see where he picks up this thought again. Some believe that this phrase may mean **"chiefly"** instead of the first of many.

**"they have been entrusted with the very words of God"** - **"the very words of God"** is often translated **"oracles or divine utterances."** The Greek word used is **"logia,"** which refers to a special statement or pronouncement by God. This would refer to the O.T. as a whole and especially to the promises contained within that Word. Some falsely believe that it is limited to the Ten Commandments. Paul's words find a parallel with those recorded in Deuteronomy 4:8 (cf. Psalm 147:19-20).



## I. THE PROBLEM - THE JEWS' NEED OF SALVATION (3:1-20) (Contd.)

### B. Answers to Possible Objections (3:3-8)

#### 1. Unbelieving Jews Will Not Make the Faithfulness of God Without Effect (3:3-4)

**3:3 - “What if some did not have faith? Will their lack of faith nullify God’s faithfulness?”**

“*What if some did not have faith?*” Some versions ask the question “*what if some were unfaithful?*” It is unfortunate that the very ones that were entrusted with the words of God could not be trusted. *Responsibility* is always closely tied with *privilege*.

“*Will their lack of faith nullify God’s faithfulness?*” - What kind of an effect does it have on God? God is faithful no matter how unfaithful we become. His covenant does not change just because we do. God still continues to care for us and keep to His commitments to His people despite their failure.

**3:4 - “Not at all! Let God be true, and every man a liar. As it is written: ‘So that you may be proved right when you speak and prevail when you judge.’”**

“*Not at all!*” - The NASB gives us the most literal interpretation of “*May it never be!*”

“*Let God be true*” - God is always honest, reliable or trustworthy. He is especially true to His Word even though His Word may proclaim judgement (Nehemiah 9:32,33).

“*and every man a liar*” - Not only is God faithful when “*some*” are unfaithful, but He will remain true even if “*every*” person on earth should prove to be unreliable. He is not saying every man is a liar, but in comparison with God, we never can claim 100% honesty in our words while God can.

“*As it is written*” - This following verse is a quote from Psalm 51:4.

“*So that you may be proved right when you speak and prevail when you judge*” - It doesn’t matter whether God is fulfilling His promise to bless His people or being equally faithful in judging them of their sins. He is “*right*” and faithful in ALL He does at ALL times. God is always proven to be right even when we don’t understand what He is up to.

It is interesting that we have no problem accepting the blessings of God (and usually agree with Him when He blesses us) but often find it difficult to accept His discipline and judgement even though we know we have been at fault. It is hard to face the truth sometimes and maintain a loving attitude toward the One who is refining us.

**I. THE PROBLEM - THE JEWS' NEED OF SALVATION (3:1-20) (Contd.)****B. Answers to Possible Objections (3:3-8) (Contd.)****2. God Is Right to Be Angry, Even If "Unrighteousness" Demonstrates His Own Righteousness (3:5-6)**

**3:5** - *“But if our unrighteousness brings out God’s righteousness more clearly, what shall we say? That God is unjust in bringing his wrath on us? (I am using a human argument.)”*

*“But if our unrighteousness brings out God’s righteousness”* - God’s righteousness here is referring to His faithfulness to His Word. His Word declares that those who disobey the Word of God will receive judgement for their sin. I believe He warns us plenty of times before judging.

*“That God is unjust in bringing his wrath on us?”* - It’s an old excuse that is still promoted today that God would be unjust in pouring out His wrath upon us. After all, (as some would argue) isn’t He a God of love? Love does not exclude justice. Love demands justice.

*“I am using a human argument”* - Paul wants his readers to know that God would never think in this way (cf. - Galatians 3:15).

**3:6** - *“Certainly not! If that were so, how could God judge the world?”*

*“how could God judge the world?”* - Scriptures are full of prophecies still to be fulfilled that God will judge the world for its refusal to repent and turn from sinning. Anyone who sees the effect of sin from God’s perspective must also accept the fact that all sin is terrible and must be properly dealt with. Here again we are led into the courtroom to face the righteous Judge.

**3. Though Sin Might Increase God's Truth and Give Him Glory, People Will Still Be Judged for Their Sins (3:7-8)**

**3:7** - *“Someone might argue, ‘If my falsehood enhances God’s truthfulness and so increases his glory, why am I still condemned as a sinner?’”*

*“If my falsehood enhances God’s truthfulness and so increases his glory, why am I still condemned as a sinner?”* - Its amazing how, after man has sinned, that he has this phenomenal ingenuity to justify his actions. The real need is not ingenuity but rather humility to confess our sin and turn away from it.

It is believed that this objector is once again a Jew who questions why he would be treated like other “sinners” when his unfaithfulness was the occasion for God being more faithful therefore, increasing the amount of God’s glory for others to witness.

**I. THE PROBLEM - THE JEWS' NEED OF SALVATION (3:1-20) (Contd.)****B. Answers to Possible Objections (3:3-8) (Contd.)****3. Though Sin Might Increase God's Truth and Give Him Glory, People Will Still Be Judged for Their Sins (3:7-8) (Contd.)**

**3:8** - *“Why not say—as we are being slanderously reported as saying and as some claim that we say—“Let us do evil that good may result?” Their condemnation is deserved.”*

*“Let us do evil that good may result?”* - A thought as foolish as this doesn't even deserve an answer. Therefore, Paul spends very little arguing this point. A similar question is brought forth in 6:1 which he does take time to answer.

The Christian life is not a life of freedom to do whatever we wish to do. It is not a freedom to sin but rather a freedom to obey the will of God.

**C. The Jews Indicted as Sinners by Their Own Scriptures (3:9-20)****1. Despite Advantages, Jews like Greeks Are under Sin (3:9)**

**3:9** - *“What shall we conclude then? Are we any better? Not at all! We have already made the charge that Jews and Gentiles alike are all under sin.”*

*“What shall we conclude then?”* - Paul wants to bring this part of his dialogue in vv. 1-8 to an end.

*“We have already made the charge that Jews and Gentiles alike are all under sin”* - He began in this epistle by showing that Gentiles were sinners and now has shown that Jews also are sinners. No one has the advantage when sin is involved. We foolishly try to point out the other persons “greater sin” and forget that sin is sin and it separates us from God. It would be better to acknowledge it and continue to mature at whatever rate is appropriate for our understanding.

*“We have already made the charge that Jews and Gentiles alike are all under sin”* - The problem with Jews and Gentiles alike is not only that they sin but that they are under the power of sin. The only way to be set free from the power of sin is through the power found in, and only in, the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

The phrase *“under sin”* means *“in the power or under the authority of.”* It was used to describe soldiers who were under a centurion (Matthew 8:9) as well as a schoolboy under the control of a slave (Galatians 4:1-7). In a Christless state a man is under the control of sin and helpless to escape its grip. No amount of determination can break its stronghold outside of God.

**I. THE PROBLEM - THE JEWS' NEED OF SALVATION (3:1-20) (Contd.)****C. The Jews Indicted as Sinners by Their Own Scriptures (3:9-20) (Contd.)****2. Biblical Proof (3:10-18)**

**3:10** - *“As it is written: **“There is no one righteous, not even one;”**”*

*“As it is written”* - He begins his biblical proof by quoting from Psalm 14:1-3; 53:1-3.

*“There is no one righteous, not even one”* - There is not a single person on earth who apart from the grace of God can say that they are in a right standing before God.

The following quotations according to Vaughan describe three things. First, *a character* whose characteristics are ignorance, indifference, crookedness and unprofitableness. Second, *a tongue* that is destructive, deceitful and malignant. And finally *a conduct* which is marked by oppression, injuriousness and implacability

**3:11** - *“there is no one who understands, no one who seeks God.”*

*“there is no one who understands”* - Outside of God we find the teaching of sin and salvation just another foolish thought. This is why debate is generally a waste of time. Unless a person’s heart is changed, no change can be expected in their thoughts, words and actions.

*“no one who seeks God”* - Anyone who suggests that they found God do not understand the process that takes place. God seeks after us – we don’t seek after Him. Everyone is given equal opportunity to be drawn to God. Some accept the gracious prompting of the Holy Spirit while some turn away. We are not predestined to go to heaven or hell - yet our choice will determine our destination. God determined the “policy” we determine the final outcome.

**3:12** - *“All have turned away, they have together become worthless; there is no one who does good, not even one.”*

*“they have together become worthless”* - Some versions translate “worthless” as “bad.” The word means “to render useless.” One of its uses was to describe milk that had gone sour.

**3:13** - *“Their throats are open graves; their tongues practice deceit. The poison of vipers is on their lips.”*

*“Their throats are open graves”* - There may be an intentional sequence of the organs required to produce speech (throat – tongue – lips – mouth). Comparing Psalm 5:9 provides the source of Paul’s quote. Their throat threatens destruction and death.

**I. THE PROBLEM - THE JEWS' NEED OF SALVATION (3:1-20) (Contd.)****C. The Jews Indicted as Sinners by Their Own Scriptures (3:9-20) (Contd.)****2. Biblical Proof (3:10-18) (Contd.)**

***“their tongues practice deceit”*** - They practice deceptive flatteries in order to do evil. Their speech is intended to deceive and betray.

***“The poison of vipers is on their lips”*** - This is a quote from Psalm 140:3b. Their words are injected into the ears of those who are unfortunate enough to hear and it brings instant pain and torment - which leads to eventual death if not quickly tended to.

**3:14 - *“Their mouths are full of cursing and bitterness.”***

***“Their mouths are full of cursing and bitterness”*** - This is quoted from Psalm 10:7. It refers to violent speech.

**3:15 - *“Their feet are swift to shed blood;”***

***“Their feet are swift to shed blood”*** - These three lines are all taken from Isaiah 59:7-8a. See also Proverbs 1:16 for this verse. These kind do not value the precious souls they destroy.

**3:16 - *“ruin and misery mark their ways,”***

***“ruin and misery mark their ways”*** - We can probably all think of certain people who leave nothing but a trail of ruin and misery in their pathway.

**3:17 - *“and the way of peace they do not know.”***

***“and the way of peace they do not know”*** - No sinner can ultimately live in peace with himself or with others.

**3:18 - *“There is no fear of God before their eyes.”***

***“There is no fear of God before their eyes”*** - This is the root cause of sin in all of humanity.

You would think after this awful list that there is no use in trying to convert people. It is one thing not to underestimate the power of sin while it is quite another not to underestimate the power of the gospel to set men free from the grip of sin. Paul knew that if Christ could set him free, He could set others as well no matter how strong the grip of sin had bound them.

**I. THE PROBLEM - THE JEWS' NEED OF SALVATION (3:1-20) (Contd.)****C. The Jews Indicted as Sinners by Their Own Scriptures (3:9-20) (Contd.)****3. Application and Conclusion (3:19-20)**

Paul once again takes on a deep-seated truth. He answers many questions in life. How can a person enter into a right relationship with God? How can one be at peace with God? How can we escape the feelings of fear in the presence of God?

The Jews incorrectly felt they could do it by meticulously abiding to every commandment laid down to them. Yet not one of them could adequately do so.

Did the Law serve any purpose? Yes. It made people understand the existence of sin in their lives.

*“It is only when a man knows the law and tries to satisfy it that he realizes he can never satisfy it.”*

William Barclay  
*“The Letter to the Romans”*  
 The Daily Study Guide  
 Welch Publishing Company Inc.  
 1975, p. 57

Just because the Law leaves people with the feeling that nothing can be done doesn't mean there is no answer. Paul uses three metaphors (law courts; sacrifice; slavery) to show that grace through faith is the answer to the problem.

**a. The Law condemns all, especially to whom it was given (3:19)**

**3:19** - *“Now we know that whatever the law says, it says to those who are under the law, so that every mouth may be silenced and the whole world held accountable to God.”*

*“Now we know that whatever the law says”* - The “law” here is not strictly the Law of Moses (or Torah) but the O.T. Canon (see also I Corinthians 9:8,9; 14:21,34; Galatians 4:21b).

*“it says to those who are under the law”* - This may be speaking more specifically of the Law of Moses.

## I. THE PROBLEM - THE JEWS' NEED OF SALVATION (3:1-20) (Contd.)

## C. The Jews Indicted as Sinners by Their Own Scriptures (3:9-20) (Contd.)

## 3. Application and Conclusion (3:19-20) (Contd.)

## a. The Law condemns all, especially to whom it was given (3:19) (Contd.)

*“so that every mouth may be silenced”* - This is a term used in a courtroom. It refers to a defendant who has nothing more to say in response to the charges that are brought before him. The law simply declared the standard that God demanded. It was helpless and hopeless to deliver anyone from sin’s grip.

*“and the whole world held accountable to God”* - The word *“accountable”* is used nowhere else in Scripture. It is used of the Greeks to mean *“answerable to”* or *“liable to prosecution.”*

“The image, then, is of all humanity standing before God, accountable to him for wilful and inexcusable violations of his will, awaiting the sentence of condemnation that their actions deserve.”

Douglass J. Moo  
*“The Epistle to the Romans”*  
 Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co.  
 1996, p. 205

If as God’s chosen people, Jews cannot be excluded from the scope of sin’s tyranny, then how could Gentiles believe they had a chance to escape the guilt of their actions. It is one thing to *perform* while it is another to *possess*. Our theology will come into our expression of homiletics. And we all need to practice what we preach. No one is able to do anything to gain God’s acceptance. God is not pleased with our *intentions* to do good. Works are not the way of *getting in* yet some believe they are the way of *staying in*.

“No person can gain a standing with God through works because no one is able to perform works to the degree needed to secure such a standing. This human inability to meet the demands of God is what lies at the heart of Romans 3.”

Ibid, p. 205

**I. THE PROBLEM - THE JEWS' NEED OF SALVATION (3:1-20) (Contd.)****C. The Jews Indicted as Sinners by Their Own Scriptures (3:9-20) (Contd.)****3. Application and Conclusion (3:19-20) (Contd.)****b. Law cannot justify, but only reveal the knowledge of sin (3:20)**

Paul wanted to secure the truth in this portion that God wants to make His righteousness available to all who receive it by faith.

**3:20** - *“Therefore no one will be declared righteous in his sight by observing the law; rather, through the law we become conscious of sin.”*

*“through the law we become conscious of sin”* - What an awful way to have to live. The Jews were conscious of their lack of living up to God’s standards and yet were unable to do anything about it. The Law revealed sin but left its adherents powerless to conquer its grip over their lives. Aren’t you glad you live under the New Covenant?

**II. THE PROVISION: JUSTIFICATION BY FAITH (3:21-31)****A. God's Righteousness Revealed (3:21-23)****1. Apart from Law, but Witnessed by the Law (3:21)**

**3:21** - *“But now a righteousness from God, apart from law, has been made known, to which the Law and the Prophets testify.”*

*“But now”* - Martin Lloyd-Jones has declared *“there are no more wonderful words in the whole of Scripture than these two words ‘But now.’”* What follows is the very essence of the Gospel that Paul desired to preach at Rome. This contains the very sum and substance of the Good News declared through the sacrificial death of Jesus Christ.

*“a righteousness from God”* - In this portion where theological terms continue to surface, we find this phrase as a key one occurring four times (vv. 21,22,25,26). God’s wrath dominated the O.T. while God’s righteousness dominates the N.T.

*“apart from law”* - It is a righteousness not obtained through the works of the Law. The reason the Law is now obsolete is because we are under a New Covenant (Hebrews 8:7-13) that fulfilled the old one.



## II. THE PROVISION: JUSTIFICATION BY FAITH (3:21-31) (Contd.)

### A. God's Righteousness Revealed (3:21-23) (Contd.)

#### 2. A Righteousness Through Faith in Jesus (3:22a)

*“has been made known”* - This literally means *“has been manifested.”* God had revealed His righteousness in the O.T. through His Law; His judgement against sin; His appeal through the prophets and with His blessings upon those who were obedient. Now Paul unveils the characteristics found in the kind of righteousness that is revealed through the Gospel message.

**3:22** - *“This righteousness from God comes through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe. There is no difference,”*

*“through faith in Jesus Christ”* - This is the human part of the perspective. We must put our faith into action even though God supplies us with the faith we need.

All people live by one of two principles before God: that of works or that of faith. The works principle is seen in those who are self-reliant, self-confident and self-determined. The motive behind this kind of lifestyle is the need to “do” something.

The other way of living for God is grounded in faith. Those who live this way accept the provision that God has made through faith. Faith is not the grounding of our merit, but merely an instrument by which righteousness is received.

*“to all who believe”* - The only way to believe is through faith (just mentioned). Faith is a universal requirement.

#### 3. For All Who Believe, for All Have Sinned (3:22b-23)

**3:23** - *“for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,”*

*“for all have sinned”* - Before man can be saved, he must believe that he is lost. The *“all”* includes both Jew and Gentiles. There is no distinction when it comes to sinners. This does not mean that all have sinned equally. Paul reduces his argument of 1:18-3:20 into this one sentence.

*“and fall short”* - The present tense of this verb indicates that people are regularly falling short of God’s glory. No one is capable of reaching their goal of not falling short until we are glorified on the last day by God Himself.

*“of the glory of God”* - Those who are awaiting the future glory can anticipate a restoration of the original glory that Adam and Eve experienced before the fall - and even better!

## II. THE PROVISION: JUSTIFICATION BY FAITH (3:21-31) (Contd.)

### B. God's Righteousness Explained (3:24-26)

#### 1. Justification by Grace Through Redemption in Christ (3:24)

**3:24** - *“and are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus.”*

*“and are justified”* - The word *“justified”* does NOT mean *“to make righteous”* or *“to treat as righteous”* but *“to declare one to be righteous.”* It means we are acquitted by God from all “charges” that could be brought against us because of our sins.

Even though we are utterly guilty of the charges against us, God in His mercy and grace, treats us, reckons us and sets the accounts against us as though we were innocent. We do not have to wait to be justified. It takes place the moment we believe in Jesus Christ as our personal Saviour. It is an act not a process. There are no degrees of justification. We must not confuse justification with sanctification. Before we can “prove it by our actions” we are declared to be righteous.

An earthly king may grant a pardon to a criminal, but he cannot grant him a position as if he had never broken the law. What an earthly king cannot do, our heavenly King does!

*“by his grace”* - Grace is a very important theological term. It speaks of the way God acts in Christ in a manner that is totally unconstrained except by His own will. We stand totally unmerited to receive this grace. We can never do anything to earn it.

“Grace is indeed needed to turn a man into a saint; and he who doubts it does not know what a saint or a man is.”

Pascal

*“through the redemption”* - Redemption is basically the liberation that takes place through the payment of a price.

*“Redemption”* means *“complete deliverance from the penalty, power and presence of sin for a price which has already been paid.”* This redemption price was paid in full through the infinite ransom that Jesus paid through His death on the cross. The price was paid to God the Father, who sat in judgement ready to render His verdict to a host of guilty defendants.

So Paul was declaring that sinners could not only be redeemed but also justified. Any judge who would justify someone who was wicked would be considered abominable in the sight of God (Proverbs 17:15; Exodus 23:7). This is what Paul declares God to have done.

## II. THE PROVISION: JUSTIFICATION BY FAITH (3:21-31) (Contd.)

### B. God's Righteousness Explained (3:24-26) (Contd.)

#### 2. Jesus' Blood Offered by God as a Propitiation Through Faith (3:25a)

**3:25** - *“God presented him as a sacrifice of atonement, through faith in his blood. He did this to demonstrate his justice, because in his forbearance he had left the sins committed beforehand unpunished—“*

*“God presented him”* - The redemption that was being offered took place because of God the Father’s will. Yet it must be said that God the Son was a willing participant – He did not have to be convinced to take part.

*“as a sacrifice of atonement”* - Some translations speak of the *“propitiatory sacrifice.”* The word used is referenced to in the O.T. *“Mercy seat”* (Leviticus 16:2) on which the sacrificial blood was poured out once a year.

*“through faith in his blood”* - By referring to Jesus Christ as our mercy seat we see the fulfilment of the atonement through faith. Instead of it being done behind a veil it is now out in the open for all to see. Instead of it being once a year on the Day of Atonement (Leviticus 16:29-34) it was done *“once and for all”* (Hebrews 9:26).

The word *“propitiation”* refers to the *“turning away of wrath.”* God’s wrath is the appropriate response of His holiness toward sin. Yet God initiates the propitiation in order to save having to pour out His wrath. We know that God didn’t delight in the sacrifice of animals (Psalm 51:16; Micah 6:6,7). How much more would it have been difficult to accept the sacrifice of His Only Begotten Son? Bengel called it *“the supreme paradox of the gospel.”*

#### 3. This Demonstrates God's Righteousness Toward the One Who Has Faith in Jesus (3:25b-26)

*“He did this to demonstrate his justice”* - God doesn’t take pleasure in punishing those who do wrong. Heathen gods are offered sacrifices in an attempt to appease the anger of the gods. Our God supplied the *“Sacrifice”* – His only begotten Son.

*“because in his forbearance he had left the sins committed beforehand unpunished”* - This is not referring to any and all sins committed before our personal salvation but rather before any salvation could be obtained through faith in Christ. Paul is referring here to sins committed before the cross (cf. - Acts 15:16; 17:30). God *“postponed”* the due penalty for sinners under the Old Covenant because nothing was available that could properly deal with those sins (Hebrews 10:4).

## II. THE PROVISION: JUSTIFICATION BY FAITH (3:21-31) (Contd.)

### B. God's Righteousness Explained (3:24-26) (Contd.)

#### 3. This Demonstrates God's Righteousness Toward the One Who Has Faith in Jesus (3:25b-26) (Contd.)

**3:26** - *“he did it to demonstrate his justice at the present time, so as to be just and the one who justifies those who have faith in Jesus.”*

*“at the present time”* - God’s justice has been clearly enacted under the New Covenant in what was before partially hidden in its purpose.

*“so as to be just”* - God had to choose a way in which justice would be maintained by not overlooking sin and the punishment of it. People too often try to lighten their sin and the affects of it.

*“You have not yet considered the weight of sin.”*

Anselm

Martin Luther called the former paragraph *“the chief point . . . of the whole Bible”* because it focussed on *“justification by faith.”*

### C. Implications of God's Righteousness (3:27-31)

#### 1. Boasting on Man's Part Is Excluded (3:27a)

In this section Paul concentrates his thoughts on faith as it relates to righteousness. He shows how faith is seen differently under the Old Covenant compared to the New Covenant. Its wonderful how he unveils the fact that the gospel breaks boundaries while maintaining the continuity of the two Covenants.

**3:27** - *“Where, then, is boasting? It is excluded. On what principle? On that of observing the law? No, but on that of faith.”*

*“Where, then, is boasting?”* - Boasting displays the kind of pride that is so often at the root of much of our human sinfulness.

*“On that of observing the law?”* - The Jews thought that their obedience to the Law (whether consistent or not) afforded them special privileges with God.

## II. THE PROVISION: JUSTIFICATION BY FAITH (3:21-31) (Contd.)

### C. Implications of God's Righteousness (3:27-31) (Contd.)

#### 2. For Justification Is Based on Faith, Not Deeds of Law (3:27b-28) (Contd.)

*“No, but on that of faith”* - Justification has always been based upon faith. Now that Christ has come, things have become more clearer on the issue (See chapter 4). The N.T. has once again revealed what the O.T. concealed.

**3:28** - *“For we maintain that a man is justified by faith apart from observing the law.”*

*“For we maintain that a man is justified by faith ”* - Paul is referring to the “law (Greek - *“nomos”*) of faith” as the “rule” or “principle” that we now live by.

*“apart from observing the law”* - That a person is justified by faith APART from the works of the Law. Luther called it sola (*“alone”*) fide (*“faith”*). No works, no matter what their nature or motivation is, can play any role (significant or not) in making a sinner stand right before God.

*“Up to this time the Jew had tried to be a good man and keep the commandments because he was afraid of God, and was terrified of the punishment that breaches of the law would bring. That day has for ever gone. But what has taken its place is the love of God. Now a man must try to be good and keep God’s law. Not because he fears God’s punishment, but because he feels that he must strive to deserve that amazing love. He strives for goodness, not because he is afraid of God, but because he loves him. He knows now that sin is not so much breaking God’s law as it is breaking God’s heart, and , therefore, is doubly terrible.”*

William Barclay  
*“The Letter to the Romans”*  
 The Daily Study Guide  
 Welch Publishing Company Inc.  
 1975, p. 61

## II. THE PROVISION: JUSTIFICATION BY FAITH (3:21-31) (Contd.)

### C. Implications of God's Righteousness (3:27-31) (Contd.)

#### 3. God Is God of Jews and Gentiles, for He Justifies Both by Faith (3:29-30)

**3:29** - *“Is God the God of Jews only? Is he not the God of Gentiles too? Yes, of Gentiles too,”*

*“Is God the God of Jews only?”* - The Jews prided themselves on their monotheistic belief. It was confessed every day by orthodox Jews based upon Deuteronomy 6:4.

*“Is he not the God of Gentiles too? Yes, of Gentiles too”* Paul uses their stringent belief in order to say that the God of the Jews has to be the God of the Gentiles as well. If not, there would have to be two Gods which the Scriptures vehemently opposes.

**3:30** - *“since there is only one God, who will justify the circumcised by faith and the uncircumcised through that same faith.”*

*“who will justify the circumcised by faith and the uncircumcised through that same faith”* - The Torah can no longer be used as a “dividing wall” for Jews and Gentiles. There is no longer a barrier. Everyone is guaranteed access to God by faith, not by works as the requirement for entrance. Faith offers us an “Admit One” entrance fee paid in full.

#### 4. This Does Not Void the Need for Law, but Rather Meets the Requirements of Law (3:31)

**3:31** - *“Do we, then, nullify the law by this faith? Not at all! Rather, we uphold the law.”*

*“Do we, then, nullify the law by this faith?”* - The Law is not ended by the introduction of faith. The Law still has a continuing role – but it has no part in justification.

*“Rather, we uphold the law”* - Faith has never laid aside the demands of the Law to those who were under its jurisdiction. It simply now (for the first time) met all the requirements of the Law. The Law is now fulfilled through faith.

## SUMMARY

As Paul continued to demonstrate the Jews' need of salvation, he proceeded to answer questions that he envisioned protesting Jews might ask. He explained the advantage of being a Jew, the faithfulness of God in spite of the Jews' unbelief, and the right of God to condemn the unrighteousness of man even though it magnifies His Own righteousness (3:1-8). Though the Jews had the advantage of possessing the oracles of God, Paul still concluded that the Jews as well as the Gentiles were in sin and proved his conclusion by listing a series of Old Testament scriptures that spoke to those under the Law (the Jews) as sinners (3:9-19). His conclusion: a law (like the Law of Moses) could not save, but only reveal the knowledge of sin; a point he will elaborate upon in chapter seven (3:20).

Paul carefully began to explain the "good news" of God's plan of salvation. Apart from law, yet witnessed by the Law and the Prophets, God's way of making man right through faith in Jesus Christ was now made clear, and made available to all who believed, whether Jew or Greek, for all have sinned (3:21-23).

This justification of man was explained in terms of redemption, made possible through the blood of Christ, and offered to those who had faith in Christ. It also demonstrated how God can be both "just" (who takes seriously the sins of mankind) and "a justifier" (who is able to forgive sinners). God was able to do this by offering Christ's blood as a propitiation to those who had faith (3:24-26).

This "justification" was a gift of God's grace to those who had faith, which prevented anyone from boasting as though they through the works of a law deserved it (3:27-30). This does not void the need for the Law, but rather it met the requirements of the Law (3:31).

## WORDS TO PONDER

***“redemption”*** - *"a releasing, a payment for a ransom; refers to being released from the guilt of sin by the blood of Christ"*

***“justified”*** - *"a legal term, indicating a verdict of 'not guilty'; in regards to sin, he who is justified is not held accountable for his sins"*

***“propitiation”*** - *"used to refer to an offering designed to appease; God offers the blood of Christ to appease for man's sins"*

***“sin”*** - *"a missing of the mark" (Romans 3:23) -- "a breaking of the law" (1 John 3:4)*

**REVIEW QUESTIONS FOR CHAPTER 3**

- 1) List the main points of this chapter
  - The Jews' Need Of Salvation (3:1-20)
  - The Provision: Justification By Faith (3:21-31)
- 2) What advantage was there in being a Jew? (3:2)
  - They possessed the revealed oracles of God
- 3) What comes through law? (3:20)
  - The knowledge of sin
- 4) What came apart from law? (3:21)
  - The righteousness of God (God's way of justifying sinful man)
- 5) Who has sinned? (3:23)
  - All have sinned
- 6) What is the gift of God's grace? (3:24)
  - Being justified through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus
- 7) How is God appeased for our sins? (3:25)
  - Through the blood of Jesus Christ
- 8) How does man receive justification from God? (3:28)
  - By faith
- 9) How does "justification by faith" relate to the principle of law? (3:31)
  - It does not void the need for law, but rather supports the demand of law



**THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS"****CHAPTER FOUR****OBJECTIVES IN STUDYING THIS CHAPTER**

- 1) To understand how Abraham was justified in God's sight
- 2) To see that the "*righteousness*" God imputes to man is actually justification (i.e., forgiveness)
- 3) To comprehend the nature of justifying faith by considering the example of Abraham

**OUTLINE****I. JUSTIFICATION OF ABRAHAM AS AN EXAMPLE (4:1-8)****A. How Abraham Was Justified (4:1-5)**

1. If by works, then he could boast (4:1-2)
2. The Scriptures reveal it was by his faith in God (4:3)
  - a. One who trusts in works, seeks God's debt, not His grace (4:4)
  - b. But when one trusts in God to justify him, such faith is counted for righteousness (4:5)

**B. The Testimony of David (4:6-8)**

1. Even David spoke of God imputing righteousness apart from works (4:6)
2. Blessed are those against whom God does not impute sins (4:7-8)

**II. RIGHTEOUSNESS BY FAITH AVAILABLE TO ALL BELIEVERS (4:9-25)****A. Because Abraham Was Justified Before Circumcision (4:9-12)**

1. His faith was counted for righteousness before he was circumcised (4:9-10)
2. Circumcision was a seal of the righteousness he had while uncircumcised (4:11a)
3. Thus he became the father of all who have the same kind of faith, both circumcised and uncircumcised (4:11b-12)

**B. Because the Promise to Abraham Was Granted Through Faith (4:13-25)**

1. The promise to be the heir of the world given in view of his faith (4:13)
2. It was not given through law (4:14-15)
3. But in light of faith, according to grace, to assure that all who are of the same faith as Abraham might be heirs of the promise (4:16-17)

**B. Because the Promise to Abraham Was Granted Through Faith (4:13-25)(Contd.)**

4. The kind of obedient faith illustrated by Abraham (4:18-22)
5. Abraham's justification by faith assures that we who believe in Him who raised Jesus from the dead shall find justification (4:23-25)

**I. JUSTIFICATION OF ABRAHAM AS AN EXAMPLE (4:1-8)****A. How Abraham Was Justified (4:1-5)****1. If by Works, Then He Could Boast (4:1-2)**

Now that Paul has clearly identified the doctrine of justification, it would make sense that he would turn to the Old Testament to confirm its truth. Abraham was considered by the Jews as their “father of the faithful.” His life and character were often used as a model of God’s way of dealing with those who walked in true piety. Abraham was particularly recognized as an example of obedience in the sight of God.

Paul knew that the Jews would consider his doctrine as something completely new and contradictory to what they had they already been taught. Paul began to prove that this “new” doctrine was as old as the Jewish faith.

**4:1 - “What then shall we say that Abraham, our forefather, discovered in this matter?”**

**“What then shall we say”** - Paul did not want his readers to think that Abraham was an exception to what he had just said in 3:27-28.

**“our forefather”** - Every wise teacher knows that an idea can be better explained if it is related to someone who stands out of a crowd. The embodiment of this truth was exemplified in the person of Abraham. Abraham was the forefather of all believers (vv.12,16-18), not just the Jews. He towered above all other men as one who stood in moral grandeur.

**4:2 - “If, in fact, Abraham was justified by works, he had something to boast about—but not before God.”**

**“If, in fact, Abraham was justified by works”** - The Jews believed that Abraham’s works were the essence of his piety and the basis for his extraordinary and exemplary relationship to God.

**“he had something to boast about—but not before God”** - When we consider God in any equation of “faith by works” we (as well as Abraham) have nothing to boast about.

## I. JUSTIFICATION OF ABRAHAM AS AN EXAMPLE (4:1-8) (Contd.)

### A. How Abraham Was Justified (4:1-5) (Contd.)

#### 2. The Scriptures Reveal it Was by His Faith in God (4:3)

**4:3 - “What does the Scripture say? ‘Abraham believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness.’”**

**“What does the Scripture say?”** - The best way to resolve any argument is through a proper use of the Scriptures. We always need to ask ourselves what God intended the readers of any portion of Scripture to understand.

Some of the more advanced rabbis declared “ Abraham, our father, inherited the world and the world to come solely by the merit of faith whereby he believed in the Lord; for it is said, **“Abraham believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness.”** Trust is man’s only answer to God’s truth.

The history of the Chosen people did not begin with Moses at Sinai but rather with Abraham in a place called the Ur of the Chaldee.

**“Abraham believed God”** - In this case Paul goes to Genesis 15:6 (cf. - Galatians 3:6) which becomes the key reference point for the rest of this chapter. Not only is this the first the word “believe” occurs in Scripture, it is also one of the few times it is connected to the thought of attaining righteousness.

**“and it was credited to him as righteousness”** - The word **“credited”** means to **“account to him a righteousness that does not inherently belong to him.”** It was therefore **imputed** to him rather than **imparted** to him. Abraham did not earn this righteousness; he received it as a gift. The Jews looked at Genesis 15:6 through the focus of Genesis 22. Abraham’s **“faith”** then became his obedience to God and was seen as a **“work”** that God was now indebted to reward. Paul stands against that kind of interpretation because it was never the intention of God to have them believe such a thing.

Abraham according to the Rabbis had his account credited in Genesis 15 and it was not until twenty nine years later that he was circumcised as recorded in Genesis 17. Some even taught the odd theory that Abraham kept the Law by intuition and anticipation before it came into effect.

**I. JUSTIFICATION OF ABRAHAM AS AN EXAMPLE (4:1-8) (Contd.)****A. How Abraham Was Justified (4:1-5) (Contd.)****2. The Scriptures Reveal it Was by His Faith in God (4:3) (Contd.)****a. One who trusts in works, seeks God's debt, not His grace (4:4)**

**4:4 - “Now when a man works, his wages are not credited to him as a gift, but as an obligation.”**

“*Now when a man works*” - Justification has no linkage to works. The basic thought of the Jews was that a man must earn the favour of God.

“*his wages are not credited to him as a gift, but as an obligation*” - Justification is a gift, freely bestowed, not a wage, justly earned. The amount that is “credited” is gained through grace and based upon faith.

**b. But when one trusts in God to justify him, such faith is counted for righteousness (4:5)**

**4:5 - “However, to the man who does not work but trusts God who justifies the wicked, his faith is credited as righteousness.”**

“*However, to the man who does not work but trusts God*” - Paul is not “canonizing laziness” (Morris) nor is he suggesting that Christians should never produce “good works.” Paul constantly encouraged the Christians to practice their faith on a daily basis. Our part is to believe even though we can take no credit for doing so.

The beauty of Basic Christianity I is that all a man can do is to take God at His Word and stake everything he can on his faith in God and the promises of God. We do not need to torture ourselves by entering into a losing battle to earn God’s love. He already loves us.

“*who justifies the wicked*” - This would stand in stark contrast to the way the Jews were taught about the way God deals with the unjust (*Exodus 23:7 - “I will not justify the wicked”*).

“*who justifies the wicked, his faith is credited as righteousness*” - The ancient writer Chrysostom had this to say in reference to Abraham,

**I. JUSTIFICATION OF ABRAHAM AS AN EXAMPLE (4:1-8) (Contd.)****A. How Abraham Was Justified (4:1-5) (Contd.)****2. The Scriptures Reveal it Was by His Faith in God (4:3) (Contd.)****b. But when one trusts in God to justify him, such faith is counted for righteousness (4:5) (Contd.)**

*“For a person who had no works, to be justified by faith was nothing unlikely. But for a person richly adorned with good deeds, not to be made just from these, but from faith, this is the thing to cause wonder, and to set the power of faith in a strong light.”*

Chrysostom

A Biblical example of this can be found in the Parable of the Pharisee and the Tax-Collector (Luke 18:9ff). The tax collector went home “justified” not because of his own merit but because he realized the futility of self-reliance and cast himself entirely upon the grace and mercy of God.

First comes God’s **revelation** followed by man’s **response** through faith which leads to God’s act of **reconciliation**.

**B. The Testimony of David (4:6-8)****1. Even David Spoke of God Imputing Righteousness Apart from Works (4:6)**

**4:6 - “David says the same thing when he speaks of the blessedness of the man to whom God credits righteousness apart from works:”**

*“David says the same thing”* - These next few verses are quoted from Psalm 32:1,2a.

*“when he speaks of the blessedness”* - There is a rich blessing for those whom God grants a credit of righteousness independent of their works. The context of this verse surrounds King David’s adulterous affair with Bathsheba.

*“to whom God credits righteousness apart from works”* - In God’s court there is no lack of evidence. God simply lays aside the plain facts and credits our account with a *“paid in full”* simply because we choose to place our faith in His mercy and grace. Imputed righteousness places into our account something that we don’t deserve or have ever earned.

**I. JUSTIFICATION OF ABRAHAM AS AN EXAMPLE (4:1-8) (Contd.)****B. The Testimony of David (4:6-8) (Contd.)****2. Blessed Are Those Against Whom God Does Not Impute Sins (4:7-8)**

**4:7** - *“Blessed are they whose transgressions are forgiven, whose sins are covered.”*

*“Blessed are they whose transgressions are forgiven”* - King David stands as a vivid example of a man who received what he didn't deserve.

**4:8** - *“Blessed is the man whose sin the Lord will never count against him.”*

*“the Lord will never count against him”* - Normally the Lord would have to *“count or reckon”* our sins against us. Here Pauls recounts the time in David's life when it was NOT HIS GOOD WORKS THAT RECKONED HIM before God but rather HIS SINS THAT WERE NOT RECKONED AGAINST HIM which constituted his forgiveness. Justification does not accredit or impute our sins against us.

Isn't it wonderful to know that God acquits us instead of condemning us.

**II. RIGHTEOUSNESS BY FAITH AVAILABLE TO ALL BELIEVERS (4:9-25)****A. Because Abraham Was Justified Before Circumcision (4:9-12)****1. His Faith Was Counted for Righteousness Before He Was Circumcised (4:9-10)**

**4:9** - *“Is this blessedness only for the circumcised, or also for the uncircumcised? We have been saying that Abraham's faith was credited to him as righteousness.”*

*“Is this blessedness only for the circumcised, or also for the uncircumcised?”* - Paul has a heart to see “all men” brought into a right relationship with God whether circumcised or not.

**4:10** - *“Under what circumstances was it credited? Was it after he was circumcised, or before? It was not after, but before!”*

*“Was it after he was circumcised, or before? It was not after, but before!”* - The act (or work) of circumcision had nothing to do with Abraham's reckoning (or crediting) before God. A high ordinance was placed upon circumcision according to the Rabbis - *“Ye shall not eat of the Passover unless the seal of Abraham be in your flesh.”* If a Gentile turned to the Jewish faith, he would have to accept three things - baptism, sacrifice and circumcision.

## II. RIGHTEOUSNESS BY FAITH AVAILABLE TO ALL BELIEVERS (4:9-25) (Contd.)

### A. Because Abraham Was Justified Before Circumcision (4:9-12) (Contd.)

#### 1. His Faith Was Counted for Righteousness Before He Was Circumcised (4:9-10) (Contd.)

So Paul makes it clear that faith alone – apart from works (4:3-8) and apart from circumcision (4:9-12) was all that was necessary to gain entrance into God’s family as was clearly in the case of Abraham. Abraham was justified by his faith (Genesis 15) at least 14 years before he was circumcised (Genesis 17). Abraham’s experience becomes vital to the standard of his spiritual descendants.

#### 2. Circumcision Was a Seal of the Righteousness He Had While Uncircumcised (4:11a)

**4:11 - “And he received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness that he had by faith while he was still uncircumcised. So then, he is the father of all who believe but have not been circumcised, in order that righteousness might be credited to them.”**

**“And he received the sign of circumcision”** - Circumcision was to those who were under the Old Covenant simply a sign (or seal) of their acceptance. Circumcision was never the condition for justification. In Genesis 17:11 we are told that circumcision was a *“sign of the covenant.”* We must remember that the covenant was established (along with its sign) well before the Law of Moses was ever introduced.

**“a seal of the righteousness that he had by faith while he was still uncircumcised”** - Circumcision neither created or enhanced the righteous stand of Abraham. The word *“seal”* refers to something that confirms the truth or reality of something else. Paul uses it in I Corinthians 9:2 to describe the Corinthian believers as a *“sign”* (confirmation or authentication) of Paul’s apostleship.

Circumcision did not *confer righteousness*, but *confirmed the righteousness*. It attested to the validity and acceptance of Abraham’s faith. It was not a means of righteousness, but a seal. It bore witness to what had already taken place.

The word *“seal”* was used as a reference to water baptism from the middle of the second century. The Holy Spirit is also our *“seal”* of approval today indicating that we have been saved (Ephesians 1:13; 4:30). We have also experienced a circumcision of our heart (Colossians 2:10-12)

**II. RIGHTEOUSNESS BY FAITH AVAILABLE TO ALL BELIEVERS (4:9-25) (Contd.)****A. Because Abraham Was Justified Before Circumcision (4:9-12) (Contd.)****2. Circumcision Was a Seal of the Righteousness He Had While Uncircumcised (4:11a)**

*“In no dispensation do rites bestow anything; they are shadow, not the substance; they are seal. But the seal is worthless apart from the matter or from the document that it attests. The Jew had torn off the seal from the covenant, and then vainly boasted of this meaningless imprint.”*

J. M. Stifler  
*“The Epistle to the Romans”*  
p. 74

**3. Thus He Became the Father of All Who Have the Same Kind of Faith, Both Circumcised and Uncircumcised (4:11b-12)**

*“So then, he is the father of all who believe but have not been circumcised”* - Abraham paved the way by being declared righteous before he was circumcised. His later circumcision added nothing to what had already happened other than signifying or confirming what had already taken place.

*“in order that righteousness might be credited to them”* - Once again it is our belief and faith in God that makes one a spiritual *“child”* of Abraham. We also through our faith have God’s righteousness credited to our account.

**4:12** - *“And he is also the father of the circumcised who not only are circumcised but who also walk in the footsteps of the faith that our father Abraham had before he was circumcised.”*

*“And he is also the father of the circumcised”* - We cannot just stop with this part of the verse. Those who are circumcised have often thought that the act of circumcision was all that was needed. It had to be precipitated by faith the same as our act of water baptism means nothing without our faith and daily walk with God.

*“who not only are circumcised but who also walk in the footsteps of the faith”* - Abraham’s footsteps declared that he believed while he was still uncircumcised. Anyone who chooses to follow in his footsteps must also believe, not just be circumcised. This was a striking turning of the tables on Jewish exclusiveness. Outward profession requires inward possession



## II. RIGHTEOUSNESS BY FAITH AVAILABLE TO ALL BELIEVERS (4:9-25) (Contd.)

### A. Because Abraham Was Justified Before Circumcision (4:9-12) (Contd.)

#### 3. Thus He Became the Father of All Who Have the Same Kind of Faith, Both Circumcised and Uncircumcised (4:11b-12) (Contd.)

*“that our father Abraham had before he was circumcised”* - Circumcision was never a visa that automatically assured entrance into the kingdom of heaven. Apart from faith, entrance can never be assured.

Therefore, Paul makes it clear that the way to God is not through membership into any nation, nor through any ordinance that marks a man's body; but rather by faith that takes God at His Word and bases everything upon God's grace and not upon man's achievement.

### B. Because the Promise to Abraham Was Granted Through Faith (4:13-25)

#### 1. The promise to be the heir of the world given in view of his faith (4:13)

**4:13** - *“It was not through law that Abraham and his offspring received the promise that he would be heir of the world, but through the righteousness that comes by faith.”*

**In the next few verses some key words are used which must be understood.**

1). **“Promise”** - There are only two Greek words to explain this word. The first is *“huposchesis”* which refers to *“a promise that is entered into which contain conditions.”* The second is *“Epaggelia”* which refers to *“a promise made out of the goodness of one's heart that contains no preconditions (unconditional).”* Paul refers to the second word in this portion.

2). **“Faith”** - This refers to a certainty in God and His Word.

3). **“Grace”** - This gift is always something that is undeserved and unearned.

4). **“Law”** - The other side of the coin is found in this word. This Law identifies and diagnoses the malady (problem) but is unable to find a cure. The Law can show a man where he goes wrong, but is unable to help him avoid doing wrong. Paul brings out the paradox of the Law that something forbidden has a tendency of becoming desirable. Why is it that stolen fruits seem sweeter? Law therefore, often moves a person to desire the very thing they are told they cannot have.

5). **“Transgression”** - Whenever any law is imposed, transgression must follow. The Law introduces a series of transgressions just waiting to take place. No one can break a law that does not exist; no one can avoid at least breaking one law that does exist.

6). **“Wrath”** - Whenever someone constantly breaks a known law you can't help but think of outraged justice. God must deal with open rebellion. He moves from His displeasure to His warning and finally to His wrath.

**II. RIGHTEOUSNESS BY FAITH AVAILABLE TO ALL BELIEVERS (4:9-25) (Contd.)****B. Because the Promise to Abraham Was Granted Through Faith (4:13-25) (Contd.)****1. The promise to be the heir of the world given in view of his faith (4:13) (Contd.)**

*“It was not through law”* - In this case Paul is referring to the Mosaic Law.

*“that Abraham and his offspring received the promise”* - Paul now moves to another unstable foundation that the Jews had placed their faith in. The Law of Moses came into effect 430 years after the promise had been given to Abraham. The Law could not therefore annul or substantially alter the promise made to Abraham. It was added to the promise – it was never intended to replace it.

*“that he would be heir of the world”* - This explains what the promise was that was made to Abraham. In fact, the promise was three fold as it unfolded in the book of Genesis. First, Abraham was going to have an immense number of descendants (Genesis 12:2; 13:16; 15:5; 17:4-6, 16-20; 22:17). Second, that he would possess a chosen land (Genesis 13:15-17; 15:12-21; 17:8). This part of the promise is not yet a reality for his descendants. Third, that he would be a channel of blessing for the people of the entire earth (Genesis 12:3; 18:18; 22:18). His descendants would even *“take possession of the cities of their enemies”* (Genesis 22:17b). Some of it came to pass during the time of Isaiah 55:3-5.

Abraham’s physical inheritance is often limited in geographical terms to the area of land between Egypt and the Euphrates (Genesis 15:18; 13:14-17). Yet his spiritual heritage cannot be confined to any borders (Hebrews 11:10).

**2. It was not given through law (4:14-15)**

**4:14** - *“For if those who live by law are heirs, faith has no value and the promise is worthless,”*

*“For if those who live by law are heirs, faith has no value and the promise is worthless”* - Paul is essentially saying that if the inheritance is based upon adherence to the Law, then there could be no heirs, because no fallen human being can adequately adhere to the Law.

*“faith has no value and the promise is worthless”* - This means that faith was exercised in vain and the promise could never be fulfilled if the Law still reigned. Faith and the promises of God live in a different domain than that of the Law. The words *“no value”* mean it would be *“emptied or deprived of power (I Corinthians 1:17); rendered vain or futile (I Corinthians 9:15; II Corinthians 9:3) or made of no effect (Philippians 2:7).”*

**II. RIGHTEOUSNESS BY FAITH AVAILABLE TO ALL BELIEVERS (4:9-25) (Contd.)****B. Because the Promise to Abraham Was Granted Through Faith (4:13-25) (Contd.)****2. It was not given through law (4:14-15) (Contd.)**

**4:15** - *“because law brings wrath. And where there is no law there is no transgression.”*

*“because law brings wrath”* - In contrast the law inevitably brings (lit - *“produces”*) wrath as opposed to what it cannot do – secure our inheritance.

*“And where there is no law there is no transgression”* - Anyone who violates the law actually turns sin into a more serious offence of transgression. The word *“transgression”* denotes the kind of *“sin that passes beyond a definite law of command.”* While every transgression is a sin not every sin is a transgression.

The Mosaic Law is powerless to eliminate wrath. Rather than rescuing people from the sentence of condemnation, it confirms their condemnation. The Law states in clarity what God requires of us all, therefore, making us more accountable than if we had no Law at all. You can't be accused of trespassing if “the sign” is not clearly display.

**3. But in light of faith, according to grace, to assure that all who are of the same faith as Abraham might be heirs of the promise (4:16-17)**

**4:16** - *“Therefore, the promise comes by faith, so that it may be by grace and may be guaranteed to all Abraham’s offspring—not only to those who are of the law but also to those who are of the faith of Abraham. He is the father of us all.”*

*“the promise comes by faith . . .”* - Chrysostom noted two things: that the promise might be *“firm”* – that it might come to fruition – and that the promise might be *“confirmed”* to every descendent of Abraham.

*“but also to those who are of the faith of Abraham”* - The apostle Paul also noted that he didn't want to rest upon a righteousness that came from the law but rather one that came through his faith in Christ (Philippians 3:9).

**4:17** - *“As it is written: ‘I have made you a father of many nations.’ He is our father in the sight of God, in whom he believed—the God who gives life to the dead and calls things that are not as though they were.”*

*“As it is written:”* - This is quoted from Genesis 17:5 when Abram's name was changed to Abraham.

## II. RIGHTEOUSNESS BY FAITH AVAILABLE TO ALL BELIEVERS (4:9-25) (Contd.)

### B. Because the Promise to Abraham Was Granted Through Faith (4:13-25) (Contd.)

#### 3. But in light of faith, according to grace, to assure that all who are of the same faith as Abraham might be heirs of the promise (4:16-17) (Contd.)

*‘I have made you a father of many nations’* It literally means *“a father of a multitude of nations.”* Isn’t it wonderful to know that we were included in the foreknowledge of God’s evangelistic effort throughout the world.

“And at this hour, after many a gloomy forecast of unbelieving and apprehensive thought, there are more men and women ready to go to the ends of the earth with the message of the Son of Abraham, than in all time before.”

Bishop H.C.G. Moule  
*“The Epistle to the Romans” Expositor Bible*  
p. 119

*in whom he believed*” - God made a promise to Abraham and Abraham believed Him. Belief does not mean that we don’t struggle a bit with God’s voice. Faith must be added to our belief in order that we can accept the promises of God. We can be absolutely assured that it will be fulfilled if God said it.

*“the God who gives life to the dead”* - As in verse 19 we find that Abraham realized that his body was as good as dead when it came to reproducing a child. As for Sarah, her womb had been barren all this time. Was it now going to bring forth the birth of a child after she passed the age of child bearing? Therefore, the object of Abraham’s faith was clearly God because no one else was capable of performing such a miracle.

*“and calls things that are not as though they were”* - The verb *“calls”* can refer to two things. **First**, it can speak of God’s creative work (Isaiah 41:4; 48:13). God essentially called a world and all that is in it into existence. **Second**, it could refer to spiritual conversion. Only God is able to create out of the nothingness of people’s empty, sinful lives a new and vibrant spiritual life.

In this case it spoke of not only the barrenness of Sarah’s womb but also the impossible act of reproduction based upon the deadness of Abraham’s propagating sperm.

## II. RIGHTEOUSNESS BY FAITH AVAILABLE TO ALL BELIEVERS (4:9-25) (Contd.)

### B. Because the Promise to Abraham Was Granted Through Faith (4:13-25) (Contd.)

#### 4. The kind of obedient faith illustrated by Abraham (4:18-22)

**4:18** - *“Against all hope, Abraham in hope believed and so became the father of many nations, just as it had been said to him, ‘So shall your offspring be.’”*

*“Against all hope, Abraham in hope”* - The *“against all hope”* refers to man’s hope in himself which is essentially a hopeless situation. The *“in hope”* refers to Abraham’s hope in God. This is a hope that is firmly based upon the promises of God. This is not a blind leap into the dark as if it were baseless or irrational in his thinking. It was rather a “leap” into the evidence of his senses and into the security of God’s Word and His lasting promises.

*“So shall your offspring be”* - Paul is quoting from an earlier promise given to Abram in Genesis 15:5.

**4:19** - *“Without weakening in his faith, he faced the fact that his body was as good as dead—since he was about a hundred years old—and that Sarah’s womb was also dead.”*

*“Without weakening in his faith, he faced the fact”* - True faith does not deny the reality of what we are facing. True faith stands against what is clearly seen without foolishly disclaiming its existence. If we have cancer - we have cancer. That doesn’t deny the fact that God can heal cancer. Abraham continued to believe God’s promise made to him even though he could clearly observe that his physical condition rendered the fulfilment of that promise most unlikely. Unlikely does not mean impossible when the promises of God are involved.

*“that his body was as good as dead”* - The present tense of this verb indicates that it is the present state of affairs. At 99 years or (100 years), his body had gone past the normal age when procreation would take place (Cf. - Hebrews 11:12).

It is interesting to note that after the death of Sarah, Abraham also had six more sons to another wife (Genesis 25:1-2). This shows the kind of God we serve. He is not only able to supply for our needs but is also able to oversupply. This was proven again when Jesus fed the 5,000 men with five loaves and two fish and had His disciples collect 12 baskets full of the broken pieces after everyone’s hunger had been satisfied.

## II. RIGHTEOUSNESS BY FAITH AVAILABLE TO ALL BELIEVERS (4:9-25) (Contd.)

### B. Because the Promise to Abraham Was Granted Through Faith (4:13-25) (Contd.)

#### 4. The kind of obedient faith illustrated by Abraham (4:18-22) (Contd.)

*“and that Sarah’s womb was also dead”* - Usually a woman was thought of as being barren not *“dead”* in her womb. It seems to be Paul’s way of stressing the point.

“Let us also remember, that the condition of us all is the same with that of Abraham. All things around us are in opposition to the promises of God. He promises immortality; we are surrounded with mortality and corruption: He declares that He counts us just; we are covered with sins: He testifies that He is propitious and kind to us; outward judgements threaten His wrath. What then is to be done? We must with closed eyes pass by ourselves and all things connected with us, that nothing may hinder or prevent us from believing that God is true.”

John Calvin

**4:20** - *“Yet he did not waver through unbelief regarding the promise of God, but was strengthened in his faith and gave glory to God,”*

*“Yet he did not waver through unbelief regarding the promise of God”* - This doesn’t mean that Abraham never had momentary hesitations about what God was planning to do. It’s just that he never reached a point of permanently distrusting and being inconsistent with his faith toward the promises of God (James 1:6-8). Abraham had some degree of doubt (Genesis 17:17) but deep down in his heart he knew that God could be trusted. How many of us can relate to the patriarch?

**4:21** - *“being fully persuaded that God had power to do what he had promised.”*

*“being fully persuaded”* - It means to be *“filled with certainty.”* This is what enabled Abraham’s faith to overcome the obstacle of the tangible and visible facts that were clearly before him. Faith finds its nutrients in the Word of God.

*“that God had power to do what he had promised”* - “God’s ability is the foundation of faith’s stability.” There is a clear application of salvation here. God waits until we recognize that we are a sinner and totally unable (dead) to help ourselves before He releases His saving power into our lives. As long as we think we can help the process along, He cannot save us by grace alone.

## II. RIGHTEOUSNESS BY FAITH AVAILABLE TO ALL BELIEVERS (4:9-25) (Contd.)

### B. Because the Promise to Abraham Was Granted Through Faith (4:13-25) (Contd.)

#### 5. Abraham's justification by faith assures that we who believe in Him who raised Jesus from the dead shall find justification (4:23-25)

**4:22** - *“This is why ‘it was credited to him as righteousness.’”*

*“it was credited to him as righteousness”* - Paul has now come the full circle in his explanation of his key verse in verse 3 (cf. - Genesis 15:6). He now prepares to offer an application to his readers.

**4:23** - *“The words ‘it was credited to him’ were written not for him alone,”*

*“were written not for him alone”* - Paul believed that what was written in both the O.T. and the N.T. was written for Christians as well as for Jews (Romans 15:4; I Corinthians 10:11).

Paul refers to a faith that is *“reckoned or credited:”* a faith apart from works, apart from circumcision, apart from the Law, apart from carnal sight – and therefore a crediting that is solely based upon the grace of God in response to our faith.

**4:24** - *“but also for us, to whom God will credit righteousness—for us who believe in him who raised Jesus our Lord from the dead.”*

*“for us who believe”* - The promise given to Abraham was ultimately fulfilled in Jesus Christ and believed by both Abraham and those who accepted the message of the gospel.

*in him who raised Jesus our Lord from the dead”* - One of Paul’s main teaching was on the resurrection of Jesus Christ (Romans 8:11; 10:9; I Corinthians 6:14; 15:15; II Corinthians 4:14).

**4:25** - *“He was delivered over to death for our sins and was raised to life for our justification.”*

*“He was delivered over to death for our sins”* - It was because of our sinful actions that He was handed over to be crucified. Christ’s death is the justifying grounds that God uses to proceed with our daily justification.

*and was raised to life for our justification.”* He was raised back to life to secure our justification (cf. - Isaiah 53). When Jesus rose from the dead, He conquered the power of sin over all of our lives. We simply have to accept the fact when we are justified.

## SUMMARY

Having declared that God's righteousness was to be found in a system involving justification by faith and not by keeping the works of any law, Paul proceeded to provide evidence by referring to Abraham's example. In considering the justification of Abraham, Paul quoted Genesis 15:6 where it was stated that Abraham's faith was accounted to him for righteousness (4:1-3). Abraham trusted in God, not in his own works, and through such faith experienced the righteousness (forgiveness) expressed by David in Psalms 31:1,2 (4:4-8).

To demonstrate further that God's righteousness by faith was offered to both Jew and Gentile, Paul again appealed to the example of Abraham. He reminded them that Abraham's faith was accounted for righteousness prior to receiving circumcision, which was in itself a seal of the righteousness of the faith he had while uncircumcised. Thus Abraham served as a father of all who believe, whether circumcised or not (4:9-12).

Paul then reminded them that the promise that Abraham was to be "a father of many nations" was given in light of his faith, not through some law, so that the promise might be according to grace and sure to those who had the same kind of faith as Abraham (4:13-17).

Finally, the nature of Abraham's obedient faith was illustrated (4:18-22), with the explanation it was preserved to reassure us that we who have the same kind faith in God who raised Jesus will find our faith accounted for righteousness in the same way (4:23-25).

There are seven aspects associated with righteousness in this chapter

1. Associated with reckoning (4:3,4,5,6,8,9,10,11,22,23,24)
2. Associated with faith (4:3,5,9,13,14,16,20,22,24)
3. Associated apart from works (4:2,5,6)
4. Associated apart from circumcision (4:10,11)
5. Associated apart from the Law (4:13,14,16)
6. Associated with grace (4:16)
7. Associated with the Person of Jesus Christ (4:25)



**WORDS TO PONDER**

**“impute”** - *"to reckon, take into account, or, metaphorically, to put down to a person's account"*

**“righteousness”** - as used in this chapter, the idea seems to be akin to that of *"justification"*, where one is declared *"not guilty"* (see Romans 4:5-8)

**REVIEW QUESTIONS FOR CHAPTER 4**

- 1) List the main points of this chapter
  - Justification of Abraham as an example (4:1-8)
  - Righteousness by faith is available to all believers (4:9-25)
- 2) How did Abraham attain righteousness? (4:3-5)
  - By believing in God to justify the ungodly (and not in his own works)
- 3) How does David describe the righteousness which is imputed to man? (4:6-8)
  - In the sense that man's sins are not counted against him
- 4) How is Abraham the father of the uncircumcised who possess faith? (4:9-11)
  - By his being justified by faith prior to his circumcision
- 5) What was the promise made to Abraham based upon? (4:13)
  - The righteousness of faith
- 6) How did Abraham demonstrate his faith? (4:19-21)
  - By fathering Isaac
- 7) For whose sake was the example of Abraham's faith written? (4:23-24)
  - Those who believe that God raised Jesus from the dead

**THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS"**

**CHAPTER FIVE**

**OBJECTIVES IN STUDYING THIS CHAPTER**

- 1) To appreciate the blessings that accompany justification
- 2) To comprehend more fully the grace offered through Jesus Christ

**OUTLINE**

**I. THE BLESSINGS OF JUSTIFICATION (5:1-11)**

**A. PEACE WITH GOD (5:1)**

**B. ACCESS TO GRACE IN WHICH WE STAND (5:2a)**

**C. REJOICING IN HOPE, EVEN IN TRIBULATIONS (5:2b-4)**

1. Joy in anticipating God's glory (5:2b)
2. Joy in tribulation, knowing even it results in more hope (5:3-4)
  - a. For tribulation produces perseverance (5:3b)
  - b. And perseverance develops character (5:4a)
  - c. Such character gives one hope (5:4b)

**D. GOD'S LOVE IN OUR HEARTS (5:5-8)**

1. The assurance our hope will not be disappointed (5:5a)
2. Poured out by the Holy Spirit (5:5b)
3. Demonstrated by Christ's death while we were yet sinners (5:6-8)

**E. SALVATION FROM GOD'S WRATH (5:9-11)**

1. Through Jesus, just as we have been justified by His blood (5:9)
2. Saved by His life, just as we were reconciled by His death (5:10)
3. The basis for us to rejoice (5:11)

**II. COMPARING CHRIST WITH ADAM (5:12-21)**

**A. ADAM AND THE CONSEQUENCE OF HIS ACTIONS (5:12-14)**

1. Through Adam, sin entered the world, and death as a consequence (5:12a)
2. Thus death spread, for all sinned (5:12b)
3. From the time of Adam to Moses, death reigned, even over those who had not sinned like Adam did (5:13-14)

**B. ADAM AND CHRIST COMPARED (5:15-19)**

1. Adam's offense brought many deaths, Christ's grace abounds even more (5:15)
2. One offense produced the judgment of condemnation, but many offenses produced the free gift of justification (5:16)
3. By Adam's offense death reigns, but those who receive the gift of righteousness will reign in life through Christ (5:17)
4. Summary (5:18-19)
  - a. Through Adam's offense judgment came to all men, resulting in condemnation (5:18a)
  - b. Through Christ's act grace came to all, resulting in justification of life (5:18b)
  - c. By Adam's disobedience many were made sinners (5:19a)
  - d. By Christ's obedience many will be made righteous (5:19b)

**C. THE RELATIONSHIP OF LAW, SIN AND GRACE (5:20-21)**

1. Law entered that sin might abound, but grace abounds much more (5:20)
2. Just as sin reigned in death, so grace reigns through righteousness to eternal life through Christ (5:21)

**I. THE BLESSINGS OF JUSTIFICATION (5:1-11)****A. PEACE WITH GOD (5:1)**

Through the act of justification man is declared righteous before God. This completely changes his standing before the God of heaven. Some wonder if it only takes faith to initiate this wonderful gift, will it last? Does justification have such a sure foundation that it will weather the storms and trials of life?

**Peace and Joy**

**5:1 - *“Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ,”***

*“Therefore, since we have been justified through faith”* - Justification not only pardons man’s sin, but it also reinstates him to a right relationship and position before God.

*“we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ”* - One of the many benefits of justification is a wonderful peace with God. This is not simply a mere tranquillity of our mind but more importantly a cessation of hostility between God and us. God is the righteous enemy of anything and anyone who is sinful. With a world that is full of sinners looking for peace and happiness they must know that true peace only comes from the removal of sinful guilt in the sight of God.

**I. THE BLESSINGS OF JUSTIFICATION (5:1-11) (Contd.)****B. ACCESS TO GRACE IN WHICH WE STAND (5:2a)**

**5:2** - *“through whom we have gained access by faith into this grace in which we now stand. And we rejoice in the hope of the glory of God.”*

*“through whom we have gained access by faith”* - The access point to peace comes through faith in God the same way everything that is vital in our relationship with God comes about. This was a giant leap for the O.T. believers because the work of the priest was now replaced by our Lord and Saviour who serves as our Great High Priest.

The Greek word for *“gained access”* has two main meanings. It is a regular word used to describe introducing or ushering someone into the presence of royalty. In this manner it describes the approach of a worshipper before God. But it also has a second meaning of describing a place where ships come into harbour or someone finding a haven. Therefore, because of Jesus we have entry into the presence of God as well as finding a haven of His grace.

**C. REJOICING IN HOPE, EVEN IN TRIBULATIONS (5:2b-4)****1. Joy in anticipating God's glory (5:2b)**

*“And we rejoice in the hope of the glory of God”* - The word *“rejoice”* can also be translated *“boast.”* We can therefore, as a believer, rejoice or boast in the assurance of the hope that God has given us. It is a hope that will be completely fulfilled. In God’s perspective, the future is as complete as the present or the past.

**2. Joy in tribulation, knowing even it results in more hope (5:3-4)**

**5:3** - *“Not only so, but we also rejoice in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance;”*

*“Not only so”* - If our faith could only produce hope during the good times it would be of little value to most of us. The true test of faith is seen during times of adversity.

*“but we also rejoice in our sufferings”* - Suffering is never to be entered into with a downcast spirit. There is a gold lining in every cloud that passes our way. Paul understood suffering and was able to set an example for others to follow. His writing to the church at Philippi was true gem of encouragement for those who were being persecuted for their faith in God. Suffering is a token of Christianity that God has awarded those who are counted worthy of His Kingdom (II Thessalonians 1:5).

**I. THE BLESSINGS OF JUSTIFICATION (5:1-11) (Contd.)****C. REJOICING IN HOPE, EVEN IN TRIBULATIONS (5:2b-4)****2. Joy in tribulation, knowing even it results in more hope (5:3-4)****a. For tribulation produces perseverance (5:3b)**

*because we know that suffering produces perseverance;*” - The word Paul uses for “*suffering*” means “*pressure*.” The word he uses for “*perseverance*” means more than just endurance. It is the kind of spirit that doesn’t just passively endure but rather actively overcomes the kinds of trials and tribulations that come against us. It is the kind of word that would describe Beethoven when he was threatened with deafness. He said “*I will take life by the throat*.”

**b. And perseverance develops character (5:4a)**

**5:4 - “*perseverance, character; and character, hope*”**

“*character*” - This word is used of metals that after passing through the fire have had their impurities purged from them. When God is in the picture, we come out of the battle stronger, purer, and better prepared for the next battle. Trials improve a Christian’s character.

**c. Such character gives one hope (5:4b)**

“*hope*” - We need to meet each challenge with our eyes aflame with hope. What can drive one man into despair can drive another into a triumphant action.

**D. GOD'S LOVE IN OUR HEARTS (5:5-8)**

**5:5 - “*And hope does not disappoint us, because God has poured out his love into our hearts by the Holy Spirit, whom he has given us*.”**

**1. The assurance our hope will not be disappointed (5:5a)**

“*And hope does not disappoint us*” - When we place our hope in God we will not see our hope trashed by Him and become dust and ashes (cf. Isaiah 28:16; Romans 9:33; 10:11).

**2. Poured out by the Holy Spirit (5:5b)**

“*because God has poured out his love into our hearts by the Holy Spirit*” - God’s love always produces good results toward us. Faith (5:1), hope (5:2) and love (5:5) combine together to offer us patience during our trials of life. The Holy Spirit is first mentioned here in this letter.

**I. THE BLESSINGS OF JUSTIFICATION (5:1-11) (Contd.)****D. GOD'S LOVE IN OUR HEARTS (5:5-8) (Contd.)**

*“It always protects, always trusts, always hopes,  
always perseveres.”*

*I Corinthians 13:7*

**3. Demonstrated by Christ's death while we were yet sinners (5:6-8)**

**5:6 - “You see, at just the right time, when we were still powerless, Christ died for the ungodly.”**

**“You see, at just the right time”** - This means that the culminating of eschatological events had now happened for Christ to die. God has a prophetic time for events to take place. Not only did Jesus die at the right time, He was also born at the right time (Galatians 4:4,5).

**“when we were still powerless”** - Paul is indicating that we were totally incapable of being good. Christ came to us when we were helpless to do anything about our sinful nature.

**“Christ died for the ungodly”** - Paul never thinks of God’s love apart from the cross and that the Father was willing to send His One and Only Son to die in our place.

**5:7 - “Very rarely will anyone die for a righteous man, though for a good man someone might possibly dare to die.”**

**“Very rarely will anyone die for a righteous man”** - A righteous man doesn’t require someone to die in his place because he will go on to his reward. The best of human love would avoid this kind of senseless death.

**“though for a good man someone might possibly dare to die”** - The pinnacle of love on a human level would be to die in the place of someone we love and/or respect (i.e. - spouse, child, during military combat).

**5:8 - “But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.”**

**“But God demonstrates his own love for us in this”** - We must be careful thinking that Jesus came to change God’s feelings of wrath toward us to becoming His love toward us. God’s wrath has always been and will always be directed towards sin not the sinner. He is the only one who can keep a proper balance between wrath and love (I John 4:10).

**I. THE BLESSINGS OF JUSTIFICATION (5:1-11) (Contd.)****D. GOD'S LOVE IN OUR HEARTS (5:5-8) (Contd.)****3. Demonstrated by Christ's death while we were yet sinners (5:6-8) (Contd.)**

*While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.*” - God’s love is proven by the fact that while we were living in sin, He chose to send His Son as the only perfect sacrifice for OUR sin. Jesus came and proved the fact that God loved us and still loves us. Jesus didn’t die to make His Father love us. He came and bore the wrath for our sin by bearing our sin upon His sinless life (Hebrews 2:17; 4:15; I Peter 2:24) and thereby becoming sin for us (II Corinthians 5:21).

**E. SALVATION FROM GOD'S WRATH (5:9-11)****1. Through Jesus, just as we have been justified by His blood (5:9)**

**5:9** - *“Since we have now been justified by his blood, how much more shall we be saved from God’s wrath through him!”*

*“Since we have now been justified by his blood”* - He is simply reinstating that God has already done the most difficult thing – that is to reconcile and justify unworthy sinners

*“how much more shall we be saved from God’s wrath through him!”* - Not only was our **status** changed but also our **state** was changed. Christ’s death changed our **status** while His risen life changes our **state**. The **change of status** is the act justification while a **change in our state** is the process of sanctification. As a saved sinner we are not to continue living in the way the did we did in the past.

Since we are already justified we can depend upon God to complete the easier part of saving us from the wrath that is to come (I Thessalonians 5:9 - eschatological). We can be assured of complete deliverance from sin, death and judgement. Our salvation is not complete until our body is redeemed and glorified with the Lord (Romans 8:23; Philipians 3:21).

**2. Saved by His life, just as we were reconciled by His death (5:10)**

**5:10** - *“For if, when we were God’s enemies, we were reconciled to him through the death of his Son, how much more, having been reconciled, shall we be saved through his life!”*

*“For if, when we were God’s enemies’* - There is a hostility between God and our sins which will reach its climax on the day of judgement. It is during this time of enmity between God and us that God initiated the process of reconciliation to move us from being enemies to becoming His children (Romans 8:14-17).

**I. THE BLESSINGS OF JUSTIFICATION (5:1-11) (Contd.)****E. SALVATION FROM GOD'S WRATH (5:9-11) (Contd.)****2. Saved by His life, just as we were reconciled by His death (5:10) (Contd.)**

*we were reconciled to him through the death of his Son*” - The word for being “*justified*” is a legal term; used in the courts. It would describe one who was accused (and was guilty) as being declared innocent by a judge. The term “*reconciliation*” comes from the world of personal relationships. To “*reconcile*” means to bring together, or make peace between, two estranged or hostile parties (I Corinthians 7:11).

“*shall we be saved through his life!*” - Paul pictures the Christian as *having been saved*, as *looking forward to being saved* and as being *in the process of being saved* (cf. - II Corinthians 2:15; II Thessalonians 2:10). This can be somewhat compared to a king proclaiming amnesty toward his rebellious subjects who are urged to accept his gracious pardon while it is still made available to them. We have the choice to accept or reject His gift of reconciliation.

**3. The basis for us to rejoice (5:11)**

**5:11 - “Not only is this so, but we also rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received reconciliation.”**

*“And so the fact of his saving us, and saving us to when we were in such plight, and doing it by means of his only-begotten, and not merely by his only-begotten, but by his blood, weaves for us endless crowns to glory in.”*

*Chrysostom*

“*but we also rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ*” - Such peace with God, such access to a loving Father, such unclouded hope of glory, are the sure and inevitable blessings that offer exceeding joy to all who are justified by their faith in God.

Once again the word for “*rejoice*” could be translated “*boast*.” This kind of boasting escapes the critique of 2:17 because as for a Christian we boast in the Lord (Philippians 3:3).

“*through whom we have now received reconciliation*” - Herein lies the wonderful paradox of Christian salvation. What has been called the “already-not-yet” syndrome. The aorist tense on the word “received” points to the conclusion of the work of the cross without avoiding or diminishing the fact that salvation is yet to be completed as described in the preceding verse.



## II. COMPARING CHRIST WITH ADAM (5:12-21)

### A. ADAM AND THE CONSEQUENCE OF HIS ACTIONS (5:12-14)

#### 1. Through Adam, sin entered the world, and death as a consequence (5:12a)

##### Death Through Adam, Life Through Christ

This passage is comparable to 3:21-26 only in theological importance. Paul paints a picture of the history of redemption in this section including all mankind. Everyone stands in relationship to one of two men which will determine their eternal destiny. Those who turn to Christ are able to overcome the effects of Adam's sin. This passage offers us an assurance of being saved from the wrath to come by sharing in blessings and the glory of God.

There is a wide application of justification shown in this chapter: *its permanence* (vv. 1-11) and *its universality* (vv. 12-21).

**5:12** - *“Therefore, just as sin entered the world through one man, and death through sin, and in this way death came to all men, because all sinned—*

*“Therefore”* - What Paul has to say in verses 12-21 becomes the ground or the basis for the confident hope that was spoke about in verse 5:1-11.

*“just as sin entered the world through one man”* - The guilt of Adam's sin has been imputed upon each and every person born into this world. Up to this point the apostle has been dealing with *“sins,”* as represented in human life, but now he proceeds to deal with *“sin.”* He goes to root the trouble; original sin, and declares its disease and its remedy. Although he clearly proved our justification from *“sins”* there still remains the question of our old nature and how we obtain deliverance from both *“sins”* and *“sin.”*

I like the way that Douglas Moo paraphrases this verse.

“In order to accomplish this [namely, that God has promised to save all those who are justified and reconciled through Christ], there exists a life-giving union between Christ and his own that is similar to, but more powerful than, the death-producing union between Adam and all his own.”

Douglas Moo  
*“The Epistle to the Romans”*  
 William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company  
 1996, p. 318

## II. COMPARING CHRIST WITH ADAM (5:12-21) (Contd.)

### A. ADAM AND THE CONSEQUENCE OF HIS ACTIONS (5:12-14) (Contd.)

#### 1. Through Adam, sin entered the world, and death as a consequence (5:12a) (Contd.)

The “*sin*” that is mentioned here is unquestionably the act of disobedience on the part of Adam that we often refer to as the “*the fall*” which has become the source of human sinfulness, misery and death.

Pauls sees “*sin*” in a very active role by writing that it “*reigns*” (5:20; cf. 6:13-14); it can be “*obeyed*” (6:16-17); “*pays wages*” (6:23); “*seizes opportunity*” (7:8, 11); “*deceives*” and “*kills*” (7:11, 13). So we can see clearly that he personifies the word “*sin*.”

This “*man*” whose very name means “*man*” is Adam who was the first of God’s human creation.

#### 2. Thus death spread, for all sinned (5:12b)

“*and death through sin*” - This death is in reference to spiritual death. This death caused the relationship of man and God to be broken. If it is not healed it will lead to eternal death.

“*and in this way death came to all men*” - No one can escape the scope of this sin. Paul is more concerned with *original death* than he is with *original sin*. No one can escape the reign of death because no one can escape the power of sin outside of forgiveness found only in the cleansing blood of Jesus Christ.

“*because all sinned*” - No man woman or child is exempted from its impact. Therefore, death is passed on to all mankind because of their own sin not because of Adam’s sin. We can’t blame Adam for our sinfulness. He began the cycle of sin and we continue in that cycle. That is why we all must continually call out to God for forgiveness.

The word “*sinned*” is in a tense that denotes a past action. In other words, all were in Adam sinning when he sinned. It was Adam’s sin that corrupted human nature and made individual sin inescapable. Original sin (and its original death) will always be an offence to reason as Pascal once argued. This is not contrary to the teaching in 5:18-19. The sin of Adam *is* the sin of all. The same principle is clearly seen in the story of Achan where the sin of one individual was said to be “*the sin of Israel*.” (Joshua 7:1,11). Yet God does not always judge in this manner (Numbers 16:22). In the end of all things, the Biblical explanation for universal human sinfulness is the only logical explanation of human history and experience as to why mankind continues to repeat its sinful pattern.

## II. COMPARING CHRIST WITH ADAM (5:12-21) (Contd.)

### A. ADAM AND THE CONSEQUENCE OF HIS ACTIONS (5:12-14) (Contd.)

#### 3. From the time of Adam to Moses, death reigned, even over those who had not sinned like Adam did (5:13-14)

**5:13** - *“for before the law was given, sin was in the world. But sin is not taken into account when there is no law.”*

*“for before the law was given, sin was in the world”* - The Law had nothing to do with creating sin and subsequent death. Paul argues that the institution of the Law made sin more worthy of death (cf. - 3:20; 4:15; 5:20; 7:7-12) but it did not change innocence into guilt.

*“But sin is not taken into account when there is no law”* - It was not the Law that created sin. It simply had no clear standard without the Law.

**5:14** - *“Nevertheless, death reigned from the time of Adam to the time of Moses, even over those who did not sin by breaking a command, as did Adam, who was a pattern of the one to come.”*

*“Nevertheless, death reigned from the time of Adam to the time of Moses”* - Between the time of Adam and Moses there was a real existence of sin because death reigned as a cruel tyrant; all were subject to its power. Death refers clearly to physical death but it also includes spiritual death along with its condemnation. Noting that death reigned is another of saying that it was and is universal and inescapable.

*“even over those who did not sin by breaking a command”* - Paul is arguing that everyone sinned no matter when they lived in history whether they had a list of written commands or not to govern their lives.

*“as did Adam”* - Adam and Eve were clearly told not to eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. He broke the clearly known will of God (Genesis 2:15-17).

*“who was a pattern of the one to come”* - Once the Law was established mankind simply continued in the pattern of Adam by rebelling against the clearly known will and Word of God.

## II. COMPARING CHRIST WITH ADAM (5:12-21) (Contd.)

### B. ADAM AND CHRIST COMPARED (5:15-19)

#### 1. Adam's offense brought many deaths, Christ's grace abounds even more (5:15)

**5:15** - *“But the gift is not like the trespass. For if the many died by the trespass of the one man, how much more did God’s grace and the gift that came by the grace of the one man, Jesus Christ, overflow to the many!”*

*“But the gift is not like the trespass”* - The similarity between the two consists in the fact that the act of each is considered to have a determined significance to those who choose to follow either the first Adam or the second Adam.

The first contrast is one of degree: The work of Christ at Calvary is greater due to the manifestation of God’s grace than any work of Adam. The second contrast is one of consequence: Adam’s sinful act brought condemnation (v 16b) and death (17a) while Christ’s act brought righteousness (16b) and life (17b).

*“For if the many died”* - The first use of the word *“many”* includes all people.

*“how much more did God’s grace and the gift that came by the grace of the one man, Jesus Christ, overflow to the many!”* - Christ’s act being a work of God’s grace is far more potent than Adam’s act being a work of man’s disgrace. This is the *“abounding plus”* which is able to not only cancel the effects of Adam’s work of trespassing but to replace it with life and peace in a through God.

The second use of the word *“many”* includes only those people who actively received the promised gift of grace through salvation based upon faith in God.

## II. COMPARING CHRIST WITH ADAM (5:12-21) (Contd.)

### B. ADAM AND CHRIST COMPARED (5:15-19) (Contd.)

#### 2. One offense produced the judgment of condemnation, but many offenses produced the free gift of justification (5:16)

**5:16** - *“Again, the gift of God is not like the result of the one man’s sin: The judgment followed one sin and brought condemnation, but the gift followed many trespasses and brought justification.”*

“That one single misdeed should be answered by judgement , this is perfectly understandable: that the accumulated sins and guilt of all the ages should be answered by God’s free gift, this is the miracle of miracles, utterly beyond human comprehension.”

C. E. B. Cranfield

*“A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistle to the Book of Romans”*

T & T Clark, 1975, 1979

#### 3. By Adam's offense death reigns, but those who receive the gift of righteousness will reign in life through Christ (5:17)

**5:17** - *“For if, by the trespass of the one man, death reigned through that one man, how much more will those who receive God’s abundant provision of grace and of the gift of righteousness reign in life through the one man, Jesus Christ.”*

*“For if, by the trespass of the one man, death reigned through that one man”* - Even though Adam passed on to the human race spiritual and physical death, the apostle did not want to leave his readers in a hopeless situation.

*“how much more”* - The work of Jesus Christ is much more glorious when compared to the disastrous effect of the first Adam. The work of Christ is in inverse proportion to that of the work of Adam.

*“who receive God’s abundant provision of grace and of the gift of righteousness reign in life through the one man, Jesus Christ”* - One must respond positively to this new grace and gift to receive it. We will *“reign in life”* only at the reception of the *“gift of righteousness.”*

## II. COMPARING CHRIST WITH ADAM (5:12-21) (Contd.)

### B. ADAM AND CHRIST COMPARED (5:15-19) (Contd.)

#### 4. Summary (5:18-19)

##### a. Through Adam's offense judgment came to all men, resulting in condemnation (5:18a)

**5:18** - *“Consequently, just as the result of one trespass was condemnation for all men, so also the result of one act of righteousness was justification that brings life for all men.”*

*“Consequently, just as the result of one trespass was condemnation for all men”* - This is a very difficult statement for some to accept. Our human weakness for sin attempts to find a loophole to escape its consequences. The Bible is clear that those who refuse to accept Christ by faith will face eternal punishment (II Thessalonians 1:8-9; Romans 2:12).

##### b. Through Christ's act grace came to all, resulting in justification of life (5:18b)

*“so also the result of one act of righteousness was justification that brings life for all men”* - The wonderful point made here is that we can be just as assured of being justified by our faith in Christ as we are that condemnation will also take place for those who refuse to accept Christ's gift of salvation. This is more than just an availability, it is an assurance of what is to come.

*“that brings life”* - By advancing from the truth of justification by faith in Christ to that of our vital union with Christ, the groundwork is laid for the teaching that will follow in chapters 6-8, namely to the sanctification and final glory of all believers in Christ.

*“for all men”* - Paul clearly points to the fact that every person is *“in Adam”* (cf. vv. 12d-14) but only those who accept the free gift of salvation are *“in Christ.”*

##### c. By Adam's disobedience many were made sinners (5:19a)

**5:19** - *“For just as through the disobedience of the one man the many were made sinners, so also through the obedience of the one man the many will be made righteous.”*

*“For just as through the disobedience of the one man”* - It is noteworthy that Paul refers to Adam's “disobedience” rather than his sin (v. 12) or trespass (vv. 15,17) in this verse.

## II. COMPARING CHRIST WITH ADAM (5:12-21) (Contd.)

### B. ADAM AND CHRIST COMPARED (5:15-19) (Contd.)

#### 4. Summary (5:18-19) (Contd.)

##### d. By Christ's obedience many will be made righteous (5:19b)

**“will be made righteous”** - To be made righteous does not mean to be morally upright, but rather to be judged acquitted or cleared of all charges against when it refers to God’s heavenly judgement seat. It is therefore, a legal not a moral term. Since Paul refers to it in a future tense he most likely is referring to the final declaration of justification at the judgement seat of Christ.

### C. THE RELATIONSHIP OF LAW, SIN AND GRACE (5:20-21)

#### 1. Law entered that sin might abound, but grace abounds much more (5:20)

**5:20 - “The law was added so that the trespass might increase. But where sin increased, grace increased all the more,”**

**“The law was added so that the trespass might increase”** - The Jews held the Law with great theological and salvific importance that Paul had to address the issue. This “law” actually “came in beside” the situation created by Adam. It actually made the situation worse rather than erasing it by intensifying the seriousness of sin.

**“But where sin increased, grace increased all the more”** - Sin leaves us in a desperate situation outside of the grace of God. God never intended to leave mankind in a hopeless situation caused by sin. He was always willing (even through His prophets) to offer a way to forgive those who had trespassed His clearly defined law.

#### 2. Just as sin reigned in death, so grace reigns through righteousness to eternal life through Christ (5:21)

**5:21 - “so that, just as sin reigned in death, so also grace might reign through righteousness to bring eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.”**

**“so that, just as sin reigned in death”** - Spiritual and eventually natural death is always the result of sin. In this verse there are one of two dominions that reign over us. Until the coming of Christ, sin ruled in the realm of death like a pitiless monarch; but since the redeeming work of our Lord, grace has been enthroned and given sway over the followers of Christ, so that they may be delivered from the tyrant of death and made heirs of eternal life.

## II. COMPARING CHRIST WITH ADAM (5:12-21) (Contd.)

### C. THE RELATIONSHIP OF LAW, SIN AND GRACE (5:20-21)

#### 2. Just as sin reigned in death, so grace reigns through righteousness to eternal life through Christ (5:21) (Contd.)

***“so also grace might reign through righteousness to bring eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord”*** - The domain of righteousness is reigned by grace and will lead ultimately to eternal life.

This previous passage has been one of the most intricate and perplexing in all of the Bible. Its interpretation requires humility due to the fact that it has been the battleground for theological controversies for centuries.

One thing is clear that there is a gracious provision that God has made for sinful mankind who had fallen under the dominance of sin and death. It is a provision of righteousness and of eternal life that has been made possible through the sanctifying work and divine power made available through the finished work of Christ's shed blood at Calvary.

**In the previous verses we have a number of contrasts that are placed side by side.**

THROUGH ADAM	THROUGH CHRIST
Came Condemnation	Came Justification
Many were made sinners	Many were made righteous
Sin abounded	Grace did much more abound
Sin reigned unto death	Grace reigned unto righteous

To put all this in perspective consider for a moment what would take place in an organ transplant. Take for instance, if the eyes of a criminal who was executed were transplanted into a person waiting for a donor. When the eye was part of the criminal it saw what he wanted to see. When the eye became part of the new owner it saw a whole new perspective on life.

For the sake of this illustration lets say the believer were the eye. When the believer was in Adam, he was everything Adam was by inheritance and by choice. He shared in his sin, condemnation and death. But through the miracle of the new birth, the believer is now in Christ. With a new will and emotions he now shares in everything that Christ is and stands for. He now shares in salvation, justification, and everlasting life.



Let us finish this chapter with Christ being the central figure of our thoughts by summing up some of the wonderful blessing of living a life in Christ Jesus.

**THERE IS MUCH MORE**  
**IN CHRIST**

- 1. The “much more” of justification (v. 9)**
- 2. The “much more” of reconciliation (v. 10)**
- 3. The “much more” of the gift (v. 15)**
- 4. The “much more” of the reign of life ((v. 17)**

**SUMMARY**

Having substantiated his thesis of "*justification by faith*" with evidence from the Old Testament, Paul discussed the blessings of such justification. **First**, there was peace with God (1). **Second**, we have access to grace in which we stand (5:2a). **Third**, there was cause for rejoicing in hope, so that we can glory even in tribulations (5:2b-4). **Fourth**, there was God's love which He first demonstrated with the gift of His Son (5:5-8). **Finally**, there was salvation from God's wrath (9). All of this was made possible when we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son and should be the basis for endless rejoicing (5:10-11).

To explain further the way in which salvation is made possible, Paul compared Christ to Adam. Through one man, Adam, sinned and death entered the world, and the consequences have led to the death of many. In a similar way, through one man, Christ, many may have now become righteous. Through Jesus' death on the cross, justification is made possible for many (5:12-19).

Upon comparing Christ with Adam, Paul briefly mentioned that with the entering in of law, sin abounded. But the increase of sin had been adequately answered by the grace offered in Jesus Christ (5:20-21).

**WORDS TO PONDER**

**“reconciliation”** - the act of bringing peace between two parties (e.g., between man and God)

**“transgression”** - violation of law; sin

**“death”** - physically: separation of body and spirit; spiritually: separation between man and God

**“eternal life”** - the alternative to spiritual death, a result of justification

**REVIEW QUESTIONS FOR CHAPTER 5**

- 1) List the main points of this chapter
  - The Blessings Of Justification (5:1-11)
  - Comparing Christ With Adam (5:12-21)
- 2) Name some benefits we enjoy as the result of justification (5:1-2)
  - Peace with God, access to grace, rejoicing in hope
- 3) Why can Christians rejoice even in the middle of trials? (5:3-5)
  - Knowing trials can produce perseverance, character and hope
- 4) How did God demonstrate His love for us? (5:6-8)
  - By having Christ die for us when we were still sinners
- 5) What in addition to Jesus' death is involved in our ultimate salvation? (5:10)
  - His present life, which saves us from the wrath to come
- 6) What was the consequence of Adam's sin upon all men? (5:12)
  - Death (I understand Paul to mean physical death; to see why, read Moses Lard's commentary on this passage. Commentaries by J. W. McGarvey and David Lipscomb take a similar view. For the view that spiritual death is under consideration, see Robert L. Whiteside's commentary.)
- 7) What comparison is made between Adam and Christ? (5:12-19)
  - Just as Adam through his sin brought physical death to all, so Christ through His obedience will give life to all (through the resurrection - cf. 1 Corinthians 15:21-22)
  - But Christ does even more; to those who will receive it, he offers *"an abundance of grace and the gift of righteousness"* so they can reign in life through Jesus (cf. v. 17)
- 8) Which has abounded more: sin, or grace? (5:20)
  - Grace

**"THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS"**

**CHAPTER SIX**

**OBJECTIVES IN STUDYING THIS CHAPTER**

- 1) To understand what takes place in baptism
- 2) To appreciate the freedom from sin which we may now enjoy in Christ

**OUTLINE**

**I. WE ARE DEAD TO SIN! (6:1-14)**

**A. THROUGH BAPTISM WE DIED TO SIN (6:1-7)**

1. Shall we sin, that grace may abound? No, we died to sin! (6:1-2)
2. In baptism we were buried into Christ's death (6:3-4a)
3. We should walk in newness of life, having been united together in the likeness of His death, crucified with Him, no longer slaves of sin, but freed from sin (6:4b-7)

**B. DEAD TO SIN, ALIVE TO GOD (6:8-14)**

1. Having died with Christ, we may live with Him over Whom death has no dominion (6:8-10)
2. Alive to God, we should not let sin reign in our bodies (6:11-12)
3. But rather present our bodies as instruments of righteousness, for we are under grace (6:13-14)

**II. WE SHOULD BE SLAVES TO GOD! (6:15-23)**

**A. WE BECOME SLAVES TO WHOM WE OBEY (6:15-18)**

1. Either of sin to death, or of obedience to righteousness (6:15-16)
2. Through obedience to God's Word, those who were slaves of sin become slaves of righteousness (6:17-18)

**B. THE MOTIVATION FOR SERVING GOD (6:19-23)**

1. Serving righteousness produces holiness (6:19)
2. Serving sin produces death (6:20-21)
3. Serving God produces the fruit of holiness, and in the end, eternal life (6:22)
4. The wages of sin is death, but God gives the gift of eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord (6:23)

**I. WE ARE DEAD TO SIN! (6:1-14)****A. THROUGH BAPTISM WE DIED TO SIN (6:1-7)****1. Shall we sin, that grace may abound? No, we died to sin! (6:1-2)**

Our Lord's death was essentially a "*death to sin.*" We have been so closely aligned with His death that Paul writes of us as being "*buried with him.*" This burial sets a seal on death and also prepares us for the life to come.

This "after-life" is not seen like a Pharaoh's tomb in Egypt that has been unearthed displaying all the treasures that were never enjoyed. It is not a false hope. It contains wonderful treasures that can be enjoyed on this side of the grave.

The repetition of the word "*know*" (6:3,6,9) emphasizes the fact that knowledge plays an important role in our Christian life. Christian *living* continues to depend upon Christian *learning*; our *duty* thrives from our *doctrine*. *Ignorant* Christians are *impotent* Christians.

The doctrine of justification by faith in God has always been exposed to misunderstanding, misinterpretation and abuse. Yet even more confusing has been the doctrine of sanctification. When we speak of sanctification we must understand that there are several tenses or positions of sanctification.

**1). Positional sanctification** - This took place in our past when we accepted Christ as our personal Saviour (I Corinthians 1:2, 30; 6:11; Hebrews 10:10,14).

**2). Progressive sanctification** - This is what we experience as a believer each and every day (John 17:17; Ephesians 5:26; I Thessalonians 4:3; II Thessalonians 2:13; I Peter 1:2).

**3). Perfect sanctification** - This is the position and condition that we will obtain when we meet the Lord (Romans 8:29; Philippians 3:21; I John 3:1-2)

**6:1 - "What shall we say, then? Shall we go on sinning so that grace may increase?"**

"*What shall we say, then?*" - This question is in some ways raised in response to the statement made in 5:20 "*But where sin increased (abound), grace increased (abounded) all the more.*"

"*Shall we go on sinning so that grace may increase?*" - God is not bound to bestow His grace upon sinful man unless He binds Himself to this act of grace - which He has done! Grace works independently of sin. The extent of our sin does not determine the level of grace that we receive.

**I. WE ARE DEAD TO SIN! (6:1-14)(Contd.)****A. THROUGH BAPTISM WE DIED TO SIN (6:1-7)(Contd.)****1. Shall we sin, that grace may abound? No, we died to sin! (6:1-2)(Contd.)**

Some feel that the “reign of grace” is incapable of curbing sin without the Law. Paul argues that the Law was never able to curb sin. The reign of grace is the only means by which we can truly defeat the power of sin over our lives. There has never been an acceptance of sin in any form throughout the Bible. But because we do sin, God instituted His grace to deal with it.

“Christians are by no means immune from the temptation to slip from a celebration of grace to an abuse of grace, to be complacent about sin because, after all, God is gracious and will forgive.”

Douglas Moo  
*“The Epistle to the Romans”*  
 William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company  
 1996, p. 356

The true gospel of grace when properly interpreted does not lead to licentiousness but rather to a life demonstrated by righteousness. It is not how close we can live our life to sinfulness but rather how far can we remove our thoughts and actions from a sinful lifestyle.

**6:2 - “By no means! We died to sin; how can we live in it any longer?”**

**“By no means! We died to sin”** - The Christian’s death to a life of sinfulness is the main point in this chapter. Every believer in Christ has died to the detriment of sin. Sin should no longer have its grip over our lives because we choose to remove ourselves from its realm and its rule over our lives. We are supposed to be blind to sin’s enticements, deaf to its commands and insensible to its power over our lives. We all must be *“dying to live.”*

**“how can we live in it any longer?”** - The habitual lifestyle of sinning should not be the standard by which a Christian lives. Yet the nature of Christian existence in an evil world is such that a true believer in Christ can live in a manner that is inconsistent with the new lifestyle that one has taken on. It is not sin that has fully died, but rather the believer. John Wesley said that sin **remains** although it is not to **reign** in the life of a believer of Christ. We can live a life of justification by faith and sanctification by struggle at the same time.

**I. WE ARE DEAD TO SIN! (6:1-14) (Contd.)****A. THROUGH BAPTISM WE DIED TO SIN (6:1-7) (Contd.)****2. In baptism we were buried into Christ's death (6:3-4a)**

**6:3 - “Or don’t you know that all of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death?”**

*“Or don’t you know that all of us who were baptized”* - Some would suggest that Paul is referring to “immersing” in a metaphorical sense or that he is referring to being baptised in the Spirit or even being “*baptized*” or immersed into the body of Christ. But during this time in Church history it would most likely refer to water baptism (Galatians 3:27). Paul uses the verb “*baptizo*” eleven times and all but one (I Corinthians 10:2) refer to water baptism. The word “*baptism*” had two meanings: one literal - “*to dip or immerse*” and the other was figurative - “*to be identified with.*”

*“into Christ Jesus”* - This is probably a shorter form of saying “*into the name of the Lord Jesus Christ*” or “*into union with Christ.*” This would distinguish this baptism from any other type or practise of the day. Christian baptism distinguishes us as disciples of Christ.

*“were baptized into his death?”* - Burial sets the seal on death. So being baptized into Christ’s death refers to the old order of life that has come to an end and is now replaced by a new order of life-in-Christ.

**3. We should walk in newness of life, having been united together in the likeness of His death, crucified with Him, no longer slaves of sin, but freed from sin (6:4b-7)**

**6:4 - “We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life.”**

*“We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death”* - Most evangelicals believe that this is a metaphor that is used to describe a symbolic picture of completely breaking away from our old life of sin and turning in full repentance to Christ and His offer of salvation.

*“just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father”* - We must not forget that it describes the participation of the believer in Christ’s own burial. In other words our dying, being buried, and then being resurrected with Christ are unique experiences that transfer us from the old way of life that we once lived into a new one. Yet this transition from the old to the new, while applied at the time of our conversion, was completely accomplished (in the eyes of God) through the redemptive work of Christ at Calvary

**I. WE ARE DEAD TO SIN! (6:1-14) (Contd.)****A. THROUGH BAPTISM WE DIED TO SIN (6:1-7) (Contd.)**

**3. We should walk in newness of life, having been united together in the likeness of His death, crucified with Him, no longer slaves of sin, but freed from sin (6:4b-7) (Contd.)**

“It is not that the believer in baptism is laid in his own grave, but that through that action he is set alongside Jesus Christ in *his*.”

Beasley-Murray

“*we too may live a new life*” - The main point of this verse is not that we are in Christ or baptised but rather that we go on from these momentary events to live an entire lifetime now in a way that is pleasing to Jesus Christ.

“Too many Christians are “betweeners”: they live between Egypt and Canaan, *saved* but never *satisfied*; or they live between Good Friday and Easter, believing in the Cross but not entering into the power and glory of the Resurrection.

**6:5 - “*If we have been united with him like this in his death, we will certainly also be united with him in his resurrection.*”**

“*If we have been united with him like this in his death*” - Since we have been united with Christ through His redemptive work at Calvary, we are to live a life of conformity to that death to sin.

“*we will certainly also be united with him in his resurrection*” - This will take place at the time of our physical resurrection (II Corinthians 4:14) when God will transform our earthly bodies when we are glorified. Until that day takes place we need to live in a manner that manifests Christ over our life. We will have complete victory over sin when the day of our resurrection takes place.



## I. WE ARE DEAD TO SIN! (6:1-14) (Contd.)

## A. THROUGH BAPTISM WE DIED TO SIN (6:1-7) (Contd.)

**3. We should walk in newness of life, having been united together in the likeness of His death, crucified with Him, no longer slaves of sin, but freed from sin (6:4b-7) (Contd.)**

**6:6 - “For we know that our old self was crucified with him so that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves to sin—“**

**“For we know that our old self was crucified with him so that the body of sin might be done away with - Sin was done away within the sense that its power over our lives was rendered powerless.**

“Just as Christ’s crucifixion meant his release from the realm of sin (6:10), the law (Galatians 4:4) and death (v. 9; Philippians 2:7-8), so our crucifixion with Christ means our release from the realm of sin (this verse), the law (6:14; 7:4), and death (8:1-11).”

Douglas Moo  
*“The Epistle to the Romans”*  
 William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company  
 1996, p. 373

It is noted by scholars that Paul didn’t say that “we” have been crucified with Christ but rather that **“our old self”** or **“our old man”** has been put to death. (cf. - Ephesians 4:22-24; Colossians 3:9-11). Some would argue that our old nature has simply been added to our new nature. But Paul does not refer to a *“change in nature”* as much as he does toward *“a change in relationship.”* The reason why our old man must be crucified is to make powerless our entire self with all of its potential to enter into sinful thoughts and behaviour.

“What was crucified with Christ was not a part of me called my old nature, but the whole of me as I was before I was converted.”

J.R.W. Stott  
*“Men Made New: An Exposition of Romans 5-8”*  
 London: Inter-Varsity, 1966, p. 45

The word used for *“crucify”* (as in Galatians 6:14) has an alternative meaning of being **“fenced off.”** The cross forms a permanent barrier between the world and Christian living.

**I. WE ARE DEAD TO SIN! (6:1-14) (Contd.)****A. THROUGH BAPTISM WE DIED TO SIN (6:1-7) (Contd.)****3. We should walk in newness of life, having been united together in the likeness of His death, crucified with Him, no longer slaves of sin, but freed from sin (6:4b-7) (Contd.)**

What we once were in Adam is no longer applicable, but until we arrive in heaven the temptation to *live* in Adam will remain. Paul wants us to know that our capacities to interact with the world around us has been rescued from the dominance of sin. Our body as a helpless toll of habitual sin has been definitely defeated.

The word for “*done away with*” or “*destroyed*” does not mean annihilated; it means “*rendered inactive, made of no effect.*” The same word is translated “*released*” or “*loosed*” in Romans 7:2.

**6:7** - “*because anyone who has died has been freed from sin.*”

“*anyone who has died has been freed from sin*” - This is the first time that Paul has linked justification with our dying to sin. Death severs the hold that sin once had upon our life. Death pays all our debts. In the same manner the man who has died with Christ has had his slate wiped clean and is ready to begin a new life with Christ that is free from the entanglement of the past.

**B. DEAD TO SIN, ALIVE TO GOD (6:8-14)****1. Having died with Christ, we may live with Him over Whom death has no dominion (6:8-10)**

**6:8** - “*Now if we died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him.*”

“*we believe that we will also live with him*” - It is clear that the present implication of our decision to “*die with Christ*” will be that we will also be promised a future resurrection.

**6:9** - “*For we know that since Christ was raised from the dead, he cannot die again; death no longer has mastery over him.*”

“*For we know that since Christ was raised from the dead, he cannot die again*” - There was a distinct difference between Christ’s death and resurrection and that of Lazarus’. Lazarus died again. Jesus not only never died again but also He broke free from death and its grip of power over His life.

**I. WE ARE DEAD TO SIN! (6:1-14) (Contd.)****B. DEAD TO SIN, ALIVE TO GOD (6:8-14) (Contd.)****1. Having died with Christ, we may live with Him over Whom death has no dominion (6:8-10) (Contd.)**

***“death no longer has mastery over him ”*** - When Christ came to earth He was able to be influenced by the powers of this old age (sin, the law and death) although none of these took a hold upon Him. Things changed when He rose from the dead. When the final day comes and the resurrection of the dead takes place, death will come to an end forever.

Until that time we can be assured because of Christ’s resurrection that the same power of sin and death that was broken over our Lord’s life will take place when we rise from the dead or are raptured. Death will no longer have lordship over us.

**6:10 - *“The death he died, he died to sin once for all; but the life he lives, he lives to God.”***

***“he died to sin once for all”*** - The main purpose that Jesus died and rose again was to destroy the power of sin. In doing so death is also conquered (I Corinthians 15:12-58) because death is a result of sin (6:23; cf. Genesis 2:17).

***“but the life he lives, he lives to God”*** - In the same way that Christ lives in a manner pleasing to His Father, so can we now that sin (and death) is conquered.

**2. Alive to God, we should not let sin reign in our bodies (6:11-12)**

**6:11 - *“In the same way, count yourselves dead to sin but alive to God in Christ Jesus.”***

***“count yourselves dead to sin”***- Since we are now in union with Christ and *have been made dead to sin* and alive to God, we need to both *appropriate* (6:10) and *apply* (6:12,13) what we have been granted.

***“but alive to God in Christ Jesus”*** - This is a reminder that we can only gain this new state as we remain united with Christ. As our relationship is firmly rooted in faith with Christ can this new life actually become a daily reality. We need to live as if we have already entered into a resurrected life.

**I. WE ARE DEAD TO SIN! (6:1-14) (Contd.)****B. DEAD TO SIN, ALIVE TO GOD (6:8-14) (Contd.)****2. Alive to God, we should not let sin reign in our bodies (6:11-12) (Contd.)**

**6:12** - *“Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body so that you obey its evil desires.”*

*“Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body”* - Now that Paul has constantly reminded Christians to consider their lives *“dead to sin”* he now commands them to make it a daily practice not to let sin hold its sway over their lives. Sin is not dead but we need to be dead to sin.

The word used for *“mortal body”* is normally in reference to our physical body but in this case it is more likely our entire person as we interact with the world around us. Even though the battle is a spiritual one, it is won or lost in how we decide to use the members of our body on a daily basis (I Corinthians 6:12-20).

*“so that you obey its evil desires”* - The evil desires or passions include not only physical lusts and appetites but also those sinful desires that reside in our mind and will: the desire to have our own way, the desire to possess what others have (7:7-8), the desire to have dominance over others. These are no longer the things that should occupy our lives.

**3. But rather present our bodies as instruments of righteousness, for we are under grace (6:13-14)**

**6:13** - *“Do not offer the parts of your body to sin, as instruments of wickedness, but rather offer yourselves to God, as those who have been brought from death to life; and offer the parts of your body to him as instruments of righteousness.”*

*“Do not offer the parts of your body to sin”* - The word used for *“offer”* (NIV) or *“yield”* (KJV) means *“to put in service of.”* The word used to describe *“parts of your body”* or *“members”* goes beyond our physical body to include our natural tendencies. We must keep a constant guard on our thoughts, attitudes and actions.

*“as instruments of wickedness”* - The word for *“instruments”* can mean an *“instrument or tool”* but in this case it more properly refers to *“a military weapon”* (cf. - John 18:3; Romans 13:12; II Corinthians 6:7; 10:4). A heavily armoured Greek foot soldier was titled by a form of this word.

**I. WE ARE DEAD TO SIN! (6:1-14) (Contd.)****B. DEAD TO SIN, ALIVE TO GOD (6:8-14) (Contd.)****3. But rather present our bodies as instruments of righteousness, for we are under grace (6:13-14) (Contd.)**

*“but rather offer yourselves to God”* - Our natural capacities and abilities are now to be given over to God for Him to use as He directs in the war against sin. This offering is a once-and-for-all surrendering to the will of God. This does not mean that there will be no further steps of surrender. There will always be a need for a daily surrendering which begins with the initial step of being determined to serve the Lord with all our heart, mind and strength.

*“as those who have been brought from death to life”* - Our bodily resurrection will take place in the future but our spiritual resurrection has already taken place (Colossians 2:12; Ephesians 2:6) which places us into a new life with a new purpose or service to God.

*“and offer the parts of your body to him as instruments of righteousness”* - The only way we can live a righteous life is to be made righteous (declared righteous before God).

**6:14** - *“For sin shall not be your master, because you are not under law, but under grace.”*

*“For sin shall not be your master”* - Once again sin is personified as having the power to master over our lives. Paul makes it clear that it should not lord over us – now or ever! This is where the real test of our faith comes in. We often feel that we can never stop engaging in sin. It is important not to compare ourselves with the practices of others but rather set Christ as our pattern.

*“because you are not under law”* - What Paul is referring to is the *“nomos”* or the Mosaic law; the torah. To be *“under law”* refers to living under the curse of the law that comes about because of our inevitable failure to meet its expectations (cf. - 3:19,20; Galatians 3:10-14). The Puritans used to refer to it as being under the *“covenant of works.”*

*“but under grace”* - To live *“under law”* is to be subject to the constraining and sin-strengthening regime of the old covenant; to be *“under grace”* is to be under the new covenant which provides freedom from the power of sin. The law demands obedience, while grace supplies the power to obey. The Christian life is no longer a burden to be carried; it is a privilege to be lived up to. We find ourselves opposing sin not because of fear of what God *will do to us*, but because of our inspiration gained by what God *has done for us*. As Denny once said,

“It is not restraint but inspiration which liberates from sin; not Mount Sinai but Mount Calvary which makes saints.”

## II. WE SHOULD BE SLAVES TO GOD! (6:15-23)

### A. WE BECOME SLAVES TO WHOM WE OBEY (6:15-18)

#### 1. Either of sin to death, or of obedience to righteousness (6:15-16)

##### Slaves to Righteousness

In the first 14 verses Paul argues that the abundance of God's grace sets us free from sin. In the next 9 verses he moves from the thought of "*freedom from sin*" to "*slavery to God*." Paul finds a safe passageway between the dangers of legalism and licentiousness. We all live either under the power of sin or the power of God. It is not whether we will have a master but which master will we serve.

**6:15** - "*What then? Shall we sin because we are not under law but under grace? By no means!*"

"*What then?*" - The question is the same as that found in verse 1. In verse 1 it is the question of whether we will keep sinning *in order to gain more* grace, while in verse 15 it is the question of *sinning because of* grace.

"*Shall we sin because we are not under law but under grace?*" - Jews believed that anyone living in a "law-less" life would be encouraged to sin. Paul makes it clear that God's grace not only liberates us from the power of sin but also constrains us from sinning as well (cf. - Romans 8:5-9)

**6:16** - "*Don't you know that when you offer yourselves to someone to obey him as slaves, you are slaves to the one whom you obey—whether you are slaves to sin, which leads to death, or to obedience, which leads to righteousness?*"

"*Don't you know that when you offer yourselves to someone to obey him as slaves, you are slaves to the one whom you obey*" - In ancient times people would often sell themselves into slavery as a way of avoiding a financial disaster. Therefore habitual obedience to sin will lead to a condition of slavery. Slavery placed an individual in an absolute exclusive possession of his master at all times and in all places.

"*whether you are slaves to sin, which leads to death*" - Paul is writing to Christians. He reminds them that being set free from sin through their union with Christ does not escape the fact that if they were to constantly yield to temptation, they would effectively become a slave to sin once again. Everyone who habitually commits sin is a slave to sin (cf. - John 8:34). People who think they are "free" from serving any master are deceived by Satan.

## II. WE SHOULD BE SLAVES TO GOD! (6:15-23) (Contd.)

### A. WE BECOME SLAVES TO WHOM WE OBEY (6:15-18) (Contd.)

#### 1. Either of sin to death, or of obedience to righteousness (6:15-16) (Contd.)

*“or to obedience, which leads to righteousness?”* - John Calvin calls obedience *“the mother of true knowledge of God.”* The word *“death”* is referring to *“eternal death”* where one is finally and eternally excluded from God’s presence. In referring to *“righteousness”* he is speaking of a *“moral righteousness”* which is a conduct that is pleasing to God.

#### 2. Through obedience to God's Word, those who were slaves of sin become slaves of righteousness (6:17-18)

**6:17** - *“But thanks be to God that, though you used to be slaves to sin, you wholeheartedly obeyed the form of teaching to which you were entrusted.”*

*“you wholeheartedly obeyed”* - This points to the time when they were converted. Faith and submission to the will of God go hand in hand.

*“the form of teaching”* - There were 2 forms of teachings that were common; Christian teaching and Jewish teaching. Becoming a Christian means that we have now come under Christian *“teaching.”*

*“to which you were entrusted”* - They were responsible for what they had been taught. The word *“entrusted”* or *“handed over”* could connote the transfer of a slave from one master to another.

**6:18** - *“You have been set free from sin and have become slaves to righteousness.”*

*“You have been set free from sin”* - Paul’s idea of being *“free”* is not a self-willed direction but rather a deliverance from those enslaving powers that prevent us from becoming what God intended us to be. Freedom in Christ always includes responsibility and limitations.

*“and have become slaves to righteousness”* - We will live our righteousness out in a world that constantly tries to pull us into its grip. Instead of living in a vacuum (protected from every harm), we must live our life in a new and powerful way that sets righteousness as its *“master.”*

## II. WE SHOULD BE SLAVES TO GOD! (6:15-23) (Contd.)

### B. THE MOTIVATION FOR SERVING GOD (6:19-23) (Contd.)

#### 1. Serving righteousness produces holiness (6:19)

**6:19** - *“I put this in human terms because you are weak in your natural selves. Just as you used to offer the parts of your body in slavery to impurity and to ever-increasing wickedness, so now offer them in slavery to righteousness leading to holiness.”*

*“I put this in human terms”* - Sometimes we need to *“paint the picture”* as plain as we can. We may have said at one time *“I’m going to put all my cards on the table.”*

*“because you are weak in your natural selves”* - This is the condition we find ourselves in when we find ourselves apart from God in our lives.

*“Just as you used to offer the parts of your body in slavery to impurity and to ever-increasing wickedness”* - Why should we ever serve God half-heartedly when we served the devil with our whole heart?

*“so now offer them in slavery to righteousness leading to holiness”* - The same single-mindedness we had toward money, lust, pleasure and power should now be directed to our service to God. Our life should be increasingly God-centred and world-renouncing.

#### 2. Serving sin produces death (6:20-21)

**6:20** - *“When you were slaves to sin, you were free from the control of righteousness.”*

*“When you were slaves to sin”* - Non-Christians often despise being told that they are being controlled by something/someone. They often deride Christians for surrendering to a “god” they cannot see, hear or touch. They are deceived into believing that they are free instead of being *“slaves to sin.”*

*“you were free from the control of righteousness”* - As a non-Christian we can and do recognize right from wrong (Romans 1:18-32; 2:14-15) but lack the power to do what is right.



**II. WE SHOULD BE SLAVES TO GOD! (6:15-23) (Contd.)****B. THE MOTIVATION FOR SERVING GOD (6:19-23) (Contd.)****2. Serving sin produces death (6:20-21) (Contd.)**

**6:21** - *“What benefit did you reap at that time from the things you are now ashamed of? Those things result in death!”*

*“What benefit did you reap at that time from the things you are now ashamed of?”* - Oh, if we could only live our lives over once again! Why couldn't we use the strength of our youthfulness to serve God? We've all thrown away good opportunities which will never come our way again.

*“Those things result in death!”* - In case we would ever want to contemplate fond memories of these things we've sown, Paul makes it clear that they lead to an eternal separation from God if we return to them.

**3. Serving God produces the fruit of holiness, and in the end, eternal life (6:22)**

**6:22** - *“But now that you have been set free from sin and have become slaves to God, the benefit you reap leads to holiness, and the result is eternal life.”*

*“the benefit you reap leads to holiness”* - If an individual is not being sanctified, it is doubtful that he has been justified. Christianity has always regarded the direction one is advancing as more critical than the particular level or stage of growth that they have achieved.

*“and the result is eternal life”* - Although we have been granted a wonderful life in Christ, it is not granted in its fulness until this life is swallowed up by eternal life (II Corinthians 5:4)

**4. The wages of sin is death, but God gives the gift of eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord (6:23)**

**6:23** - *“For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.”*

*“For the wages of sin is death”* - This death is merited by the sinful lifestyle and unrepentance of an individual. The word for *“wages”* speaks of a soldier's pay that is earned through the risk of his life and the sweat of his brow. It was due him and could not be taken from him.

## II. WE SHOULD BE SLAVES TO GOD! (6:15-23) (Contd.)

### B. THE MOTIVATION FOR SERVING GOD (6:19-23) (Contd.)

#### 4. The wages of sin is death, but God gives the gift of eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord (6:23) (Contd.)

*“but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord”* - The use of the word *“gift”* clearly shows that it is given as an unmerited favour of God.

Dr. Martin Lloyd Jones lists three contrasts in this verse. The master that is served – sin vs God; the outcome of that service – death vs eternal life; and the means by which this outcome is attained – a *“wage”* earned vs a gift received.

### SUMMARY

In chapter five, Paul made the statement *“where sin abounded, grace abounded much more”* (5:20). Aware that some readers might misconstrue what he said, Paul quickly pointed out that grace is no excuse to sin since through grace they have died to sin (6:1-2). To emphasize this, he reminded them of their baptism into Christ, in which they experienced a burial into the death of Christ and rose to walk in newness of life, having died to sin (6:3-7). Dead to sin, they were now free to live as instruments of righteousness for God (6:8-14).

Another reason not to continue in sin is explained in terms of servitude. We become slaves to that which we obey, either sin or God (6:15-16). Paul was grateful that the Romans had begun to obey God and were free to become His servants (6:17-18). How important it was that they continue to do so was to be seen in the outcome of serving sin contrasted to serving God. Serving sin earns death, but in serving God one received the gift of eternal life in Christ Jesus (6:19-23)!

### WORDS TO PONDER

*“baptism”* - from the Greek word *“baptizo”* meaning to *“immerse,”* it most commonly in the New Testament refers to the burial in water in the name of Jesus for the remission of our sins

*“sanctification”* - the process of *“sanctifying”* or *“setting apart for a devoted purpose;”* in the New Testament it begins with baptism and continues on as we grow in Christ

**REVIEW QUESTIONS FOR CHAPTER 6**

- 1) List the main points of this chapter
  - We are dead to sin! (6:1-14)
  - We should be slaves to God! (6:15-23)
- 2) Why are Christians not to continue in sin? (6:2)
  - Because we died to sin
- 3) What happens when one is baptized into Christ? (6:3-7)
  - They are baptized into His death, being buried with Him and united with Him in the likeness of His death, where the old man is crucified with Him and the body of sin is done away, making it possible to be freed from sin and to rise to walk in newness of life
- 4) How should we present the members of our bodies? (6:13)
  - As instruments of righteousness to God
- 5) Why does sin no longer have dominion over the Christian? (6:14)
  - Because the Christian is not "under law", but "under grace"
- 6) What was necessary to become free from sin? (6:17-18)
  - To obey the doctrine of God from the heart
- 7) What is the result of presenting your members as slaves to righteousness? (6:19)
  - Holiness, or sanctification
- 8) What three steps are described that eventually lead to eternal life? (6:22)
  - 1) Being set free from sin 2) Becoming slaves to God 3) Bearing the fruit of holiness
- 9) What is the just payment for sin? But what does God give us in Christ? (6:23)
  - Death. Eternal life.

**"THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS"**

**CHAPTER SEVEN**

**OBJECTIVES IN STUDYING THIS CHAPTER**

- 1) To understand the Jewish Christian's relationship to the Law of Moses
- 2) To comprehend the dilemma one faces without Jesus Christ

**OUTLINE**

**I. JEWISH BELIEVERS AND THE LAW (7:1-6)**

**A. A PARALLEL TO BEING RELEASED FROM MARRIAGE (7:1-3)**

1. Law has dominion over those who live under it (7:1)
2. As illustrated by a woman who is married to a man (7:2-3)

**B. THEY HAVE DIED TO THE LAW (7:4-6)**

1. So they can be married to Christ (7:4)
2. So they can serve in newness of the Spirit, far superior to serving in the oldness of the letter (7:5-6)

**II. LIMITATIONS OF THE LAW (7:7-25)**

**A. THE LAW IS HOLY AND JUST AND GOOD (7:7-12)**

1. The Law is not sin, but rather makes known sin (7:7)
2. But sin takes occasion by the commandment to lead one to death (7:8-12)

**B. THE LAW CANNOT SAVE ONE FROM SIN (7:13-25)**

1. The problem is not law, but sin (7:13)
2. The Law is spiritual, but man is carnal and sold under sin (7:14)
3. Though one may desire good and hate evil, one is still enslaved by sin (7:15-23)
4. Deliverance comes only from God, through Jesus Christ (7:24-25)

**I. JEWISH BELIEVERS AND THE LAW (7:1-6)****A. A PARALLEL TO BEING RELEASED FROM MARRIAGE (7:1-3)****1. Law has dominion over those who live under it (7:1)**

Chapter 7 of Romans is one of the most famous portions in the Bible. Fascination has led to vigorous debate about who is being identified in these verses. Is he speaking of his unregenerate life; his regenerate life; back-slidden Christians or Jews living under the Law?

**An Illustration From Marriage**

Paul argues that a person's bondage to the Law must be completely severed like what a death does to a marriage relationship before one gets remarried (7:1-6). There was no place for polygamy in the New Testament Christian's lifestyle.

“This is the case in marriage, where the death of a spouse sets the other spouse “free from” the law that brands a second marriage as adulterous (vv. 2-3). This general principle is applied to Christian experience in v. 4, which is the key verse in the paragraph: Christians, in dying with Christ, have suffered a death that severs their bondage to the law and that makes possible their new relationship with Jesus Christ.”

Douglas Moo  
*“The Epistle to the Romans”*  
 William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company  
 1996, pp. 410-11

**7:1 - “Do you not know, brothers—for I am speaking to men who know the law—that the law has authority over a man only as long as he lives?”**

**“Do you not know, brothers”** - Paul builds upon teaching that he expected his readers to already understand. This may very well bring us back to 6:14b.

**“brothers—for I am speaking to men who know the law”** - Many of the Gentile Christians who lived in Rome were probably those who had worshipped at a local Jewish synagogue before accepting Christ as their personal Saviour. Even if they had never been Jewish, they still would have been aware of its main teachings.

**“that the law has authority over a man only as long as he lives?”** - The rabbis taught that *“if a person is dead, he is free from the Torah and the fulfilling of the commandments.”*

## I. JEWISH BELIEVERS AND THE LAW (7:1-6) (Contd.)

### A. A PARALLEL TO BEING RELEASED FROM MARRIAGE (7:1-3) (Contd.)

#### 2. As illustrated by a woman who is married to a man (7:2-3)

**7:2** - *“For example, by law a married woman is bound to her husband as long as he is alive, but if her husband dies, she is released from the law of marriage.”*

*“by law a married woman”* - This phrase literally means a woman who is *“under a husband.”*

*“is bound to her husband as long as he is alive”* - There are a number of allegorical interpretations considered in this verse. Some think that the first husband is the Law while the second husband represents Christ and that the woman represents a person who has become a Christian.

Others consider the wife as the *“true self”* while the first husband is the *“old man”* and the second husband is representing *“Christ.”*

*“she is released from the law of marriage”* - The main point of verse 2 and 3 are that death severs the relationship that one had with the Law.

**7:3** - *“So then, if she marries another man while her husband is still alive, she is called an adulteress. But if her husband dies, she is released from that law and is not an adulteress, even though she marries another man.”*

*“if she marries another man while her husband is still alive, she is called an adulteress”* - These verses are often cited to prove that anyone who is remarried on any other basis than the death of the spouse is entering into adultery. These verses cannot be properly used to support that argument. Since Paul does not mention divorce, we can conclude that the remarriage mentioned had taken place without a divorce of any kind. This would have made it clearly an adulterous affair. The laws of the day, whether Roman, O.T. (Deuteronomy 25:1-4) or N.T. (Matthew 19) allowed for a remarriage other than through the death of the spouse.

*“she is released from that law and is not an adulteress”* - Paul is trying to show that severance from the Law would enable one to enter into a new relationship. This analogy is also true of a wife whose husband has died. If she ever did remarry, she would take on a new name.

**I. JEWISH BELIEVERS AND THE LAW (7:1-6) (Contd.)****B. THEY HAVE DIED TO THE LAW (7:4-6)****1. So they can be married to Christ (7:4)**

**7:4** - *“So, my brothers, you also died to the law through the body of Christ, that you might belong to another, to him who was raised from the dead, in order that we might bear fruit to God.”*

*“you also died to the law through the body of Christ, that you might belong to another”* - Anyone who had chosen to identify with the death, burial and resurrection of the Lord have decided to totally break way from their previous lifestyle to walk in a manner pleasing to God.

Just as in chapter 6 that a person had to die to sin to live for God so also in chapter 7 a person must put to death the Law that once governed them in order to be joined together with Christ.

This would be clear for a Jew who had once lived under the Law but the Gentiles would have recognized that this step was unnecessary. Paul made it clear that Gentiles had no need to first come under the Law (which the Jews had to die to) in order to break from it to become an accepted child of God.

*“in order that we might bear fruit to God”* - Our new relationship in Jesus not only enables us but also demands of us that we show forth Christlike traits, words, thoughts and actions. A non-fruit bearing Christian should seriously take a look at his/her root system.

**2. So they can serve in newness of the Spirit, far superior to serving in the oldness of the letter (7:5-6)**

**7:5** - *“For when we were controlled by the sinful nature, the sinful passions aroused by the law were at work in our bodies, so that we bore fruit for death.”*

*“For when we were controlled by the sinful nature”* - A non-Christian is encased or controlled by this world’s principles and values. We must expect sinners to sin. Their attitudes will always be in opposition to ours. We serve two different masters.

*“the sinful passions aroused by the law were at work in our bodies”* - Paul is not only stating that the Law fails to deal with sin but that it also simulates sin in those who are bound to the Law. The domain of the flesh is overpowered by sin, the law and death. The *“sinful passions”* are explained in v. 7 as those desires that the law forbids one to do.

**I. JEWISH BELIEVERS AND THE LAW (7:1-6) (Contd.)****B. THEY HAVE DIED TO THE LAW (7:4-6) (Contd.)****2. So they can serve in newness of the Spirit, far superior to serving in the oldness of the letter (7:5-6) (Contd.)**

*“so that we bore fruit for death”* - Just as a tree is known by its fruit (Matthew 7:15-20) so is a believer in Christ (Galatians 5:22-23) as well as a nonbeliever (Galatians 5:16-21).

**7:6** - *“But now, by dying to what once bound us, we have been released from the law so that we serve in the new way of the Spirit, and not in the old way of the written code.”*

*“But now, by dying to what once bound us”* - We all need to ask ourselves whether we have died to those things that once bound us as well. For a Jew, it was the Law that bound them; for the Gentile it is normally those things that we often declare as our “freedom to choose.” Our society continually promotes the lie that we are our own master - we are in charge so don’t infringe upon our freedom.

*“we have been released from the law so that we serve in the new way of the Spirit”* - This *“new way of the Spirit”* is one that brings true life (II Corinthians 3:6).

*“and not in the old way of the written code”* - Even the most dedicated Jew was never able to live in a manner that he would not break at least one law over a short period of time. Written code is never able to change one’s conduct. We have a police force and judicial system that have to deal with laws that have been broken on a daily basis. Our courts are overflowing with trespasses of the law.



## II. LIMITATIONS OF THE LAW (7:7-25)

### A. THE LAW IS HOLY AND JUST AND GOOD (7:7-12)

#### 1. The Law is not sin, but rather makes known sin (7:7)

##### Struggling With Sin

**7:7 - “What shall we say, then? Is the law sin? Certainly not! Indeed I would not have known what sin was except through the law. For I would not have known what coveting really was if the law had not said, ‘Do not covet.’”**

**“What shall we say, then? Is the law sin? Certainly not!”** - We must guard ourselves against the thought that God’s Holy Law is sinful. It is not a curse because *“Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights, who does not change like shifting shadows”* (James 1:17).

God instituted the Law. He has never created something for us that is sinful. Paul affirms that the Law is “God’s law (v. 22); it is good, holy and righteous or just (v.12); it is spiritual (v. 14). How could this same Law bring wrath (4:15); increase the trespass (5:20) and arouse sinful passions (7:5)?

**“Indeed I would not have known what sin was except through the law”** - Paul identifies the true culprit. The Law was not the problem. Sin was. Sin uses our carnal weakness and internal struggles to gain mastery despite the “goodness” of the Law.

**“For I would not have known what coveting really was if the law had not said, ‘Do not covet.’”** - The Law clearly identified the specific details that God placed His eternal finger upon and named as sinful (Deuteronomy 5:21).

Before going on we must identify the “I” (egō) that takes the main stage throughout this portion of Scripture. Depending upon the way we interpret this little word will have considerable effect upon how we make sense of this teaching. There are four basic interpretations for this word.

**a). The Autobiographical Direction** - Most interpreters throughout history have believed that Paul is speaking of his own experience. But there is also differences about what Paul may be describing in vv. 7-12.

i). He was describing an awakening of sinful impulses at the time of his “bar mitzvah” (or his coming of age).

ii). The realization of condemnation just prior to his conversion.

## II. LIMITATIONS OF THE LAW (7:7-25) (Contd.)

### A. THE LAW IS HOLY AND JUST AND GOOD (7:7-12) (Contd.)

#### 1. The Law is not sin, but rather makes known sin (7:7) (Contd.)

**b). The Adamic Direction** - During the earliest days of the church many thought that this description (vv. 7-12) could only be applied directly to Adam. Some would suggest that Paul is describing “I in Adam” (vv. - 7-13) and then goes on to speak of “Adam in me” (vv. 13-25).

**c). The Israel Direction** - Some scholars have thought that especially verses 8-10) described Israel before they received the Law. They then believe that verses 14-25 continue to describe the Jews living under the Law of Moses.

**d). The Existential Direction** - This particular viewpoint would see the “I” in verses 7-25 as “*no one in particular and everybody in general.*” They see Paul using figurative language to describe the confrontation between any person and the demands of God.

Taking all things into consideration I feel that the combination of a) and c) are the best explanations of this text. There are a number of examples of “I” NOT describing the individual but rather standing for Jerusalem or the nation of Israel (Jeremiah 10:19-22; Micah 7:7-10; Lamentations 1:9-22; 2:20-22; Song of Songs (Solomon) 1:1-2).

In other words, Paul is describing his own (although not all personally experienced) involvement as a member of the people of Israel as well as other Jew’s experience while living under the Law. It did not bring life but rather death (vv. 7-12) and it failed to deliver them from the power of sin (vv. 13-25).

#### 2. But sin takes occasion by the commandment to lead one to death (7:8-12)

**7:8 - “But sin, seizing the opportunity afforded by the commandment, produced in me every kind of covetous desire. For apart from law, sin is dead.”**

**“But sin, seizing the opportunity afforded by the commandment”** - The Law is NOT sinful, not the originator of sin, but rather the Law is used as an operating base that sin uses to accomplish its evil and deadly purposes. It’s ironic that sin, by taking advantage of the commands written in the Law of Moses, produces what is prohibited.

**“produced in me every kind of covetous desire”** - The way this works is simple. We all seem to be enticed by “forbidden fruit.” A stolen apple we are told tastes sweeter. I was once told that the way one father got his children to play musical instruments was to place them out in the open and tell the children not to touch them. Consider the command for idols (Exodus 20:4; 32).

## II. LIMITATIONS OF THE LAW (7:7-25) (Contd.)

### A. THE LAW IS HOLY AND JUST AND GOOD (7:7-12) (Contd.)

#### 2. But sin takes occasion by the commandment to lead one to death (7:8-12) (Contd.)

**7:9** - *“Once I was alive apart from law; but when the commandment came, sin sprang to life and I died.”*

<b>“Apart from the Law”</b>	<b>“When the Commandment came”</b>
<i>“sin is dead”</i> (v. 8c)	<i>“Sin sprang to life”</i> (v. 9b)
<i>“I was alive”</i> (v. 9a)	<i>“I died”</i> (v. 10a)

*“Once I was alive apart from law”* - This could also be stated as “I was existing before the Law was introduced.” It was during the time when sin was being accounted for. It was *“recognized”* but not *“reckoned.”*

*“sin sprang to life and I died”* - Paul is not suggesting that there was no sin before the introduction of the Law of Moses. It simply sprang to life with the establishment of the Law.

**7:10** - *“I found that the very commandment that was intended to bring life actually brought death.”*

*“I found that the very commandment that was intended to bring life”* - This is not speaking of a specific commandment but rather of the Mosaic Law as a whole. There were a number of promises of life for those who obeyed the Law (Leviticus 18:5; Psalm 19:7-10; Ezekiel 20:11). But the condition of that life was based upon TOTAL obedience.

*“actually brought death”* - Throughout this chapter we find the *“die”* and *“death”* referring to an objective reality instead of a subjective realization (cf. vv.2, 3,4,5,10,11,13,24).

**7:11** - *“For sin, seizing the opportunity afforded by the commandment, deceived me, and through the commandment put me to death.”*

*“deceived me, and through the commandment put me to death”* - So not only was the Law instrumental in creating sinful impulses (vs 8), it is now accused of deceiving and killing. It is very likely that Paul is thinking of Israel being deceived into believing that the Law could offer them life when it required perfect obedience to receive it.

**II. LIMITATIONS OF THE LAW (7:7-25) (Contd.)****A. THE LAW IS HOLY AND JUST AND GOOD (7:7-12) (Contd.)****2. But sin takes occasion by the commandment to lead one to death (7:8-12) (Contd.)**

**7:12 - “So then, the law is holy, and the commandment is holy, righteous and good.”**

**“So then, the law is holy”** - The Law was not holy because it demanded holiness but because of its origin it was given by the One who is Holy.

**“and the commandment is holy, righteous and good”** - The Law of God can never be charged with anything wrong. It attempts to bring an individual into a place of goodness.

“In the precepts of the law, God is but the rewarder of perfect righteousness, which all of us lack, and conversely, the severe judge of all evil deeds. But in Christ his face shines, full of grace and gentleness, even upon us poor and unworthy sinners.”

John Calvin  
“*Institutes 2.7.8*”

**B. THE LAW CANNOT SAVE ONE FROM SIN (7:13-25)****1. The problem is not law, but sin (7:13)**

In these next verses Paul shows us that the Mosaic Law is powerless to rescue people from the power of sin. The Law informs us of our duties before God but is incapable of giving us the ability to perform those duties.

In this next section we are right to question whether our Christian life should be characterized by such a severe struggle on a constant basis. Most of the early church fathers believed that these verses were in reference to an unregenerate person. Others thought it described someone who was “halfway” - under conviction but not yet surrendered to the will of God.

But we must come to grips with the fact that every Christian will struggle with sin and fail to do the will of God. This chapter is a puzzle that must allow the pieces to fit together in their most natural manner. Lets look at the arguments in a closer manner.

## II. LIMITATIONS OF THE LAW (7:7-25) (Contd.)

### B. THE LAW CANNOT SAVE ONE FROM SIN (7:13-25) (Contd.)

#### 1. The problem is not law, but sin (7:13) (Contd.)

The reasons for thinking this experience is one of an **unregenerate person** (by Douglas Moo) is as follows:

1. The strong connection of egō with “the flesh” (vv. 14,18,25).
2. Egō throughout struggles on his/her own (v. 25) without the help of the Holy Spirit.
3. Egō is “under the power of sin” (v. 14b), a state from which every believer is released (6:2,6,11,18-22).
4. Egō is a “prisoner of the law of sin” (v. 23) (cf. Romans 8:2).
5. While Paul makes it clear that believers will continue to struggle with sin (cf. - 6:12-13; 13:12-14; Galatians 5:17), what is depicted in 7:14-25 is not just a struggle with sin but a defeat by sin.
6. The egō in these verse struggles with the need to obey the Mosaic Law; yet Paul has already proclaimed the release of the believer from the dictates of the law (6:14; 7:4-6).

Anyone living in a state of unregeneration is doomed to fail to live a victorious life because any feeble attempt to conquer the power of sin leaves one helplessly overcome. Only the power of God can break the power of sin.

Some believe Paul was using “I” in 7:14-25 to depict a regenerate person as follows:

1. Egō must refer to Paul himself, and the shift of the past tenses of vv. 7-13 to the present tenses of vv. 14-25 can be explained only if Paul is describing in these latter verses his present experience as a Christian.
2. Only the regenerate can truly “delight in God’s law” (v. 22), seek to obey it (vv.15-20), and “serve” it (v. 25); the regenerate do “seek after God” (3:11) and cannot “submit to the law of God” (8:7).
3. Whereas the “mind” of the people outside of Christ is universally presented by Paul as opposed to God and his will (cf. - Romans 1:28; Ephesians 4:17; Colossians 2:18; I Timothy 6:5; II Timothy 3:8; Titus 2:15), the “mind” of egō in this text is a positive medium, by which egō “serves the law of God” (vv. 22,25).
4. Egō must be a Christian because only a Christian possesses the “inner person;” cf. Paul’s only other two uses of the phrase in II Corinthians 4:16; Ephesians 3:16.
5. The passage concludes, after Paul’s mention of the deliverance wrought by God in Christ, with a reiteration of the divided state of the egō (vv. 24-25). This shows that the division and struggle of the egō that Paul depicts in these verse is that of the person already saved by God in Christ.

## II. LIMITATIONS OF THE LAW (7:7-25) (Contd.)

### B. THE LAW CANNOT SAVE ONE FROM SIN (7:13-25) (Contd.)

#### 1. The problem is not law, but sin (7:13) (Contd.)

These two are not the only viewpoints of these critical verses. What one believes in reference to the power of sin plays a vital role in how one will live out their faith in God. Lets consider a few more of these viewpoints:

1. The pietists saw these verses as the cry of a person under the conviction of sin but as of yet not regenerated.
2. Some consider egō as representing a new yet immature believer who is attempting to live a life pleasing to God on his or her own power.
3. There are a few who believe that Paul is referring to “Adam in me;” that sin prone nature that is found in everyone.

I tend to believe that Paul is looking back, now that he is Christian, to the time when he and other Jews were living under the Law of Moses as non-Christians. Looking back we can all see the failure to meet God’s holy demands now that we have had our spirit regenerated.

The reason for this conclusion is two clearly defined contrasts. The first speak of egō as “sold under sin” (v. 14b) compared with Paul’s clear assertion that every believer has been “set free from sin” (6:18,22). The second contrast is between the state of egō as being “imprisoned by the law [or power] of sin” (vs. 23), and the believer who has been “set free from the law of sin and death” (8:2).

We must not think that a Christian does not struggle with sin. Paul painfully and explicitly spends plenty of time scolding and warning Christians in his letters that they are not delivered from *the influence of sin*.

**7:13 - “Did that which is good, then, become death to me? By no means! But in order that sin might be recognized as sin, it produced death in me through what was good, so that through the commandment sin might become utterly sinful.”**

**“Did that which is good, then, become death to me?”** - Paul did not want his Jewish readers to think wrongly of the Law that God gave them. Just because something doesn’t work for us doesn’t mean it is useless. Perhaps we are not using it the way it was intended to be used.

**“it produced death in me through what was good so that through the commandment sin might become utterly sinful”** - The Law, by clearly defining sin for what it is, has turned sin into a conscious and wilful rebellion against God by revealing its true colours.

## II. LIMITATIONS OF THE LAW (7:7-25) (Contd.)

### B. THE LAW CANNOT SAVE ONE FROM SIN (7:13-25) (Contd.)

#### 2. The Law is spiritual, but man is carnal and sold under sin (7:14)

**7:14** - *“We know that the law is spiritual; but I am unspiritual, sold as a slave to sin.”*

*“We know that the law is spiritual”* - This is just another way of stating that the Law came from God alone; a divine origin. It is interesting that the law is never called *“spiritual”* any other place in the Scriptures. This is one of the strongest ways to give a contrast between the *but I am unspiritual* and the *“fleshly”* or *“unspiritual”* egō. In using this term in this context he is most likely referring to his previous carnal nature (cf. v 5)

*“sold as a slave to sin”* - If the earlier part of the verse places doubt about whom Paul was referring to, this should clinch the argument. Paul has to be referring to a non-Christian. This is not simply an “influence of sin” but rather a slavery to sin. In the previous chapter Paul made it clear that Christians have “died to the power of sin” (6:2) and are therefore no longer “a slave to sin” (6:18,22). The word for *“sold”* is used eleven of its 24 times in the LXX in reference to the selling of slaves.

#### 3. Though one may desire good and hate evil, one is still enslaved by sin (7:15-23)

**7:15** - *“I do not understand what I do. For what I want to do I do not do, but what I hate I do.”*

*“I do not understand what I do”* - This next portion is one of the most common verses in Paul’s writings. The word for *“understand”* is not so much referring to his cognitive ability as it is to his intimate involvement and approval of the action (cf. Matthew 7:23; 25:12). This conflict of willing, wanting and doing is the focus of verses 15-20. Three main words come to light in this section which are *“do,” “practise” and “produce.”*

*“or what I want to do I do not do”* - This does not mean that Paul and the other Jews never did anything that was right. In fact, they likely kept most of the commandments and only infringed upon a few of them (Philippians 3:6). But now looking at things from a Christian perspective gives one a new insight into the matter of sin and righteousness.

*“but what I hate I do”* - What Paul is expressing here is a conflict that is indicative to one who is a slave to the power of sin. This is not typical or even a possible daily occurrence for the child of God who has been set free from the power of sin.

## II. LIMITATIONS OF THE LAW (7:7-25) (Contd.)

### B. THE LAW CANNOT SAVE ONE FROM SIN (7:13-25) (Contd.)

#### 3. Though one may desire good and hate evil, one is still enslaved by sin (7:15-23) (Contd.)

**7:16** - *“And if I do what I do not want to do, I agree that the law is good.”*

*“I agree that the law is good”* - People can often read something into our words. This is something that Paul carefully guarded against. The fact that the egō has a will that conflicts with evil proves that egō acknowledges the demands of God’s Law. We never gain much ground by knocking down another person’s belief. It is better to present the “better way” without getting into a cat fight.

**7:17** - *“As it is, it is no longer I myself who do it, but it is sin living in me.”*

*“but it is sin living in me”* - Here lies an important doctrinal statement. If we only had our will that wanted to follow God’s Law we would find it difficult to explain what happens when we fail to follow that pathway.

There must be another “actor” or factor in the equation that cannot be left out. This other factor is indwelling sin. Sin doesn’t work outside of our lives causing us to follow its bidding. Sin finds its root in our lives even though we choose to follow God. It is not some outside Law that is to blame. Since we all take part in the sin of Adam, it finds a resident in our lives. Those living under the Law cannot resist its power to control them.

**7:18** - *“I know that nothing good lives in me, that is, in my sinful nature. For I have the desire to do what is good, but I cannot carry it out.”*

*“I know that nothing good lives in me, that is, in my sinful nature”* - Notice where it is that Paul indicates that the “no-good part of us” dwells – it is in our *“sinful nature.”*

*For I have the desire to do what is good, but I cannot carry it out”* - A sincere respect for the Law of God does not assure anyone that they can live up to its standards.



## II. LIMITATIONS OF THE LAW (7:7-25) (Contd.)

### B. THE LAW CANNOT SAVE ONE FROM SIN (7:13-25) (Contd.)

#### 3. Though one may desire good and hate evil, one is still enslaved by sin (7:15-23) (Contd.)

“His point is that the Jew under the law, and, by extension, other non-Christians, do have a genuine striving to do what is right as defined by God (cf. 2:14-15). But this striving after the right, because of the unbroken power of sin, can never so ‘take over’ the mind and will that it can effectively and consistently direct the body to do what is good.”

Douglas Moo  
*“The Epistle to the Romans”*  
 William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company  
 1996, pp. 459

**7:19** - *“For what I do is not the good I want to do; no, the evil I do not want to do—this I keep on doing.”*

*“For what I do is not the good I want to do”* - This verse is basically a repeat of verse 15 with a slight change of thought. What a terrible state to be left into when we strive to do what is right based upon a list of do’s and don’ts.

**7:20** - *“Now if I do what I do not want to do, it is no longer I who do it, but it is sin living in me that does it.”*

*“it is no longer I who do it, but it is sin living in me that does it.”* - This verse is once again a reinstatement of what was already said in verses 16b and 17b.

**7:21** - *“So I find this law at work: When I want to do good, evil is right there with me.”*

*“So I find this law at work”* The use of the word *“law”* is most likely referring to a principle that is at work in one’s life who is attempting to live by the Law.

*“evil is right there with me”* - Since evil is a reality until it is fully conquered at the end of time, we must all face it. We will face it either by living under the Law or by living under the grace of God.

## II. LIMITATIONS OF THE LAW (7:7-25) (Contd.)

### B. THE LAW CANNOT SAVE ONE FROM SIN (7:13-25) (Contd.)

#### 3. Though one may desire good and hate evil, one is still enslaved by sin (7:15-23) (Contd.)

**7:22** - *“For in my inner being I delight in God’s law;”*

*“For in my inner being I delight in God’s law”* - The *“inner being”* is different than the new man that is created at the new birth. *“God’s law”* is clearly speaking of the Mosaic Law or the torah of which every Jew was highly devoted to.

**7:23** - *“but I see another law at work in the members of my body, waging war against the law of my mind and making me a prisoner of the law of sin at work within my members.”*

*“but I see another law at work in the members of my body”* - This cannot be referring to the Mosaic Law. It has to be another “authority” that is opposed to the Mosaic Law.

*“waging war against the law of my mind”* - This is a military term that shows the intensity of the battle at hand. Notice that it stages its attack against the reasoning side of our bodies.

Even though the Mosaic Law has been used sin, it can never cease to be God’s good, holy and spiritual law. It is sin that is the problem – not the Law.

*“and making me a prisoner of the law of sin at work within my members”* - This cannot be referring to the life of a Christian. Even though we may struggle with sin, commit sin and even be continually weakened by a particular sin, we have been set free from being held captive or placed under the authority of sin’s power.

## II. LIMITATIONS OF THE LAW (7:7-25) (Contd.)

### B. THE LAW CANNOT SAVE ONE FROM SIN (7:13-25) (Contd.)

#### 4. Deliverance comes only from God, through Jesus Christ (7:24-25)

**7:24 - “What a wretched man I am! Who will rescue me from this body of death?”**

**“What a wretched man I am!”** - There is no doubt that we all sense from time to time a feeling of frustration when we fail to live the way we should. But these words go beyond the normal sense of failure.

This is indeed an experience that Paul would have shared in his past. He also recognized that many of his fellow Jews have felt this way. Paul is now a Jew who has been set free by Christ which makes his past wretchedness even more insightful.

**“Who will rescue me from this body of death?”** - What a climax to this intensive dialogue. This is clearly the status of one who lives under a sentence of spiritual death, condemned and bound for hell. A Christian has a totally different perspective at their time of death. We long for our final deliverance and also clearly understand Who our Deliverer will be.

**7:25 - “Thanks be to God—through Jesus Christ our Lord! So then, I myself in my mind am a slave to God’s law, but in the sinful nature a slave to the law of sin.”**

**“Thanks be to God—through Jesus Christ our Lord!”** - Could any other deliverer be named? God and only God is able to defeat the forces of sin, hell and the grave.

**“So then, I myself in my mind am a slave to God’s law”** - Paul’s past was ever before him. Anyone who has lived a life of legalistic bondage would understand why this chapter ended on this note. It was a way of driving home the point of just how enslaved a person can become.

**“but in the sinful nature a slave to the law of sin”** - But even more enslaving are those who never even took the opportunity to be set free from the bondage of sin.

**There is only one clear decision to make, surrender to the will and Word of God.**

## SUMMARY

Paul has just completed discussing how being baptized into Christ makes us dead to sin and free to present our bodies as instruments of righteousness unto holiness. For the benefit of his Jewish readers (those who know the Law), he now carried the concept of death and freedom one step further: the Jewish believers needed to become dead to the Law that they might be joined to Christ. He illustrated his point by referring to the marital relationship. The result of being freed from the Law is that they would be able to "*serve in the newness of the Spirit and not in the oldness of the letter.*" (7:1-6)

Lest his Jewish readers think he was implying that the Law was sinful, Paul was quick to dispel that notion. The Law, he says, was "*holy and just and good.*" The problem was that the Law only made known that which is sinful, but sin took opportunity by the commandment to produce evil desire and deceived him, resulting in death (7:7-12).

To further illustrate his point, Paul pictured himself as a man under the Law who found himself in a terrible dilemma. With his mind he knew that which was good and wanted to do it. He also knew that which was evil and wanted to avoid that. But he found a "*law*" (or principle) in his flesh which won over the desire of his mind (7:13-23). As a prisoner he cried out for freedom. Was there no hope? Yes! God provided the solution through His Son Jesus Christ, upon which Paul will elaborate in chapter eight (7:24-25).

## WORDS TO PONDER

***"in the flesh"*** - "*to be in the flesh is to be under the flesh; and to be under it is to be controlled by its propensities, evil inclinations, and desires*" (Moses Lard)

***"The Law"*** - the Law of Moses, including the Ten Commandments (cf. v.7)

***"law of my mind"*** - that inner desire, which in the context of this chapter, is the desire of one to do that which is good and right

***"law of sin in my members"*** - "*The law which I see 'in my members' is the constant tendency which I notice in them to sin, whenever excited by sinful objects*" (Moses Lard)

**REVIEW QUESTIONS CHAPTER 7**

- 1) List the main points of this chapter
  - Jewish Believers and The Law (7:1-6)
  - Limitations of The Law (7:7-25)
- 2) Who is Paul speaking to in this chapter? (7:1)
  - Those who know the Law (Jewish Christians)
- 3) What example is given to show their relationship to the Law? (7:2-3)
  - How a woman whose husband dies is free to be married to another without being guilty of adultery
- 4) What is their relationship to the Law when joined to the body of Christ? (7:4-6)
  - Dead to the law, delivered from the law
- 5) How do we know that part of the Law referred to is the Ten Commandments? (7:7)
  - To illustrate his point, Paul mentions "*You shall not covet*", one of the Ten Commandments
- 6) Was the Law responsible for death? If not, what was? (7:13)
  - No! It was "*sin*" that produced death
- 7) What dilemma does one face in trying to keep the Law? (7:15-21)
  - The DESIRE to do good and avoid evil may be there, but the ABILITY is found lacking
- 8) What is the end result of this dilemma? (7:23)
  - CAPTIVITY to the law (or principle) of sin in one's members
- 9) Where can one find freedom from this dilemma? (7:24-25)
  - From God, through Jesus Christ our Lord!

**"THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS"**

**CHAPTER EIGHT**

**OBJECTIVES IN STUDYING THIS CHAPTER**

- 1) To appreciate the place the Holy Spirit has in the lives of Christians
- 2) To recognize the power to overcome sin which is available in Christ
- 3) To realize the extent of God's love toward us

**OUTLINE**

**I. IN CHRIST THERE IS FREEDOM FROM SIN (8:1-17)**

**A. FREEDOM FROM THE CONDEMNATION OF SIN (8:1-4)**

1. Available to those in Christ, made possible by the law of the Spirit of life (8:1-2)
2. An accomplishment not attained by the Law, but by the death of Christ (8:3-4)

**B. FREEDOM FROM THE POWER OF SIN (8:5-17)**

1. To those who set their minds on the things of the Spirit, not the flesh, pleasing God (8:5-8)
2. To those who have the indwelling Holy Spirit (8:9-11)
3. To those who by the Spirit put to death the deeds of the body (8:12-13)
4. To those thus led, who are the children of God and joint heirs with Christ (8:14-17)

**II. BLESSINGS OF BEING CHILDREN OF GOD (8:18-39)**

**A. THE GLORY TO BE REVEALED IN US (8:18-25)**

1. Present sufferings don't even compare (8:18)
2. The whole creation eagerly awaits for the revealing and glorious liberty of the children of God (8:19-22)
3. We also eagerly wait with perseverance for this hope (8:23-25)

**B. THE HELP OF THE HOLY SPIRIT (8:26-27)**

1. Helps in our weakness as we pray (8:26a)
2. By interceding for us as we pray (8:26b-27)

**C. ALL THINGS WORKING TOGETHER FOR GOOD (8:28-30)**

1. For those who love God, called according to His purpose (8:28)
2. For such, whom God foreknew, He will carry out His ultimate purpose (8:29-30)

**D. GOD'S LOVE TOWARD HIS ELECT (8:31-39)**

1. God, who spared not His own Son, is on our side (8:31-33)
2. Christ, who died for us, now intercedes for us at God's right hand (8:34)
3. Through such love we are more than conquerors over all things (8:35-39)

## I. IN CHRIST THERE IS FREEDOM FROM SIN (8:1-17)

### Life Through the Spirit

This chapter has been called the “*inner sanctuary within the cathedral of Christian faith; the tree of life in the midst of the Garden of Eden as well as the highest peak in the range of (spiritual) mountains.*” Throughout this festal journey Romans 8 makes it comprehensively clear what it means to be a Christian.

Two words stand out - they are “*sinful nature*” or “*flesh*” (*sarx*) and spirit (*pneuma*). He uses the “*sinful nature*” to describe how in our human nature we stand helpless, impotent and weak; dominated by the dictates of sin. vulnerable to sin and temptation; The second word “*pneuma*” (wind or spirit) occurs 21 times [once every 2 verses] with only 2 (or 3) of those times not referring to the Holy Spirit. Paul focusses his writing on what the Spirit does more than what He is.

The Holy Spirit brings assurance to the believer. The chapter begins with “*no condemnation*” and ends with “*no separation*” as Godet says, while in between, as C. A. Fox remarks “*there is no defeat.*” There are many other thoughts and themes highlighted in this chapter but let us not forget that . . .

*“Romans 8 picks up many of the earlier themes of the letter as it reiterates and expands on the assurance of eschatological life that the believer has in Christ.”*

Douglas Moo  
*“The Epistle to the Romans”*  
 William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company  
 1996, pp. 470

Based upon what has already been written, Paul reasserts his triumphant conclusion found in Romans 5:12-21. Those who are “*in Christ Jesus*” can be assured that they have had their previous life of condemnation and death replaced by one that comes with an assurance of everlasting life with God.

It is essential to recognize that our “*no condemnation*” is based upon the fact that as a disciple of Jesus Christ we have been transferred from eternal death (separation from God) to eternal life (ever present with God).

The contrast of walking according to our sinful nature (8:5-8) stands in stark contrast to those who walk, live and are led by the Spirit of God (8:9-17).



**I. IN CHRIST THERE IS FREEDOM FROM SIN (8:1-17) (Contd.)****A. FREEDOM FROM THE CONDEMNATION OF SIN (8:1-4)****1. Available to those in Christ, made possible by the law of the Spirit of life (8:1-2)**

**8:1** - *“Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus,”*

*“Therefore, there is now ”* - The word *“now”* clearly alludes to the new era that Jesus Christ inaugurated through his death, burial and resurrection (3:21; 5:9; 6:19,22; 7:6).

*“no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus”* - It is imperative that we do not attempt to separate the destruction of sin’s power over the life of a Christian with the removal of its penalty for past actions. Christ took on our condemnation and nailed it to the cross where it lost its force or momentum over our lives (II Corinthians 5:21).

**8:2** - *because through Christ Jesus the law of the Spirit of life set me free from the law of sin and death.*

*“because through Christ Jesus the law of the Spirit of life”* - It is interesting that Paul uses the word *“nomos”* to describe the *“law.”* Whether this *“law”* refers to the Mosaic Law or is being used figuratively is not the main focus here. Instead, we need to see the contrast between the Spirit on one hand and death on the other.

*“set me free from the law of sin and death”* - Sin and death ruled the lives of those bound to the old covenant while the Spirit of God who brings life rules the lives of those living under the life-giving new covenant.

**2. An accomplishment not attained by the Law, but by the death of Christ (8:3-4)**

**8:3** - *“For what the law was powerless to do in that it was weakened by the sinful nature, God did by sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful man to be a sin offering. And so he condemned sin in sinful man,”*

*“For what the law was powerless to do in that it was weakened by the sinful nature”* - Paul makes it clear that the reason that the Law failed was because it was *“weakened by the sinful nature [or flesh].”* It was never introduced as a means to secure righteousness.

## I. IN CHRIST THERE IS FREEDOM FROM SIN (8:1-17) (Contd.)

## A. FREEDOM FROM THE CONDEMNATION OF SIN (8:1-4) (Contd.)

## 2. An accomplishment not attained by the Law, but by the death of Christ (8:3-4) (Contd.)

“It is as with a sick man who wants to drink some wine because he foolishly thinks that his health will return if he does so. Now if the doctor, without any criticism of the wine, should say to him: *‘It is impossible for the wine to cure you, it will only make you sicker,’* the doctor is not condemning the wine but only the foolish trust of the sick man in it. For he needs other medicine to get well, so that he can then drink his wine. Thus also our corrupt nature needs another kind of medicine than the Law, by which it can arrive at good health so that it can fulfill the Law.”

Martin Luther  
“*Sholium*” on 8:3

**8:4** - *“in order that the righteous requirements of the law might be fully met in us, who do not live according to the sinful nature but according to the Spirit.”*

*“in order that the righteous requirements of the law might be fully met in us”* - This is the purpose for which God has condemned sin in the flesh. The passive verb described by *“might be fully met in us”* speaks of something that is done in and for us by Christ’s sin offering.

*“who do not live according to the sinful nature but according to the Spirit”* - When we walk in *“the sinful nature”* one’s life is determined and directed by the value system of the world which is in direct contrast and rebellion toward God.

To walk *“according to the Spirit”* is to live under the control and according to the values created and maintained by God. We cannot serve two masters.

It is because that God broke the power of sin (vs 3) that the righteous requirements of the law can be accomplished by those who choose to walk according to the Spirit. Living according to the Spirit is not gained through OUR *“righteous actions”* for OUR obedience will always fall short of the perfect obedience required by the Law. We must never forget that our Christian behaviour must be empowered by the Holy Spirit in order to be directed away from the influences of the flesh.

**I. IN CHRIST THERE IS FREEDOM FROM SIN (8:1-17) (Contd.)****A. FREEDOM FROM THE CONDEMNATION OF SIN (8:1-4) (Contd.)****2. An accomplishment not attained by the Law, but by the death of Christ (8:3-4) (Contd.)**

Since Christ took upon Himself the condemnation of us all (vs. 3b; cf. v. 1), our heavenly Father also made it possible for the righteous obedience that our Saviour had earned to be transferred to us. This has been referred to by M. D. Hooker as an “*interchange*.” Christ becomes what we are so we might become what Christ is.

“The faithful, while they sojourn in this world, never make such a proficiency, as that the justification of the law becomes in them full or complete. This [v. 4a] then must be applied to forgiveness; for when the obedience of Christ is accepted for us, the law is satisfied, so that we are counted just.”

John Calvin

“Law was given that grace might be sought, grace was given that the law might be fulfilled.”

Augustine

**B. FREEDOM FROM THE POWER OF SIN (8:5-17)****1. To those who set their minds on the things of the Spirit, not the flesh, pleasing God (8:5-8)**

**8:5** - *“Those who live according to the sinful nature have their minds set on what that nature desires; but those who live in accordance with the Spirit have their minds set on what the Spirit desires.”*

*“Those who live according to the sinful nature have their minds set on what that nature desires”* - There is an unbreakable connection between the Spirit that brings life and the carnal nature (flesh) that brings death (vv. 5-8). Living according to the sinful nature is not a viable option for any believer. We are not to be passion-controlled or lust controlled, or pride controlled or ambition-controlled.

**I. IN CHRIST THERE IS FREEDOM FROM SIN (8:1-17) (Contd.)****B. FREEDOM FROM THE POWER OF SIN (8:5-17) (Contd.)****1. To those who set their minds on the things of the Spirit, not the flesh, pleasing God (8:5-8) (Contd.)**

Those who walk “*according to the flesh*” can never escape death (v. 6); are prevented from obeying God’s Law (v. 7); and cannot please God (v. 8). On the other hand those who do walk in “*accordance with the Spirit*” obtain the life of God (v. 2); are able through Christ to fulfill the demands of the Law (v. 4) and are delivered from all condemnation (v. 1).

“*but those who live in accordance with the Spirit have their minds set on what the Spirit desires*” - Paul makes a clear distinction that Christians do not live in a realm dominated by the sinful nature (flesh). You cannot walk in a life dominated by the Spirit and in the flesh at the same time

**8:6 - “*The mind of sinful man is death, but the mind controlled by the Spirit is life and peace;*”**

“*The mind of sinful man is death*” - There needs to be more warnings to Christians who believe it is acceptable to live in a manner that is controlled by “*the mind of sinful man.*” This verse makes it clear that it will lead to spiritual death and ultimately to an eternal death separated from God. There is literally no future in it. It will lead to self-extinction; spiritual suicide and destroy one’s soul.

“*but the mind controlled by the Spirit is life and peace*” - Only those who walk, think and are in the Spirit will be rewarded with not just their present life in the Spirit but also one in their eternal life as well.

**8:7 - *the sinful mind is hostile to God. It does not submit to God’s law, nor can it do so.*”**

“*the sinful mind is hostile to God*” - All problems associated with our Christian growth stem from our carnal nature that is at constant opposition with God. There is no neutrality with a sinful mind. The battle is linked to our inability to control our self-gratification.

“*It does not submit to God’s law*” - It will always be “God’s law” that the unbeliever will be measured by and condemned by. Believers on the other hand are no longer under the law (6:14,15) or subject to its binding authority. Its written on their hearts where obedience begins.

“*nor can it do so*” - Here is the “*total depravity*” or “*total inability*” of anyone to submit to the demands of God’s law apart from Christ. There are a host of sins that continue to attract us that can be categorized into the following: coveting for riches; pride and power; sexual pleasure.

**I. IN CHRIST THERE IS FREEDOM FROM SIN (8:1-17) (Contd.)****B. FREEDOM FROM THE POWER OF SIN (8:5-17) (Contd.)****1. To those who set their minds on the things of the Spirit, not the flesh, pleasing God (8:5-8) (Contd.)**

**8:8 - *Those controlled by the sinful nature cannot please God.***

*Those controlled by the sinful nature cannot please God*” - Not only are we unable to do what is right but we are also unable to be delivered from the condition that sin leaves us in. The only means of rescue for anyone is through the saving power of Jesus Christ. We must work with God to replace the “I will” with “Thy will.”

**2. To those who have the indwelling Holy Spirit (8:9-11)**

**8:9 - *“You, however, are controlled not by the sinful nature but by the Spirit, if the Spirit of God lives in you. And if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Christ.”***

*“You, however, are controlled not by the sinful nature but by the Spirit, if the Spirit of God lives in you”* - If the Spirit of God is not within us then we are not a Christian. We are indissolubly one with Christ as a Christian. Paul was probably not convinced that all his readers were indwelt by the Spirit of God. The Spirit of God never comes into our lives without drastically affecting our doctrine, direction and destiny.

**8:10 - *“But if Christ is in you, your body is dead because of sin, yet your spirit is alive because of righteousness.***

*“But if Christ is in you”* - The Holy Spirit and Jesus Christ are so closely related when it comes to salvation that they appear as inseparable. This further offers support for the doctrine of Trinitarianism.

*“your body is dead because of sin”* - Believer and non-believer alike must all face the penalty of physical death as a result of Adam’s fall. Jesus did not eradicate sin or its present effects upon us. That day is still to come. He set the stage and the final curtain is yet to be drawn.

*“yet your spirit is alive because of righteousness”* - The beauty of being a Christian is that our physical death will only bring us into an eternal life. This is because our human spirit has been possessed and penetrated by God’s Spirit. This righteousness is not the **imputed righteousness** that Christ gave us at our point of justification but rather the **implanted righteousness** which comes through the process of sanctification which is directed by the Holy Spirit.

**I. IN CHRIST THERE IS FREEDOM FROM SIN (8:1-17) (Contd.)****B. FREEDOM FROM THE POWER OF SIN (8:5-17) (Contd.)****2. To those who have the indwelling Holy Spirit (8:9-11) (Contd.)**

“Paul is teaching that the believer, although still bound to an earthly, mortal body, has residing within him or her the Spirit, the power of new spiritual life, which conveys both that “life,” in the sense of deliverance from condemnation enjoyed now and the future resurrection life that will bring transformation to the body itself. All this takes place “because of righteousness,” this “righteousness” being that “imputed righteousness” which leads to life (see 5:21).”

Douglas Moo  
*“The Epistle to the Romans”*  
 William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company  
 1996, pp. 492

**8:11** - *“And if the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead is living in you, he who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through his Spirit, who lives in you.”*

*“he who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through his Spirit”* - The life-giving power of the Holy Spirit will transform our state of mortality into an eternal life of immortality in our future resurrected body. A Christian dies only to rise again into eternal life. Believers have the right to share in God’s victory over death, hell and the grave.

**3. To those who by the Spirit put to death the deeds of the body (8:12-13)**

**8:12** - *“Therefore, brothers, we have an obligation—but it is not to the sinful nature, to live according to it.”*

*“Therefore, brothers, we have an obligation”* - There are always consequences in any new relationship. Brotherhood (working together) also indicates a “Fatherhood” (working under).

*“but it is not to the sinful nature”* - The sinful nature is characteristic of any life that is in rebellion toward God. It is not enough for us to have the Spirit; the Spirit must have us!

*“to live according to it”* - The constant struggle of a godly life is that we must take our daily stand against the influences of a worldly mind set. This struggle likens us to a slave that was set free both legally and positionally from his/her master only to return and not just listen to but also heed to the voice of our previous master - our carnal nature.

**I. IN CHRIST THERE IS FREEDOM FROM SIN (8:1-17) (Contd.)****B. FREEDOM FROM THE POWER OF SIN (8:5-17) (Contd.)****3. To those who by the Spirit put to death the deeds of the body (8:12-13) (Contd.)**

**8:13** - *“For if you live according to the sinful nature, you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the misdeeds of the body, you will live,”*

*“For if you live according to the sinful nature, you will die”* - This death is what is known in theological arena as an eternal separation from God as a result of living in sin.

“The believer’s once-for-all death to the law of sin does not free him from the necessity of mortifying sin in his members; it makes it *necessary* and *possible* for him to do so.”

John Murray  
*“The Epistle to the Romans”* NICNT  
2 vols., 1965

It is in cases like this that we find differences in doctrine - Arminianism and Calvinism. The Arminian believes that a regenerate believer may indeed fall back into a fleshly lifestyle and face the consequences of this verse. A Calvinist believes that the truly regenerate believer, while often tempted by fleshly acts, will be infallibly prevented from living a fleshly lifestyle by the Spirit that lives within.

“Paul insists that what God has done for us in Christ is the sole and final grounds for our eternal life at the same time as he insists on the indispensability of holy living as the precondition for attaining that life. Neither the ‘indicative’ – what God has done for us in Christ – nor the ‘imperative’ – what we are commanded to do – can be eliminated.”

Douglas Moo  
*“The Epistle to the Romans”*  
William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company  
1996, pp. 495

Holiness of life is achieved neither by our unaided efforts which is the error of those who teach *“moralism”* or *“legalism”* nor can it be done by the Spirit apart from our cooperation. We need to live out the life that is placed within us by the Holy Spirit who has resided in us.

## I. IN CHRIST THERE IS FREEDOM FROM SIN (8:1-17) (Contd.)

## B. FREEDOM FROM THE POWER OF SIN (8:5-17) (Contd.)

## 4. To those thus led, who are the children of God and joint heirs with Christ (8:14-17)

**8:14** - *“because those who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God.”*

*“because those who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God”* - In the previous 13 verses we saw *“life”* as the dominate theme. There is a close parallel between Romans 8:2-17 with portions found in Galatians 4:3-7. As we come into vv.14-17 we see the *“sonship of the believer”* as a dominate focus. Not only do we have *“life”* we also have *“leading”* by the Spirit.

Being the sons of God explains further why those who are placed under the authority and dominion of the Holy Spirit experience life. But it also places us into an “already-not-yet” tension due to belonging to the realm of righteousness while continuing to presently live in the midst of the older realm of sin and death.

**8:15** - *“For you did not receive a spirit that makes you a slave again to fear, but you received the Spirit of sonship. And by him we cry, ‘Abba, Father.’”*

*“For you did not receive a spirit that makes you a slave again to fear”* - Anyone who receives the Holy Spirit into their lives are set free from sin, bondage and fear. Anything contrary to this is not from God (cf. - Galatians 4:8-11).

*“but you received the Spirit of sonship. And by him we cry, ‘Abba, Father’”* - This is one of the remarkable pictures of the believer’s joy and security as recorded in Scripture. Paul refers to this “Spirit of adoption or sonship” also in Galatians 4:6.

Paul uses the term *“sonship”* because it was a common depiction of Israel’s unique position and thereby was easily transferred into Christian teaching. Even the Greeks and Romans practised adoption and conferred all the legal rights and privileges on the adopted child as was granted to the natural child. As a Christian we not only gain the status of a true son but we also gain the heart of one as well. We are not adopted as a *baby* but rather as a mature son with full rights and abilities (to walk; speak, make wise decisions, and draw upon the family’s wealth).

*And by him we cry, ‘Abba, Father’”* - We must find the right balance between fact and feelings. Its questionable whether one can have a genuine experience of God’s adoption without it affecting one’s emotions. This “Abba” is the same Aramaic term that Jesus used to refer to His intimate and loving relationship with His heavenly Father (Mark 14:36).



**I. IN CHRIST THERE IS FREEDOM FROM SIN (8:1-17) (Contd.)****B. FREEDOM FROM THE POWER OF SIN (8:5-17) (Contd.)****4. To those thus led, who are the children of God and joint heirs with Christ (8:14-17) (Contd.)**

**8:16** - *“The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God’s children.”*

*“The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God’s children”* - The Holy Spirit plays two important roles in our lives. He is not only involved in making us God’s children; but He also helps us to understand that we are His children.

**8:17** - *“Now if we are children, then we are heirs—heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ, if indeed we share in his sufferings in order that we may also share in his glory.”*

*“Now if we are children, then we are heirs”* - The word for *“children”* is not the same as *“son”* (vs. 14) which speaks of an adult son. In this place the word *“children”* means *“born ones”* speaking of those who are born of the Word and of the Spirit (I Peter 1:23; John 3:5).

A child who is adopted into a family is, although recognized as part of the family, does not usually receive a portion of his/her inheritance until a latter time - when maturation takes place (Galatians 4:1-7). John Wesley told that the crisis of his conversion came about when he *“exchanged the faith of a servant for the faith of a son.”*

*“heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ”* - Here Paul links the O.T. teaching (which was considered as receiving a portion of land) with the NT teaching of an eschatological life. As a Christian we inherit what God has promised through Christ.

As an heir we can partake in our inheritance now that we are an adult son.

*“if indeed we share in his sufferings in order that we may also share in his glory”* - Here is where the maturity comes into the picture. The *“crown”* does not come without the *“cross”* (Philippians 1:29;3:10; II Corinthians 1:5). These recorded sufferings begin in glory (8:17b) and end in glory (8:30). These sufferings include daily anxieties, tensions, and persecutions for following the One who was *“numbered with the transgressors”* (Luke 22:37). Jesus suffered before entering into His glory as our example (I Peter 1:11).

Our outward man may perish as our inward man is being daily renewed (II Corinthians 4:16) until we be fully formed after the image of Christ having His life revealed in our body (II Corinthians 4:10).

## II. BLESSINGS OF BEING CHILDREN OF GOD (8:18-39)

### A. THE GLORY TO BE REVEALED IN US (8:18-25)

Although the word “*glory*” is only mentioned 3 times in vv. 18-30 it is still the overwhelming theme of the passage. Paul links this theme of “*glory*” with “*freedom*” (vs. 21); “*the redemption of our bodies*” (vs. 23); and “*sonship*” (vv. 19, 23,29).

This section deals with a number of very practical questions that arise in the irony of Christian living. How can we continue to walk with hope in the face of sufferings and trials of daily Christian living? Why do we have to die if we have been set free from the “*law of sin and death?*” Why does God allow His children to suffer? How can there be “*no condemnation*” and still be all these problems in life?

#### 1. Present sufferings don't even compare (8:18)

**8:18 - “*I consider that our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us.*”**

“*I consider that our present sufferings*” - These sufferings are not those that take place at our time of salvation when we “*died with Christ.*” These sufferings are also not just those that we have to endure because of our stand with God (i.e - persecution). It is suffering that would include illnesses, bereavement, hunger, financial difficulties, and even death itself. Suffering is not the final word for the Christian believer.

The great theologian, John Calvin died with this verse unfinished on his lips.

“*are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us*” - Glory is much like salvation that is reserved for us (I Peter 4:4,5). Some day we will witness what has already been decided upon on our behalf.

#### 2. The whole creation eagerly awaits for the revealing and glorious liberty of the children of God (8:19-22)

**8:19 - “*The creation waits in eager expectation for the sons of God to be revealed.*”**

“*The creation waits in eager expectation*” - Both creation and Christians sense a feeling of incompleteness and frustration until the time of God’s future deliverance.

The word for “*eager expectation*” refers to a person craning his/her neck to see what is coming. It is composed of two words “*head*” and “*stretch*” with “*away from.*” J. B. Phillips paraphrase writes that “*the creation is on its tiptoe.*”

## II. BLESSINGS OF BEING CHILDREN OF GOD (8:18-39) (Contd.)

### A. THE GLORY TO BE REVEALED IN US (8:18-25) (Contd.)

#### 2. The whole creation eagerly awaits for the revealing and glorious liberty of the children of God (8:19-22) (Contd.)

*“for the sons of God to be revealed”* - This “revealing” is not just a disclosure but also includes the process where the status that we now maintain in preliminary form in all its “hiddenness” will be brought to its final stage and made public.

**8:20** - *“For the creation was subjected to frustration, not by its own choice, but by the will of the one who subjected it, in hope”*

*“For the creation was subjected to frustration, not by its own choice”* - One writer calls this Paul’s commentary on Genesis 3:17,18.

*“but by the will of the one who subjected it”* - Three suggestions have been made to identify who this is:

- 1). Adam whose sin brought death and decay (cf. 5:12)
- 2). Satan whose temptation led to the fall
- 3). God who decreed the curse of judgement because of sin (Genesis 3:17).

Of these three, only God had the right to declare that all creation was condemned because of the sin.

*“in hope”* - This promise of God was given in conjunction with the curse. This is the pivoting point of Paul’s argument. We can now look ahead to the nature of that hope and its relationship to our new revelation of being the *“sons of God.”*

**8:21** - *“that the creation itself will be liberated from its bondage to decay and brought into the glorious freedom of the children of God.”*

*“that the creation itself will be liberated from its bondage to decay”* - Since the time of the Fall, all of creation has been waiting to be fully liberated just like God’s children will be. Creation will never be liberated without Christians experiencing that liberation (cf. vs. 19).

*“brought into the glorious freedom of the children of God”* - There are two main beliefs as to when this will take place. Some believe it will happen during the millennial reign of Christ (Revelation 20:4-6). Others believe it will happen at the end of time when God ushers in the eternal state of blessedness with a *“new heaven and new earth”* (Revelation 21:1-22:7).

## II. BLESSINGS OF BEING CHILDREN OF GOD (8:18-39) (Contd.)

### A. THE GLORY TO BE REVEALED IN US (8:18-25) (Contd.)

#### 2. The whole creation eagerly awaits for the revealing and glorious liberty of the children of God (8:19-22) (Contd.)

**8:22** - *“We know that the whole creation has been groaning as in the pains of childbirth right up to the present time.”*

*“We know that the whole creation has been groaning”* - This groaning is because of the future anticipation of what God has promised to do (II Corinthians 5:2). It is also mentioned in Matthew 24:8; Mark 13:8 speaking of the distress that will take place preceding the end of time.

*“as in the pains of childbirth right up to the present time.”* - Jesus also made reference to a time period symbolic to childbirth (John 16:20b-22) when He addressed His disciples. J. B. Phillips describes this time as a *“symphony of sighs.”*

#### 3. We also eagerly wait with perseverance for this hope (8:23-25)

**8:23** - *“Not only so, but we ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for our adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies.”*

*“who have the firstfruits of the Spirit”* - These *“firstfruits”* are not something that come (and go) after our initial justification. They remain active and grow through our entire process of sanctification. The Holy Spirit in a sense is not only our “first instalment” or “down payment” but also our pledge of guarantee of what is to come (II Corinthians 1:21,22; 5:5; Ephesians 1:14). This word is used in modern Greek to signify an engagement ring which is given in pledge (or earnest) of the upcoming marriage.

*“groan inwardly”* - These are not verbal utterances but rather inward, nonverbal sighs which speak of a deep concern. There is a unique and awkward balance that must be maintained in the life of a believer in Christ. We have an inward joy because of the many blessings that God bestows upon us while at the same time we daily struggle to overcome the old age with its sin and death (I John 3:2). Someday our groaning will pass as we are clothed with our house from heaven (II Corinthians 5:2).

*“as we wait eagerly for our adoption as sons”* - Paul has no problem identifying the constant moral and physical infirmities that take place in the interim time between our justification and the time of our glorification (II Corinthians 5:2,4). We have the right as sons but not always experiencing the realization of what that entails on a daily basis.

## II. BLESSINGS OF BEING CHILDREN OF GOD (8:18-39) (Contd.)

### A. THE GLORY TO BE REVEALED IN US (8:18-25) (Contd.)

#### 3. We also eagerly wait with perseverance for this hope (8:23-25) (Contd.)

**8:24** - *“For in this hope we were saved. But hope that is seen is no hope at all. Who hopes for what he already has?”*

*“But hope that is seen is no hope at all”* - Our salvation includes the need to activate our hope in God. This hope must be both expectant and patient about the assured results that will come to pass. Biblical hope anticipates the future (Titus 2:13). It has been so rightfully said that *“the frustrations and difficulties of life can sometimes all but erase the image of that glory for us”* - Douglas Moo. We must keep in mind that temporary suffering will some day give way to eternal glory.

**8:25** - *“But if we hope for what we do not yet have, we wait for it patiently.”*

*“But if we hope for what we do not yet have”* - We need not be concerned about what is about to take place. Hope should always lead to trust. Our reward will not be transient but rather eternal (II Corinthians 4:16-18).

*“we wait for it patiently”* A patient fortitude is a unique sign of a child of God. This word carries with it the thought that we need to bear up under intense pressure.

### B. THE HELP OF THE HOLY SPIRIT (8:26-27)

**8:26** - *“In the same way, the Spirit helps us in our weakness. We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groans that words cannot express.”*

#### 1. Helps in our weakness as we pray (8:26a)

*In the same way, the Spirit helps us in our weakness”* - In the same way as hope works to sustain us during our times of testing, so does the Holy Spirit come alongside to offers His aid. He not only joins us but He also helps to (lit - *“bear our overwhelming burdens”*) because He is very aware of our weaknesses.

#### 2. By interceding for us as we pray (8:26b-27)

*“We do not know what we ought to pray for”* - He is not there to simply help us improve in our style or manner of prayer as much as He is to guide us in our content and object of prayer. In other words He helps in our “what” not in our “how” part of our prayer.

## II. BLESSINGS OF BEING CHILDREN OF GOD (8:18-39) (Contd.)

### B. THE HELP OF THE HOLY SPIRIT (8:26-27) (Contd.)

*“but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groans that words cannot express”* - This does not mean that we are isolated from the prayer and that the Holy Spirit does all the work. The Holy Spirit clearly discerns God’s perfect will and then leads us into a way of accomplishing God’s will. The Holy Spirit’s *“groans”* are His *“language of prayer”* to communicate in a manner that is pleasing to God. It shows how He identifies with the burdens we are carrying.

**8:27-** *“And he who searches our hearts knows the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints in accordance with God’s will.”*

*“And he who searches our hearts knows the mind of the Spirit”* - There is a perfect accord that exists between the Godhead.

*“because the Spirit intercedes for the saints in accordance with God’s will”* - This accord is based upon the agreement that takes place with the will of God. The Spirit of God prays through our difficulties and concerns and validates our heart in accordance with God’s heart.

### C. ALL THINGS WORKING TOGETHER FOR GOOD (8:28-30)

#### 1. For those who love God, called according to His purpose (8:28)

##### More Than Conquerors

**8:28 -** *“And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose.”*

There are a number of different interpretations (and emphasis’ of this verse as follows).

- 1). *“God causes all things to work together for good”* - NASB
- 2). *“In all things God works for the good”* - NIV, Also NRSV, TEV (Today’s English Version)
- 3). *“All things work together for good”* - KJV, NIV margin
- 4). *“he [the Spirit] cooperates for good to those who love God”* - REB (Revised English Bible)

*“And we know that in all things God works for the good”* - Paul is not suggesting that everything that takes place in our lives will be good for us. He is not overly optimistic. Bad things do happen to good people. This does not underestimate the power of God to work things out for our good. God’s sovereign will does and always will undergird us.

## II. BLESSINGS OF BEING CHILDREN OF GOD (8:18-39) (Contd.)

### C. ALL THINGS WORKING TOGETHER FOR GOOD (8:28-30) (Contd.)

#### 1. For those who love God, called according to His purpose (8:28) (Contd.)

**“all things”** - This is not restricted to just the *“sufferings of this present time”* (cf. vss. 18, 35-37) but it includes the good as well as the bad things that we all have to face in life.

**“works”** - We need to ask whether God *“works together”* with us or does He just *“work”* independently in our lives. Probably it is better to understand that *“all things work for good on behalf of the believer.”*

**“for the good”** - Some believe that Paul is only referring to our eschatological glory that will take place (i.e. - our ultimate conformity to the image of Christ once we reach heaven). It should rather encompass the **“good”** things in our lives that contribute and sustain us in our journey on the pathway of salvation. This **“good”** must be seen in God’s viewpoint and not ours.

“The idea that this verse promises the believer material wealth or physical well-being, for instance, betrays a typically Western perversion of “good” into an exclusively material interpretation. God may well use trials in these areas to produce what he considers a much higher “good”: a stronger faith, more certain hope (cf. - 5:3-4). But the promise to us is that there is nothing in this world that is not intended by God to assist us on our earthly pilgrimage and to bring us safely and certainly to the glorious destination of that pilgrimage.”

Douglas Moo  
*“The Epistle to the Romans”*  
 William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company  
 1996, pp. 492

**“of those who love him”** - Paul is not suggesting that if we don’t love God enough that we will lose out on this blessings. There are only a few verse that Paul even mentions our love of God (I Corinthians 2:9; 8:3; cf. - Ephesians 6:24). In reality it can only be Christians who truly do love God and they have proven it by surrendering their lives to Him.

## II. BLESSINGS OF BEING CHILDREN OF GOD (8:18-39) (Contd.)

### C. ALL THINGS WORKING TOGETHER FOR GOOD (8:28-30) (Contd.)

#### 1. For those who love God, called according to His purpose (8:28) (Contd.)

*“who have been called according to his purpose”* - The main purpose that God called us was to conform us into the image of Christ while living on this side of heaven and therefore to ultimately and even presently (at certain times) share in His glory. The pattern of our forefathers in the faith prove this principle (i.e. - Job, Abraham, Jacob, Joseph, David, Daniel, Paul etc.).

#### 2. For such, whom God foreknew, He will carry out His ultimate purpose (8:29-30)

**8:29** - *“For those God foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the likeness of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brothers.”*

*“For those God foreknew he also predestined”* - Here we have Paul addressing the purpose or the plan of God in and through our lives. This verse has offered theologians much fertile ground to build upon their teachings of Soteriology (the doctrine of salvation). Unfortunately, it has been used to “solidify” some of the “pet doctrines” which follow.

What God *“foreknew”* was *“us”* not *“about us.”* In only 2 of the six recorded uses of this verb in the NT only 2 mean to *“know beforehand”* as in the sense that God entered into a relationship before . . . It is to these that He also *“predestined”* (called) which can only refer to Christians. Predestination only applies to Christians.

Nowhere does the Bible teach that God predestines people to be eternally condemned. If they are condemned in the end, it is entirely because of their refusal to accept the gracious gift of salvation that has been offered to all mankind (John 3:18-21).

*“to be conformed to the likeness of his Son”* - What is clear is that God has known about us individually before, during and after we have become a Christian and we are therefore called to demonstrate the life of Christ through our attitudes and actions.

*“that he might be the firstborn among many brothers”* - *Jesus has become the first fruits* of those who have been raised to life with Him (I Corinthians 15:20).



**II. BLESSINGS OF BEING CHILDREN OF GOD (8:18-39) (Contd.)****C. ALL THINGS WORKING TOGETHER FOR GOOD (8:28-30) (Contd.)****2. For such, whom God foreknew, He will carry out His ultimate purpose (8:29-30) (Contd.)**

**8:30** - *“And those he predestined, he also called; those he called, he also justified; those he justified, he also glorified.”*

There is no room left to believe that God has predestined some and called others and justified others and will glorify only a few “true Christians.”

Theologians often refer to the conflict that Paul is addressing as the “already-not-yet controversy.” We have already been redeemed, justified and reconciled with God but have not as of yet been glorified. Our ultimate victory is still to come after a life that is sure to include pain, anxiety, distress and even disasters. Our final glorification will deliver us from every aspect of sin, including its very presence in our eternal lives.

**D. GOD'S LOVE TOWARD HIS ELECT (8:31-39)****1. God, who spared not His own Son, is on our side (8:31-33)**

**8:31** - *“What, then, shall we say in response to this? If God is for us, who can be against us?”*

*“What, then, shall we say in response to this?”* - Here is the first of six questions that end this chapter. It is believed that the *“this”* or *“these things”* is a reference to everything that Paul has been speaking about in chapters 5 to 8.

*“If God is for us, who can be against us?”* - As we look back in our lives (as Paul is doing) we cannot help but think of the many blessings that God has poured out upon our lives. Since we are justified in Christ we can also be assured that we will be vindicated at the time of judgement. With God (and His love for us) on our side we can be assured of complete victory over the spiritual forces that continue to oppose us.

We are not to think that if God is on our side that we will not have those who oppose us in varied ways and levels of intensity. It is rather that no one and no thing can ultimately stand against those whom God is with and fighting for.

## II. BLESSINGS OF BEING CHILDREN OF GOD (8:18-39) (Contd.)

### D. GOD'S LOVE TOWARD HIS ELECT (8:31-39) (Contd.)

#### 1. God, who spared not His own Son, is on our side (8:31-33) (Contd.)

**8:32** - *“He who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all—how will he not also, along with him, graciously give us all things?”*

*“He who did not spare his own Son”* - There was no greater demonstration that God loved us and was on our side then when He sent His One and only Son to die in our place (an echo of Genesis 22:12) as a result of our sin.

*“but gave him up for us all”* - Even though this epistle was written to the believers, the “all” does not preclude everyone. Christ died for the whole world – some accept the fact and avail themselves to its blessing while others do not.

*“how will he not also, along with him, graciously give us all things?”* - This is to say that God doesn't stop with His provision just in areas that involved our salvation. God goes beyond that and pours on material blessings as well (Matthew 6:33). If when we were sinners God gave us His very best, now that we are His children doesn't it make sense that He will meet our daily needs?

Yet whether we experience these kinds of blessings or not, we should not depend upon them for a guarantee of our salvation. Paul learned to be content when he experienced times of abundance as well as during the times of want. (Philippians 4:10-13).

**8:33** - *“Who will bring any charge against those whom God has chosen? It is God who justifies.”*

*“Who will bring any charge against those whom God has chosen?”* - This is not to say that there won't be any accusations brought against us at the last judgement. We can be sure that Satan will attempt to accuse us along with our enemies and perhaps even our past sins that we have not asked forgiveness of. It will become a futile act.

*“It is God who justifies”* - It is not that important who brings the charges or what they are listed as. In the end it is God who will take all the evidence and weigh it out in accordance with what Jesus Christ did for us at Calvary. Justification is a powerful act of freedom for those who choose to accept its benefits.

## II. BLESSINGS OF BEING CHILDREN OF GOD (8:18-39) (Contd.)

### D. GOD'S LOVE TOWARD HIS ELECT (8:31-39) (Contd.)

#### 2. Christ, who died for us, now intercedes for us at God's right hand (8:34)

**8:34** - *“Who is he that condemns? Christ Jesus, who died—more than that, who was raised to life—is at the right hand of God and is also interceding for us.”*

*“Who is he that condemns?”* - Jesus knows what it is like to have people step forward with accusations. Just because there are accusations/condemnations does not mean that they will hold up in a court of law – especially one in heaven where our past sins have been dealt with (Isaiah 1:8).

*“is at the right hand of God and is also interceding for us”* - Paul doesn't stop just with the fact that Jesus Christ has secured our justification. He goes on to say that Jesus is now seated at the right hand (Psalm 110:1; Mark 12:35-37) of God the Father (as our high Priest - Hebrews 10:25) to intercede and ensure that the right verdict is allied in our lives (Isaiah 53:12).

#### 3. Through such love we are more than conquerors over all things (8:35-39)

**8:35** - *“Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall trouble or hardship or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword?”*

*“Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?”* - True love is never separated by hardship. In fact it usually grows in spite of any determined efforts to destroy it.

*“Shall trouble or hardship or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword?”* - Most of this list can also be found in Paul's other writings of his experiences (II Corinthians 11:26-27; 12:10; II Timothy 3:10-12; Hebrews 11:35-38).

**8:36** - *“As it is written: “For your sake we face death all day long; we are considered as sheep to be slaughtered.”*

*“For your sake we face death all day long”* - There are times when we give out to others that we place our own lives in danger. A host of martyrs can attest to this fact. God does not always choose to deliver us from the clutches of death (Psalm 44:22).

*“we are considered as sheep to be slaughtered”* - Believing in God is often much easier than suffering for Him, but it is a reality we may all face (Philippians 1:29).

## II. BLESSINGS OF BEING CHILDREN OF GOD (8:18-39) (Contd.)

### D. GOD'S LOVE TOWARD HIS ELECT (8:31-39) (Contd.)

#### 3. Through such love we are more than conquerors over all things (8:35-39) (Contd.)

“It is no new thing for the Lord to permit his saints to be undeservedly exposed to the cruelty of the ungodly.”

John Calvin

**8:37** - *“No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us.”*

*“No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us”* - We may sometimes feel overwhelmed by the problems we face but we are not conquered. Even though we will take part in the victory, we must remember that the battle and the victory is the Lord's who loves us.

**8:38** - *“For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers,”*

*“For I am convinced”* - Our personal testimonies offer the reason why we can have the assurance as mentioned previously (8:37). The word used for *“convinced”* speaks of a firm assurance on solid ground.

“The Apostle's eye looks through all time, through all space, and through all worlds, and in the most sweeping language asserts his persuasion that there is nothing ‘able’ to break the golden chain that binds the heart of God to His people.”

Stifler

*“death”* - Although in the context we may believe that Paul is suggesting a kind of martyrdom, it is more likely to be any type of physical death.

*“life”* - This is probably not referring to any specific part of our life as in other passages (I Corinthians 3:22).

*“angels nor demons”* - Paul normally uses the word *“angels”* to denote the good angels. Many versions use the word *“rulers”* instead of *“demons”* although once again the word most likely is speaking of *“evil spiritual powers.”*

## II. BLESSINGS OF BEING CHILDREN OF GOD (8:18-39) (Contd.)

### D. GOD'S LOVE TOWARD HIS ELECT (8:31-39) (Contd.)

#### 3. Through such love we are more than conquerors over all things (8:35-39) (Contd.)

***“neither the present nor the future”*** - I have discovered that the present time doesn't remain very long. There is no use in fretting over what may be taking place or may take place in the future.

***“nor any powers”*** - There is no power great enough to come between us and our Saviour and Lord. None of these things can or will change our relationship with our Lord.

**8:39** - ***“neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.”***

***“neither height nor depth”*** - It is believed that this is referring to heaven and hell.

***“nor anything else in all creation”*** - Calvinists use this portion to support their belief that not even the believer can separate him/herself from God's love and end up in hell (eternal security). God's judgement does not exclude His love.

“There is no condemnation because we share the righteousness of God and the Law condemn us. There is no obligation because we have the Spirit of God who enables us to overcome the flesh and live for God. There is no frustration because we share the glory of God, the blessed hope of Christ's return. There is no separation because we experience the love of God . . .

We are free from judgement because Christ died for us and we have His righteousness. We are free from defeat because Christ lives in us by His Spirit and we share His life. We are free from discouragement because Christ is coming for us and we shall share His glory. We are free from fear because Christ intercedes for us and we cannot be separated from His love.”

Warren Wiersbe

*“The Bible Exposition Commentary - Volume 1”*  
Chariot Victor Publishing, 1989, p. 541-42

## CHAPTER 8

Therefore, there is no power, nothing in the expanse of space, nor in the course of time, or anything in God's creation that can sever us from God's love.

This chapter began by stating that there is no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus. It ends with the statement that there is no separation from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

## SUMMARY

In chapter seven, Paul described the dilemma of a man who became a prisoner of the law of sin which was in the members of his body. In the last few verses, Paul made reference to the hope of liberation that was made possible by God through Jesus Christ. In this chapter, Paul amplified on the freedom from sin found in Christ.

**First**, for those in Christ who were walking according to the Spirit, there was no condemnation for sin, for the death of Christ for sin had set them free from the law of sin and death by fulfilling the requirement of the law (8:1-4). **Second**, by setting our minds on the things of the Spirit and not the flesh, we were able to enjoy life and peace, pleasing God (8:5-8). And **third**, we now enjoy the indwelling of the Spirit of God, by whom we can put to death the deeds of the body and enjoy both present and future blessings as the children of God (8:9-17).

The blessings of being God's children were enlarged upon in the rest of the chapter. Our present sufferings meant nothing in view of our ultimate redemption and revealing for which we eagerly and patiently wait (8:18-25). We have the privilege of the Holy Spirit and Jesus interceding for us when we pray, which assures that all things will work together for good for those called according to God's purpose (8:26-30). Finally, as God's elect we have the assurance that nothing can tear us away from God's love and that in all things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us (8:31-39).

## WORDS TO PONDER

**“law of the Spirit of life”** - 1) possibly an expression referring to the Gospel; or, 2) the law (principle) involving the life-giving Spirit who aids those in Christ to become free of the *“law of sin and death”* in their members (cf. 7:23 with 8:11-13)

**“the Spirit, Spirit of God, Spirit of Christ, Spirit of Him”** - various references to the Holy Spirit

**“the creation”** - various explanations are often given: 1) all of mankind; 2) only the saved; 3) the whole physical creation placed under the curse (Genesis 3:17; 8:21; Revelation 22:3), using the kind of language found in Psalm 98:7-9; 148:1-14.

**“predestined”** - predetermined; note carefully in v. 29 that it is based upon *“foreknowledge”* (cf. 1 Peter 1:2), and that which is predetermined is **WHAT** those in Christ are to become, not **WHO** are to be in Christ

**“elect”** - chosen; according to 1 Peter 1:2, this election is based upon God's foreknowledge, not some arbitrary choice

**“intercedes”** - to make a petition on behalf of another; used of the Holy Spirit in v. 26-27 (interceding as a *“translator”*?), and of Christ in v. 34 (interceding as *“defence counsel”*?)

**REVIEW QUESTIONS CHAPTER 8**

- 1) List the main points of this chapter
  - In Christ There Is Freedom From Sin (8:1-17)
  - Blessings Of Being Children Of God (8:18-39)
  
- 2) What is the main difference between the "*law of Moses*" and the "*law of the Spirit of life*"? (8:2-4)
  - The Law of Moses could not set one free from the "*law of sin and death*"
  
- 3) What is the result of setting your mind on the things of the flesh? On the things of the Spirit? (8:6)
  - Death; life and peace
  
- 4) Do the Scriptures teach that the Holy Spirit dwells in the Christian? (8:9-11)
  - Yes
  
- 5) How can we be assured that we will continue to live spiritually? (8:13)
  - By putting to death the deeds of the body with the help of the Spirit
  
- 6) List briefly the blessings of being the children of God (8:14-39)
  - One day we will be glorified together with Christ
  - We have the help of the Holy Spirit
  - All things ultimately work for our good
  - Nothing can separate us from God's love



**"THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS"****Chapter Nine****OBJECTIVES IN STUDYING THIS CHAPTER**

- 1) To appreciate why and how God could choose to reject the nation of Israel (except for a remnant) and accept people from among the Gentiles instead.

**OUTLINE****I. PAUL'S CONCERN FOR HIS BRETHREN OF ISRAEL (9:1-5)****A. HIS GREAT CONCERN (9:1-3)**

1. His conscience and the Holy Spirit bear witness to his great sorrow and grief (9:1-2)
2. He would even be willing to be cut off from Christ for their sakes (9:3)

**B. FOR ISRAEL, RECIPIENTS OF MANY BLESSINGS (9:4-5)**

1. Including the covenants, the Law, the promises (9:4)
2. Of whom are the patriarchs, and of course, Christ Himself (9:5)

**II. THE TRUE CHILDREN OF GOD (9:6-29)****A. ARE CHILDREN OF PROMISE, NOT CHILDREN OF FLESH (9:6-13)**

1. They are not all Israel who have descended from Israel (9:6)
2. As illustrated with Isaac and Ishmael, Jacob and Esau (9:7-10)
3. According to God's purpose, whose choice was not based upon works (9:11-13)

**B. ARE THE OBJECTS OF GOD'S MERCY (9:14-23)**

1. Possible only through His Mercy (9:14-16)
2. Just as Pharaoh was the object of His Wrath (9:17-18)
3. God's right to choose the objects of His mercy and His wrath (9:19-23)

**C. ARE OF BOTH THE JEWS AND THE GENTILES (9:24-29)**

1. Not of Jews only, as foretold by Hosea (9:24-26)
2. But only a remnant of Israel, as foretold by Isaiah (9:27-29)

**III. THE BASIS OF GOD'S CHOICE: FAITH vs. NO FAITH (9:30-33)****A. FOR THE GENTILES (9:30)**

1. Though they had not actively been looking for it (9:30a)
2. Yet many have attained righteousness through faith (9:30b)

**B. FOR ISRAEL (9:31-33)**

1. Though diligent for the Law, did not have the attitude of faith (9:31-32a)
2. And therefore stumbled over Christ, as foretold by Isaiah (9:32b-33)

**God's Sovereign Choice**

Paul ended chapter eight on a mountaintop of joy and quickly entered a valley of despair. These verses are written with a broken heart. Chapters 9-11 explain Paul's anguish over the fact that Israel has been walking in disbelief. In this struggle, Paul had to deal with keeping the Gospel pure from a mixture with the Torah; both Jews and Christian Jews who were becoming more and more suspicious of his stand against the Law; and he even had Roman Christians who were struggling against how much Jewish heritage they should retain in their walk of faith.

Why was history showing that the majority of the Jews were rejecting the Gospel when they were supposed to be the group that it began with (Romans 1:16)? The promises that were once made to Israel were now being realized in the Gentiles instead of the Jews. Israel was not so much disinherited as it was being replaced by the Gentiles. Perhaps that is why Paul quoted the O.T. so often in these three chapters (1/3 of all quotes).

We must keep in mind that the Jews were seeing Paul as a traitor. He moved from ministering to the Jews to reaching out to the Gentiles after constantly being rejected (Acts 13:46-48). This did not mean that he didn't have a heart for his own people. He didn't want the Jews living in Rome to believe that he didn't care for their welfare. Paul was even willing to have Israel take his place in heaven (Romans 9:3 - although it could never happen) the same as Moses stated (Exodus 32:30-35).

What Paul was standing as a guard against was the extremists in either direction. What he said led the way toward the reconciliation found in chapters 14-15. If God fashioned both the O.T. and the N.T. then there should not have been a quarrel between the two. Can all this make any sense?

It may appear as a strange place to insert this portion contrasting the Jews and the Gentiles. After all he had just finished a remarkable doctrinal teaching in chapter 8. It would be an ideal time to continue on and now show how this doctrine can be "played out" in everyday living – as some would call the practical duties of living for God. Romans is divided up into Doctrinal chapters (1-8); Dispensational chapters (9-11); and Devotional chapters (12-16).

“The emphasis in Romans 9 is on Israel’s past election, in Romans 10 on Israel’s present rejection, and in chapter 11 on Israel’s future restoration.”

Warren Wiersbe  
“*The Bible Exposition Commentary*”  
Vol. 1; p. 534

## I. PAUL'S CONCERN FOR HIS BRETHREN OF ISRAEL (9:1-5)

### A. HIS GREAT CONCERN (9:1-3)

#### 1. His conscience and the Holy Spirit bear witness to his great sorrow and grief (9:1-2)

**9:1 - “I speak the truth in Christ—I am not lying, my conscience confirms it in the Holy Spirit”**

**“I speak the truth in Christ—** Paul realized that it doesn’t take long for the Christians to be at odds with each other. Taking sides continues to be a problem. He wanted his readers to know that he was speaking the truth as one who was united with Christ.

**“I am not lying”** - No one can speak truth and lie at the same time.

**“my conscience confirms it in the Holy Spirit”** - Paul’s conscience was monitored by the Holy Spirit. That is the best way to keep one’s conscience clear.

**9:2 - “I have great sorrow and unceasing anguish in my heart.”**

**“I have great sorrow and unceasing anguish in my heart”** - Those who have a heart for others will often have their heart broken by the words and actions of those they love the most. This was a common anguish felt by the O.T. prophets. (Jeremiah 4:19; 14:17; Daniel 9:3).

**I. PAUL'S CONCERN FOR HIS BRETHREN OF ISRAEL (9:1-5) (Contd.)****A. HIS GREAT CONCERN (9:1-3) (Contd.)****2. He would even be willing to be cut off from Christ for their sakes (9:3)**

**9:3** - *“For I could wish that I myself were cursed and cut off from Christ for the sake of my brothers, those of my own race,”*

*“For I could wish that I myself were cursed and cut off from Christ”* - The Greek for *“cursed”* is *“anathema”* which describes a person who has been excommunicated. We should not think that Paul considers himself as a proper substitute for a sinful nation. He is more likely saying “were it possible for me to take your place then . . .” Paul had the heart of Moses who also asked that his own name be blotted out of the book if God chose not to forgive His people (Exodus 32:30-32).

*“for the sake of my brothers, those of my own race”* - Blood continues to run deeper than water. He may have been an Apostle to the Gentiles but he never forgot his Jewish roots.

**B. FOR ISRAEL, RECIPIENTS OF MANY BLESSINGS (9:4-5)****1. Including the covenants, the Law, the promises (9:4)**

**9:4** - *“the people of Israel. Theirs is the adoption as sons; theirs the divine glory, the covenants, the receiving of the law, the temple worship and the promises.”*

*“the people of Israel”* - In these next few chapters, Paul avoids using the term *“Jew”* as he had so often used in the previous 8 chapters. It is because the title of *“Israel”* links them to their distinct and privileged religious position.

*“Theirs is the adoption as sons”* - This *“adoption”* does not ensure them individual salvation. Otherwise, Paul would not be so distressed at what could happen to his people *“Israel”* (as seen in 9:2-4a). This adoption is used in a different context as that found in the previous chapter. Here Paul is referring to the nation as being set aside to receive a special O.T. blessing and subsequently serving their monotheistic God. At no time was the whole nation considered to be the chosen people – only those who obeyed the Law of Moses.

*“theirs the divine glory”* - This would refer to God’s special presence with the children of Israel in the past, present and future.

**I. PAUL'S CONCERN FOR HIS BRETHREN OF ISRAEL (9:1-5) (Contd.)****B. FOR ISRAEL, RECIPIENTS OF MANY BLESSINGS (9:4-5) (Contd.)****1. Including the covenants, the Law, the promises (9:4) (Contd.)**

**“*the covenants*”** - It is not normal to use this word in the plural form. It makes it difficult to know which of the covenants he may be referring to as follows:

- a). The covenants with Abraham and the patriarchs
- b). The 3 ratifications of the Mosaic Covenant (ie. - Sinai [Exodus 19:5-6]; Moab [Deuteronomy 29-31]; Mounts Ebal and Gerizim [Joshua 8:30-35].
- c). All Biblical covenants including the New Testament.
- d). Covenants with Noah, Abraham, Moses and all of Israel, and David

It is most likely those of item (d).

**“*the receiving of the law*”** - We must remember that if it wasn't for the nation of Israel we never would have had the Law to begin with.

**“*the temple worship*”** - This would refer to the sacrificing of animals in their normal system of worship.

**“*and the promises*”** - These were the original promises given to Abraham and the other patriarchs.

**2. Of whom are the patriarchs, and of course, Christ Himself (9:5)**

**9:5 - “*Theirs are the patriarchs, and from them is traced the human ancestry of Christ, who is God over all, forever praised! Amen.*”**

**“*Theirs are the patriarchs*”** - The reason why this is so important is that through the patriarchs (their seed) God blessed the generations to come.

**“*and from them is traced the human ancestry of Christ*”** - It is noteworthy that **“*Christ*”** is **“*from them*”** rather than belonging “to them.” Just because they can find an ancestral link to the Messiah does not prove that they are one with Him.

## II. THE TRUE CHILDREN OF GOD (9:6-29)

### A. ARE CHILDREN OF PROMISE, NOT CHILDREN OF FLESH (9:6-13)

#### 1. They are not all Israel who have descended from Israel (9:6)

**9:6 - “It is not as though God’s word had failed. For not all who are descended from Israel are Israel.”**

*“It is not as though God’s word had failed”* - Most of the people of Israel to whom the promises of salvation had been made available refused to live up to the blessings afforded to them. This never violated the integrity of God’s Word. The word used for *“failed”* refers to a ship going off its course which is something that God’s Word has never done.

*“For not all who are descended from Israel are Israel”* - From verses 6b-29, Paul sets forth a clear argument that it was God’s grace that made them all a special people and not their ethnical identity. Within the nation was found “a nation” that trusted in God and followed His Word. They were a remnant of faithful followers of God’s Word. Therefore, God’s Word was fulfilled in a few faithful believers but not in the whole nation.

The mainstream of Jewish teaching was wrong to believe that all Jews were elected to salvation by virtue of their inclusion into the nation that God had chosen to make a covenant with.

#### 2. As illustrated with Isaac and Ishmael, Jacob and Esau (9:7-10)

**9:7 - “Nor because they are his descendants are they all Abraham’s children. On the contrary, It is through Isaac that your offspring will be reckoned.”**

*“Nor because they are his descendants are they all Abraham’s children”*- Paul makes a clear distinction between a national (ethnical) Israel and a spiritual Israel. The word for *“descendants”* is *“sperma”* which speaks of the ‘sperm seed’ that began with Isaac and carried on through this genealogical lineage.

*“On the contrary, It is through Isaac that your offspring will be reckoned”* - The ethnical genealogy of Israel was passed on to everyone born into the bloodline of Abraham. But salvation is NOT a Jewish birthright.

Abraham also had offspring through Ishmael and his genealogical lineage. The major difference lies in the fact that it was only through Isaac’s lineage that God established His perpetual/everlasting covenant. Paul goes back to Genesis 21:12 to gain support for his argument.

## II. THE TRUE CHILDREN OF GOD (9:6-29) (Contd.)

### A. ARE CHILDREN OF PROMISE, NOT CHILDREN OF FLESH (9:6-13) (Contd.)

#### 2. As illustrated with Isaac and Ishmael, Jacob and Esau (9:7-10) (Contd.)

**9:8** - *“In other words, it is not the natural children who are God’s children, but it is the children of the promise who are regarded as Abraham’s offspring.”*

*“it is not the natural children who are God’s children”* - Ishmael could only make a claim to Abraham as one of his natural descendants. Isaac on the other hand was tied to Abraham both in the natural manner as well as through the spiritual link that was set firmly in place by the Abrahamic Covenant.

Paul always used the phrase *“children of God”* to clearly denote people who had obtained salvation through Jesus Christ (Romans 8:16,17,21; Ephesians 5:1; Philippians 2:5).

*“but it is the children of the promise who are regarded as Abraham’s offspring”* - This regarding took place because of their faith in God as did Abraham’s faith in Genesis 15:6 which brought him into a righteous relationship with God (Romans 4:3,5,22; Galatians 3:6).

As N. T. Wright has put it *“what counts is grace, not race.”*

**9:9** - *“For this was how the promise was stated: ‘At the appointed time I will return, and Sarah will have a son.’”*

*“For this was how the promise was stated”* - Paul now brings his readers back to the time when Isaac was conceived.

*“‘At the appointed time I will return, and Sarah will have a son’”* - This was no ordinary conception. The same parallel occurs in our *“spiritual conception.”* There is nothing ordinary about it. Both came about by a miracle of God. If God does not come – nothing will happen. Both come about as a direct result of God fulfilling His promises to us.

**9:10** - *“Not only that, but Rebekah’s children had one and the same father, our father Isaac.”*

*“Not only that, but Rebekah’s children had one and the same father, our father Isaac.”* If what Paul had written thus far was not enough, he moves ahead one more generation to prove his point. There are three important points to understand in this illustration.

First, is the fact that both Jacob and Esau had the same father AND mother. So no one could say that one was preferred over the other because of having different mothers.

## II. THE TRUE CHILDREN OF GOD (9:6-29) (Contd.)

### A. ARE CHILDREN OF PROMISE, NOT CHILDREN OF FLESH (9:6-13) (Contd.)

#### 2. As illustrated with Isaac and Ishmael, Jacob and Esau (9:7-10) (Contd.)

Second, God made His promise that Jacob (Israel) would be the predominant son of the two of them. By stating this before the birth took place offers a strong support that it was God's will and not either of their natural abilities or devotion to God through their faith that impacted the outcome.

There are also a number of similarities between Rebecca and Sarah. Both of them had a son who was called to be the heir of the Abrahamic Covenant. It was also clear in the O.T. writings that both of their sons had a rival. Although it is a fact that Isaac's rival was his half-brother while Jacob's rival was his twin brother.

Third, is the fact that Jacob was the younger of the two. Normally, the older son held the prominent place in the family. This normal custom did not affect God's decision.

So due to the facts that both were born of the same mother and father at the same time gave neither one the benefit of receiving the household birthright and with it the Abrahamic Covenant.

#### 3. According to God's purpose, whose choice was not based upon works (9:11-13)

**9:11 - *"Yet, before the twins were born or had done anything good or bad—in order that God's purpose in election might stand:"***

***"Yet, before the twins were born or had done anything good or bad"*** - In some ways it is good that Paul brings this truth to the forefront. We should recognize that it is not our works that has gained us an acceptance before the LORD.

***"in order that God's purpose in election might stand"*** - The word ***"purpose"*** highlights God's predetermined plan that He would use to bring about a covenant blessing to the people of Israel and through them to the whole world. This statement has to do with ***"national election"*** not ***"individual election."***



## II. THE TRUE CHILDREN OF GOD (9:6-29) (Contd.)

## A. ARE CHILDREN OF PROMISE, NOT CHILDREN OF FLESH (9:6-13) (Contd.)

## 3. According to God's purpose, whose choice was not based upon works (9:11-13) (Contd.)

“A seminary professor once said to me, *‘Try to explain election, and you may lose your mind: but explain it away and you will lose your soul.’*”

Warren Wiersbe  
*“The Bible Exposition Commentary”*  
 Vol. 1; p. 544

**9:12 - “not by works but by him who calls—she was told, ‘The older will serve the younger.’”**

“*not by works but by him who calls*” - Just as God chose Jacob before he had a chance to accomplish any works and gain acceptance with God, so we must come to God through the gift of salvation with nothing to offer. God’s call lays aside all other works but that of God’s alone. As one writer has said,

*“Nothing in my hands I bring;  
 simply to the cross I cling.”*

“*she was told, ‘The older will serve the younger’*” - God did not suggest that it would happen - He called it into reality based upon His wisdom and understanding of the future.

“Once again, of Jacob and Esau, while still in the womb, God declares that the one is a ruler and leader and master, but that Esau is a subject and slave. For God the Maker of living beings knoweth well the difference pieces of his own handiwork, even before He has thoroughly chiselled and consummated them, and the faculties which they are to display at a later time, in a word their deeds (τὰ ἔγγρα) and experiences.”

Philo  
*“Allegorical Interpretations of the Laws”*  
 3.88

## II. THE TRUE CHILDREN OF GOD (9:6-29) (Contd.)

### A. ARE CHILDREN OF PROMISE, NOT CHILDREN OF FLESH (9:6-13) (Contd.)

#### 3. According to God's purpose, whose choice was not based upon works (9:11-13) (Contd.)

**9:13 - “Just as it is written: ‘Jacob I loved, but Esau I hated.’”**

“*Jacob I loved, but Esau I hated*” - Paul quoted from Malachi 1:2-3. God knew the kind of nations that would be eventually represented by these sons of Isaac (Genesis 25:24). Malachi goes on (1:4f) to symbolize the names of Jacob with Israel and Esau with Edom. So once again God is dealing with 2 nations not simply to 2 sons born of Isaac. It was because of the direction that they and their offspring would turn that God either loved or hated what they would do. God makes it clear that He loves sinners (John 3:16).

There is no doubt that an election did take place. But it was not an “*election to salvation*” as it was to an “*election to privilege.*” Even in the O.T. we find that those who had been of the “*elected*” were not guaranteed a place of salvation if they chose to turn away from God and His Word. Remember that election is always a matter of grace. If God only acted on “our righteousness” none of us would be saved.

Some translators indicate that the word “*rejected*” is better to be used than “*loved*” and “*hated.*” It would therefore, not be an indication of God’s emotions as much as it would be about His actions. Yet I doubt that this is the case here.

Arminians have for years taught that God’s choice was based upon our choice to believe in the salvation that was made available to us. Therefore, the exercising of our faith in God is the basis for His choice and pleasure toward us (Hebrews 11:6).

We must always keep a fine line of balance between the sovereign work of God and not trivializing the need for each of us to exercise our faith in God. Yet by making our human decision the basis for our salvation is to deny that God reaches out to us well before we ever attempt to reach back. It is never that we “find Jesus” as much as it is that He has reached down with His gracious and merciful hand and lifted us up out of the miry clay of sin.

## II. THE TRUE CHILDREN OF GOD (9:6-29) (Contd.)

### B. ARE THE OBJECTS OF GOD'S MERCY (9:14-23)

#### 1. Possible only through His Mercy (9:14-16)

**9:14** - *“What then shall we say? Is God unjust? Not at all!”*

*“Is God unjust?”* - The word used for *“unjust”* or *“unrighteous”* is a word that is closely linked with God being faithful to His promises and covenant(s) with Israel.

*“Not at all!”* - In the preliminary response to the arguments that are being set forth, Paul simply rejects any such charges about the just ways that God deals with His people.

**9:15** - *“For he says to Moses, ‘I will have mercy on whom I have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I have compassion.’”*

*“For he says to Moses”* - Earlier in Paul’s argument he uses examples of how God worked with Isaac/Ishmael and Jacob/Esau. Now he uses the very words that God spoke to his servant Moses (Exodus 33:19b). In the incident preceding this, God chose to only kill 3,000 instead of the entire nation when they moulded and worshipped the golden calf. His decision was based purely upon His mercy and grace.

*“‘I will have mercy on whom I have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I have compassion’”* - Knowing full well that these words were originally cited to the mediator of the covenant (Moses) offers a strong support that God can and will reveal His mercy as He chooses to.

**9:16** - *“It does not, therefore, depend on man’s desire or effort, but on God’s mercy.”*

*“It does not, therefore, depend on man’s desire or effort”* - Man’s part of inwardly desiring, setting the purpose in his heart or having the readiness to do something is NOT the main part of this equation. This is because of the fact that man is not the initiator but rather the responder to God’s act of mercy.

*“but on God’s mercy”* - God is the one who executes the desire in us to turn to Him and allow His mercy to be poured out upon us. I do believe that God knows who will respond to His invitation and who will reject His invitation of abundant mercy.

## II. THE TRUE CHILDREN OF GOD (9:6-29) (Contd.)

### B. ARE THE OBJECTS OF GOD'S MERCY (9:14-23) (Contd.)

#### 2. Just as Pharaoh was the object of His Wrath (9:17-18) (Contd.)

**9:17** - *“For the Scripture says to Pharaoh: ‘I raised you up for this very purpose, that I might display my power in you and that my name might be proclaimed in all the earth.’”*

*“For the Scripture says to Pharaoh”* - Once again Paul refers to the Scriptures (Exodus 9:16) referring to the 6<sup>th</sup> time (# of mankind) that Moses and Aaron stood before Pharaoh to demand that the people of Israel be released to worship the LORD.

*“I raised you up for this very purpose”* - Not everyone born into this world is born for the same purpose. Some are born for noble purposes while others are not (II Timothy 2:20,21).

*“that I might display my power in you and that my name might be proclaimed in all the earth”* - Since Pharaoh was the ruler of the world, anything that happened in or through his life would impact many people. The miracles of God spoke loudly to the inhabitants of those living in other lands (Joshua 2:8-11).

**9:18** - *“Therefore God has mercy on whom he wants to have mercy, and he hardens whom he wants to harden.”*

*“Therefore God has mercy on whom he wants to have mercy”* - God’s mercy therefore may depend upon His purposes. It is not unusual in the Bible to have one life sacrificed for the sake of many others (Genesis 50:20; John 1:29).

*“and he hardens whom he wants to harden”* - There is no doubt in Exodus 4-14 that God used the hardening of Pharaoh’s heart to accomplish His will of setting the people free. The word **“harden”** is used 14 times in these 11 chapters of Exodus. The word refers to the *“spiritual insensitivity”* that Pharaoh clearly acted out when confronted with the Word from God. In most other cases that the word is used we find that it describes those who refuse to revere God and His Word.

Sometimes Pharaoh hardened his heart (Exodus 8:15; 19,32) and at other times God hardened Pharaoh’s heart (Exodus 9:12; 10:1,20,27). It must also be said that God didn’t **“harden”** Pharaoh’s heart until after we read that Pharaoh hardened his own heart. It is much the same as those who continually turned away from God and His Word and find themselves *“handed over”* to do those things that they were determined to do (Romans 1:28). The same sunlight that melts a wintry ice can harden a lump of clay.

## II. THE TRUE CHILDREN OF GOD (9:6-29) (Contd.)

### B. ARE THE OBJECTS OF GOD'S MERCY (9:14-23) (Contd.)

#### 2. Just as Pharaoh was the object of His Wrath (9:17-18) (Contd.)

“God’s glory is promoted in the overthrow of a sinner as much as in saving one.”

Stifler

“Yet, without pretending that it solves all our problems, we must recognize that God’s hardening is an act directed against human beings who are already in rebellion against God’s righteous rule. God’s hardening does not, then, *cause* spiritual insensitivity to the things of God: it maintains people in the state of sin that already characterise them.”

Douglas Moo  
*“The Epistle to the Romans”*  
 William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company  
 1996, pp. 599

#### 3. God's right to choose the objects of His mercy and His wrath (9:19-23)

**9:19** - *“One of you will say to me: ‘Then why does God still blame us? For who resists his will?’”*

*“Then why does God still blame us?”* - It is not unusual for people to blame God for their words, attitudes and actions. It is so easy to say *“God made me do it.”* We don’t like to take responsibility for our words and actions.

*“For who resists his will?”* - Since God is such a big God, why not blame Him for the way we end up in life? Isn’t it easier to shift the blame than admit to our sinful ways? This is one of the arguments being set forth by the gay community - they were “born this way” even though they cannot find any substantial facts for their claim. It is an old excuse that just doesn’t hold water.

God has commanded everyone/everywhere to repent. God’s commands are His enabling. If anyone is lost, it is because they love sin more than they love the One who died to forgive them of their sin.

## II. THE TRUE CHILDREN OF GOD (9:6-29) (Contd.)

### B. ARE THE OBJECTS OF GOD'S MERCY (9:14-23) (Contd.)

#### 3. God's right to choose the objects of His mercy and His wrath (9:19-23) (Contd.)

**9:20** - *“But who are you, O man, to talk back to God? ‘Shall what is formed say to him who formed it, ‘Why did you make me like this?’”*

*“But who are you, O man, to talk back to God?”* - How can we find faults in someone’s behaviour if we can shift the blame unto God for our behaviour and preferences in life? As you can see, Paul is not negating the fact that God doesn’t mind us questioning Him or His ways if our attitude is in order. People who have a sincere desire to understand God are always welcomed to do so as long as they don’t begin to question His every move and decision.

*‘Shall what is formed say to him who formed it, ‘Why did you make me like this?’”* - This quote is from Isaiah 29:16 where the prophet makes it clear that we cannot do anything without God knowing our actions and attitudes. We must keep the roles in the proper order. God is the Potter. We are the clay.

**9:21** - *“Does not the potter have the right to make out of the same lump of clay some pottery for noble purposes and some for (dishonour - KJV) common use?”*

*“Does not the potter have the right to make”* - Much of this section has its roots in the O.T. (Isaiah 29:16; 45:9; Jeremiah 18:3-10). God will reshape and rework a vessel in order to still use it in the future. It may not reach the potential it was originally designed for, but it can still be used instead of it being rejected. The Jews, likewise, were given many opportunities to repent and become reestablished as God’s chosen people. God’s form of justice is always righteous (Genesis 18:25). God is not obliged to save anyone who continually rejects Him.

*“to make out of the same lump of clay some pottery for noble purposes and some for common use?”* - This is very similar to II Timothy 2:20. To be used in a common use does not mean that one will be totally rejected. It simply means that they will not receive a noble position.

**9:22** - *“What if God, choosing to show his wrath and make his power known, bore with great patience the objects of his wrath—prepared for destruction?”*

*“What if God, choosing to show his wrath and make his power known”* - Here is one of the few times that Paul introduces a question but leaves the conclusion to the reader. In the case of Pharaoh, God used the 10 plagues to show both His wrath as well as to make His power known (Exodus 7:4-5).

## II. THE TRUE CHILDREN OF GOD (9:6-29) (Contd.)

### B. ARE THE OBJECTS OF GOD'S MERCY (9:14-23) (Contd.)

#### 3. God's right to choose the objects of His mercy and His wrath (9:19-23) (Contd.)

*bore with great patience the objects of his wrath*” - In the only two other cases where Paul uses the word “*patience*” (Romans 2:4; I Timothy 1:16), we find that opportunity is given for repentance to take place.

“*prepared for destruction?*” - Once again we need to ask the question whether those who received the wrath of God actually had a chance to repent or were they always doomed for destruction. My view is that their destiny depended upon their willingness to repent (cf. - Romans 2:5). Those who choose not to repent will have to face their impending doom. The word “*prepared or fitted*” is in the verb form of a middle voice which means it should read “*prepared himself.*”

**9:23** - “*What if he did this to make the riches of his glory known to the objects of his mercy, whom he prepared in advance for glory*”

“*What if he did this to make the riches of his glory known to the objects of his mercy*” - When we get to heaven we will have plenty to thank the Lord for.

“*whom he prepared in advance for glory*” - The preparation for glory is once again based upon the recipient’s willingness to repent and receive the favour of the Lord. NO one in the history of the New Testament just made it into heaven because God “willed it to happen.” Everyone has had to repent and confess their sins in order to receive the precious gift of salvation that is FREELY given to all who believe. (John 1:12,13; Hebrews 7:25; II Samuel 14:14b).

## II. THE TRUE CHILDREN OF GOD (9:6-29) (Contd.)

### C. ARE OF BOTH THE JEWS AND THE GENTILES (9:24-29)

#### 1. Not of Jews only, as foretold by Hosea (9:24-26)

**9:24** - *“even us, whom he also called, not only from the Jews but also from the Gentiles?”*

*“even us, whom he also called”* - We may well ask the question what we have been called into. God has called us according to His purpose (Romans 8:28); into fellowship with His Son (I Corinthians 1:9); into His eternal glory (I Peter 5:10); unto the marriage supper of the Lamb (Revelation 19:9).

*“not only from the Jews but also from the Gentiles?”* - Not only has God chosen to bring salvation to Jews, but also to the Gentiles (Romans 9:6; Galatians 3:7-9) to whom Paul was sent to preach to (Romans 15:16; Ephesians 3:1,6). The word for Gentiles is *“ethnos”* which speaks of a foreign race (often implied as a pagan or heathen) that is not Jewish in descent.

**9:25** - *“As he says in Hosea: ‘I will call them ‘my people’ who are not my people; and I will call her ‘my loved one’ who is not my loved one, ”*

*“As he says in Hosea:”* Paul is referring to Hosea 2:23.

*“I will call them ‘my people’ who are not my people”* - The use of this text seems to indicate that Paul is further trying to break down the boundary that has been so firmly erected over the centuries. Just like in I Peter 2:10, the Northern Kingdom of the ten tribes of Israel had sunk into a low level of sin that made them like the heathen nations that surrounded them. There is no extent of sin that can bar one from the grace and mercy of God who chooses to repent.

**9:26** - *“and, ‘It will happen that in the very place where it was said to them, ‘You are not my people,’ they will be called ‘sons of the living God.’”*

*“You are not my people, they will be called ‘sons of the living God.’”* - God has and can continue to move from *“divine exclusion to divine admission”* ([Jamieson, Fausset and Brown Commentary](#)) as He chooses to base His decision upon the response of individuals. God knows our heart.

History shows that God, during the time of the Exodus, rejected the Gentiles to save the Jews in order that through the Jews, the Gentiles may later be saved (Isaiah 49:6; 60:3). Quite ironic isn't it?



## II. THE TRUE CHILDREN OF GOD (9:6-29) (Contd.)

### C. ARE OF BOTH THE JEWS AND THE GENTILES (9:24-29) (Contd.)

#### 1. Not of Jews only, as foretold by Hosea (9:24-26)(Contd.)

“The second prophecy (v. 26) is from Hosea 1:10 and refers to Gentiles any place on the earth who turn to Christ now and in the future. As James put it: *“That the residue of men might seek after the Lord, and all the Gentiles, upon whom my name is called, saith the Lord, who doeth all these things”* (Acts 15:17).”

J. Vernon McGee  
*“Thru the Bible Commentary  
 [computer file], electronic ed., Logos Library System,  
 (Nashville: Thomas Nelson) 1997, c1981*

#### 2. But only a remnant of Israel, as foretold by Isaiah (9:27-29)

**9:27 - “Isaiah cries out concerning Israel: ‘Though the number of the Israelites be like the sand by the sea, only the remnant will be saved.**

*“Isaiah cries out concerning Israel”* - Paul quotes from Isaiah 10:22,23.

“The prophet in awful earnestness, and as with a scream of anguish, cries over Israel”

Morison

*“Though the number of the Israelites be like the sand by the sea”* -  
 t would be safe to say that there are at least 15 million Jews living on the earth today.

*“only the remnant will be saved “* - This was originally spoken of the terrible slaughter that would take place during the days of Sennacherib’s Assyrian army. The teaching of the remnant which is both a word of judgement and word of hope is found throughout the Scriptures (Ezra 9:8; Isaiah 1:9; 10:20,21; 11:11,18; Ezekiel 6:8; Micah 5:7,8; Romans 11:4-6). During the time of the upcoming Great Tribulation, only 144,000 Jews will be sealed with the name of God upon their foreheads (Revelation 14:1-5). Only those who remain true to God will gain and maintain their salvation.

Although the doctrine of the acceptance of the Gentiles was difficult for the Jews to accept, it must be said that it was much harder for them to accept that they could be rejected. That is why Paul continually referred to Scriptures to support his statements. After all, he was inspired by the Holy Spirit to write these things.

## II. THE TRUE CHILDREN OF GOD (9:6-29) (Contd.)

### C. ARE OF BOTH THE JEWS AND THE GENTILES (9:24-29) (Contd.)

#### 2. But only a remnant of Israel, as foretold by Isaiah (9:27-29) (Contd.)

**9:28** - *“For the Lord will carry out his sentence on earth with speed and finality.”*

*“carry out”* - This word speaks of *“bringing to a complete end; to finish”* (cf. - Isaiah 10:23; 30:12-14; Daniel 9:26).

**9:29** - *“It is just as Isaiah said previously: ‘Unless the Lord Almighty had left us descendants, we would have become like Sodom, we would have been like Gomorrah.’”*

*“It is just as Isaiah said previously”* - Paul quotes verbatim from the LXX in Isaiah 1:9.

*“Unless the Lord Almighty had left us descendants”* - This portion was probably used because of the use of the word *“descendants or seed”* (*“sperma”* cf. Isaiah 6:13).

*“ we would have become like Sodom, we would have been like Gomorrah”* - In comparison with Sodom and Gomorrah there was no seed left to perpetuate its heritage. This would offer some hope even to a rebellious Israel. It should also humble both Jew and Gentile alike to understand that we would all face impending doom if it were not for the mercy of God.

#### Israel’s Unbelief

## III. THE BASIS OF GOD'S CHOICE: FAITH vs. NO FAITH (9:30-33)

### A. FOR THE GENTILES (9:30)

#### 1. Though they had not actively been looking for it (9:30a)

In these verse (9:30-33) Paul moves from divine sovereignty to human responsibility. We move away from the thought of election to encompass that of faith in God as the main requirement for God’s acceptance of us.

**9:30a** - *“What then shall we say? That the Gentiles, who did not pursue righteousness,*

*“That the Gentiles, who did not pursue righteousness”* - Gentile salvation was never based upon the will or works of the receiver. It has always been God’s will and God’s work to bring about salvation. The word *“pursue”* refers to intensely using energy as a hunter pursues his prey.

### III. THE BASIS OF GOD'S CHOICE: FAITH vs. NO FAITH (9:30-33) (Contd.)

#### A. FOR THE GENTILES (9:30) (Contd.)

#### 2. Yet many have attained righteousness through faith (9:30b)

9:30b - *“have obtained it, a righteousness that is by faith;”*

“The meaning is substantially the same, only the imagery in the two words differs; the former being that of *laying hold of a prize*, and the latter of *arriving at a goal*.”

Marvin R. Vincent D.D.  
*“Vincent Word Studies”*  
 1886

*“a righteousness that is by faith”* - This has always been a righteousness that is obtained through faith (Romans 1:17; Philippians 3:9) and justifies (Romans 5:1) the one who exercises that faith. Faith knows of no supremacy in creed or deed.

Gentiles came to God without Jewish privileges and without a clear understanding of the Scriptures. The Jews (on the other hand as noted in 9:30b) attempted to gain their righteousness through a poor adherence to the Mosaic Law. The Jews stumbled in the light while the Gentiles stumbled in the darkness. In spite of all their privileges they could not walk in righteousness outside of their faith in God.

It is an interesting paradox that the Gentiles did not pursue righteousness and yet it overtook them. The Jews, on the other hand did pursue righteousness and yet they never arrived at it. This once again backs up Paul’s earlier statement (Romans 9:16). A right relationship with God is never something that can be earned.

“The Jew sought to put God in his debt; The Gentile was content to be in God’s debt.”

William Barclay  
*“Letter to Romans”*  
 St. Andrew Press 1972, p.143

**III. THE BASIS OF GOD'S CHOICE: FAITH vs. NO FAITH (9:30-33) (Contd.)****B. FOR ISRAEL (9:31-33)****1. Though diligent for the Law, did not have the attitude of faith (9:31-32a)**

**9:31** - *“but Israel, who pursued a law of righteousness, has not attained it.”*

“You will never be able to reconcile the sovereignty of God and the responsibility of man. But Paul is making it very clear here that if you are going to be saved it is *your* responsibility. It is “*whosoever will may come*” (see Mark 8:34) and “... *him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out*” (John 6:37). You can come; don’t stand on the sidelines and say, “I’m not elected.” But I have never heard of anybody being elected who didn’t run for office.

If you *want* to be saved, you are the elect. If you don’t, you’re not. And that is all I know about it. I cannot reconcile election and free will. I have come to the place in the sunset of my life that I can say that God is sovereign, and He is going to do this according to His will. And His will is right—there is no unrighteousness with Him. He won’t make a mistake. Men make mistakes; men in government make mistakes, yet people believe in them.”

J. Vernon McGee

*“Thru the Bible Commentary*

*[computer file], electronic ed., Logos Library System,  
(Nashville: Thomas Nelson) 1997, c1981*

**9:32a** - *“Why not? Because they pursued it not by faith but as if it were by works.*

**2. And therefore stumbled over Christ, as foretold by Isaiah (9:32b-33)**

**9:32b** - *“They stumbled over the ‘stumbling stone.’”*

*“They stumbled over the ‘stumbling stone’* - Paul once again turns to a quote from the O.T. (Isaiah 8:14; 28:16; cf. - I Peter 2:6-8). What should have been a stepping stone became a stumbling block [something that cut into them as they fell] (I Corinthians 1:23) or a mill stone around their neck (Luke 17:2). The wonderful ministry of the Lord to the nation of Israel was leading them into a state of apostasy instead of a steadfast faith in God (Psalm 118:22; I Peter 2:6-8). How unfortunate, that they allowed their hearts to become hardened.

### III. THE BASIS OF GOD'S CHOICE: FAITH vs. NO FAITH (9:30-33) (Contd.)

#### B. FOR ISRAEL (9:31-33) (Contd.)

##### 2. And therefore stumbled over Christ, as foretold by Isaiah (9:32b-33) (Contd.)

“Israel is like a person walking on a path, whose eyes are narrowly focussed downward on the path itself that it trips over a stone in the middle of that path. On the other hand, Israel’s failure to perceive in Christ the end and goal of the path she has been walking leads her to continue on that path after it had served its purpose.”

Douglas Moo  
*“The Epistle to the Romans”*  
 William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company  
 1996, pp. 628

**9:33** - *“As it is written: ‘See, I lay in Zion a stone that causes men to stumble and a rock that makes them fall, and the one who trusts in him will never be put to shame.’”*

*“As it is written”* - Isaiah 8:14; cf. Isaiah 28:16)

*“See, I lay in Zion a stone that causes men to stumble and a rock that makes them fall”* - Truth, even though it should create a solid foundation (Matthew 21:42), will become an impediment such as a rock of offence for those who wish to walk in stubborn unbelief.

*“and the one who trusts in him will never be put to shame”* - One version talks about that one will not *“make haste.”* It is another way of saying that one will not quickly flee away from.

It must be said that God ultimately does not save people because of either their birth or their behaviour. It is only through the grace of God that we are saved (Ephesians 2:8,9). As we come to the close of the final Revelation of Jesus Christ we find that *“whoever is thirsty”* and *“wishes to come – may come”* (Revelation 22:17; cf. Joel 2:32; Romans 10:13).

**III. THE BASIS OF GOD'S CHOICE: FAITH vs. NO FAITH (9:30-33) (Contd.)**

**B. FOR ISRAEL (9:31-33) (Contd.)**

**2. And therefore stumbled over Christ, as foretold by Isaiah (9:32b-33) (Contd.)**

“No one will deny that there are many mysteries connected with divine sovereignty and human responsibility. Nowhere does God ask us to choose between two truths, because they both come from God and are a part of God’s plan. They do not compete; they cooperate. The fact that we cannot fully understand *how* they work together does not deny the fact that they do.”

Warren Wiersbe  
*“The Bible Exposition Commentary”*  
Vol. 1; p. 546

## SUMMARY

With the conclusion of chapter eight Paul has completed his description of how God's righteousness was manifested in Christ, and the results of such justification. However, some of Paul's readers may have received the impression that God's plan of saving man in Christ apart from the Law (3:21-22) implies that God has rejected His people of Israel and the promises made to them. In chapters nine through eleven, Paul explains that God has not rejected His people.

Paul first expresses his own concern for his fellow Israelites (1-2). If it would do any good, Paul would gladly be condemned in order to save his brethren who had been the recipients of so many blessings (3-5).

But Paul quickly states that God's promises had not failed. He reminds them that true Israel is not simply the physical descendants of Israel, any more than the promises to Abraham were to be carried out through all of Abraham's descendants just because they are his physical descendants. Rather, it depends upon what God has chosen according to His Divine purpose. This is illustrated by contrasting what the Scriptures reveal about Isaac and Ishmael, and then about Jacob and Esau (6-13).

That God has made such distinction is illustrated further with the example of Pharaoh, where God chose to show mercy to some while He hardened others [who had already persistently rejected God's mercy, MAC] (14-18). That God has the right to make such choices is His as the potter over the clay (19-21).

So God chose to endure "vessels of wrath" with much longsuffering, that He might make known His glorious riches to "vessels of mercy" [a point expanded upon further in chapter eleven, MAC] (22-23). And who are these "vessels of mercy?" They consist of Gentiles, and a remnant of Israel, as foretold by Hosea and Isaiah (24-29).

Paul's conclusion? That God's words of promise were not just to the fleshly descendants of Abraham (as the Jews would have it), but to the faithful remnant of Israel and to the Gentiles who accepted the righteousness which is by faith. The only reason any of the Israelites were rejected by God was because of their rejection of the Messiah, even as Isaiah foretold (30-33).

**WORDS TO PONDER**

**“harden”** - to make callous, to make strong; can be accomplished in two ways:

- 1) INDIRECTLY, by providing occasion to repent or resist (eg: as when judgment is delayed, Romans 2:4-5), and
- 2) DIRECTLY, by strengthening those who rebel so as to contrast power, mercy, or judgment (for example,
  - a) Pharaoh to show God's power, Exodus 9:12-16;
  - b) Israel, to show God's mercy, Romans 11:7-11,31;
  - c) those who disbelieve, to show God's judgment, II Thessalonians 2:9-12

**“remnant”** - a small portion of the whole; Isaiah foretold only a remnant of Israel would be saved (Romans 9:27-29)

**“the Stumbling Stone”** - a reference to Jesus (cf. I Peter 2:6-8)



**REVIEW QUESTIONS FOR THE CHAPTER**

- 1) List the main points of this chapter
  - Paul's Concern For His Brethren of Israel (1-5)
  - The True Children of God (6-29)
  - The Basis of God's Choice: Faith vs. No Faith (30-33)
- 2) How much love did Paul have for the nation of Israel? (2-3)
  - Enough to be lost if it would do any good
- 3) Who are the true children of God? (8)
  - Children of promise, not children of the flesh
- 4) What does God have the right to do? (18)
  - To show mercy on whom He wills, and to harden whom He wills
- 5) What O.T. prophet foretold that Gentiles would be a part of the people of God? (25-26)
  - Hosea
- 6) What did Isaiah say would happen to the nation of Israel (27)
  - Only a remnant would be saved
- 7) Why are Gentiles among the saved? (30)
  - Because of their faith in God
- 8) Why are some Israelites going to be lost? (31-33)
  - They trusted more in the keeping of the Law, and did not believe in Christ who brought them salvation

**"THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS"****Chapter Ten****OBJECTIVES IN STUDYING THIS CHAPTER**

- 1) To see the importance of combining zeal with knowledge
- 2) To understand that Israel had plenty of opportunity to heed the gospel of Christ, but for the most part they had rejected it

**OUTLINE****I. ISRAEL'S REFUSAL OF GOD'S RIGHTEOUSNESS (10:1-15)****A. PAUL'S EXPRESSION OF CONCERN FOR ISRAEL (10:1-4)**

1. That Israel be saved, for they have zeal but not knowledge (10:1-2)
2. Through ignorance, they seek to save themselves by the Law, and do not submit to God's righteousness in Christ which brings an end to the Law (10:3-4)

**B. RIGHTEOUSNESS OF THE LAW vs. RIGHTEOUSNESS BY FAITH IN CHRIST (10:5-15)**

1. Righteousness of the Law as defined by Moses (10:5)
2. Righteousness by faith as defined by Paul (10:6-15)
  - a. Involves the mouth and the heart (10:6-8)
  - b. Involves confessing Jesus and believing in His resurrection (10:9-10)
  - c. Offered to all who believe and call upon Him (10:11-13)
  - d. Accomplished through the medium of preaching (10:14-15)

**II. ISRAEL'S NEGLECT OF THE GOSPEL (10:16-21)****A. NOT ALL OBEYED THE GOSPEL (10:16-18)**

1. As Isaiah predicted (10:16)
2. Even though they had ample opportunity (10:17-18)

**B. THEIR NEGLECT, AND THE GENTILES RECEPTION, FORESEEN BY SCRIPTURES (10:19-21)**

1. As spoken by Moses (10:19)
2. As spoken by Isaiah (10:20-21)

**I. ISRAEL'S REFUSAL OF GOD'S RIGHTEOUSNESS (10:1-15)****A. PAUL'S EXPRESSION OF CONCERN FOR ISRAEL (10:1-4)****1. That Israel be saved, for they have zeal but not knowledge (10:1-2)**

Paul is not easy on the Jews in chapters 9 to 11. Yet he was never rude or disrespectful toward his people. His were not angry words but rather words spoken both in truth and in love. He moves his thoughts from that of God's sovereignty (chapter 9) to an equally important truth of human responsibility (chapter 10).

Much of what concerned Paul is identified in a problem that continues to this very day. That is the constant struggle of maintaining a proper balance between zeal and knowledge.

“Paul was entirely ready to admit that the Jews were zealous for God; but he also saw that that zeal was a misguided, misdirected thing. The whole of Jewish religion was based on meticulous obedience to the law . . . It was not any easy thing; it must often have made life a very uncomfortable thing.”

William Barclay DD.  
*“The Letter to the Romans”*  
 1967, pp. 145-146

There were few people who could properly address this issue as well as Paul. His previous zeal to follow the traditions of his forefathers placed him in a position well ahead of his contemporaries until God taught him the truth (Galatians 1:13-17; Philippians 3:4-11). Jesus also was bombarded with this problem. Our Lord chose to address the problem by highlighting the sinful attitude of the elder brother (Luke 15:11-32) as well as exposing the heart of one of the Pharisees (Luke 18:9-14).

**10:1 - “*Brothers, my heart’s desire and prayer to God for the Israelites is that they may be saved.*”**

**“*Brothers*”** - Even though the Gentiles are Paul's predominant readers, he does not want them to think that his Jewish brethren are any less significant. This is Paul's way of continuing to link himself with his people. This is what compelled him to continue to bring them to the truth even though they constantly opposed him. A true brother loves at all times and is born for this type of adversity (Proverbs 17:17).

**I. ISRAEL'S REFUSAL OF GOD'S RIGHTEOUSNESS (10:1-15) (Contd.)****A. PAUL'S EXPRESSION OF CONCERN FOR ISRAEL (10:1-4) (Contd.)****1. That Israel be saved, for they have zeal but not knowledge (10:1-2) (Contd.)**

*“my heart’s desire and prayer to God for the Israelites is that they may be saved”* - Paul’s prayer was a demonstration of his growing faith in God’s willingness and ability to save his people from their waywardness (II Corinthians 3:7-18).

“We violate the order of human thought and trespass the boundary between God’s prerogative and man’s when the truth of God’s sovereign counsel constrains despair or abandonment of concern for the eternal interests of men.”

Douglas Moo  
*“The Epistle to the Romans”*  
 William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company  
 1996, pp. 632

It has been often speculated how many converts there would be in the Christian faith if every Christian had the same concern as Paul had for those who were not yet saved.

**10:2 - “For I can testify about them that they are zealous for God, but their zeal is not based on knowledge.”**

*“For I can testify about them that they are zealous for God”* - Godly zeal is often not recognized with a positive notion in the Bible (John 2:17; Acts 22:3; Philippians 3:6).

*“but their zeal is not based on knowledge”* - Zeal in and of itself though, is a dangerous thing. The word for *“zeal”* is properly *“heat.”* Our zeal needs to be based upon what God wants to do. We need to have a zeal *“from God”* in order to counteract the lurking dangers of a zeal *“for God.”* When we direct our energy in that direction we can be assured of God’s protection and provision. Otherwise we will most likely get caught in the enemy’s web of deceit.

Israel prided itself in never returning to idolatry after the Babylonian captivity. They became sticklers to adhere to the Law. Unfortunately, they were not sensitive to the way that their traditions were being accepted as equal to God’s Law to the point of demanding death for their opponents (Acts 26:1-11; Galatians 1:13,14). It’s a sad commentary when believers walk in a way that displays heat without light.

**I. ISRAEL'S REFUSAL OF GOD'S RIGHTEOUSNESS (10:1-15) (Contd.)****A. PAUL'S EXPRESSION OF CONCERN FOR ISRAEL (10:1-4) (Contd.)****1. That Israel be saved, for they have zeal but not knowledge (10:1-2) (Contd.)**

Persistence without godly submission and willingness to walk in the direction that the Holy Spirit truly guides us is misguided foolishness. Be very careful when you say things like *“the Lord told me or I feel led by the Lord to . . .”* If it's the easy way out, question it! If it does little to produce godly character it most likely is not from God. Choose character development over comfort.

**2. Through ignorance, they seek to save themselves by the Law, and do not submit to God's righteousness in Christ which brings an end to the Law (10:3-4)**

**10:3** - *“Since they did not know the righteousness that comes from God and sought to establish their own, they did not submit to God's righteousness.”*

*“Since they did not know the righteousness that comes from God”* - It is one thing *“to be declared righteous by God”* and it is another *“to actually be righteous.”*

*“and sought to establish their own”* - This is the kind of righteousness that is based upon works instead of a sincere faith in God (Philippians 3:9). What sadly marked their actions were ignorance, action and failure. Their ignorance was like many people today not based upon a lack of opportunity to access truth but rather it stemmed from their willful disobedience against the known will of God.

*“they did not submit to God's righteousness”* - Submission to the known will of God is required to walk a life of righteousness. It can only take place through faith. There is no such thing as righteousness in and of ourselves. Righteousness comes from God alone.

**10:4** - *“Christ is the end of the law so that there may be righteousness for everyone who believes.”*

*“Christ is the end of the law”* - There is no need for the Law now that Christ has fulfilled its requirements (Matthew 5:17). The word *“end”* - *Greek - “telos”* has two distinct meanings. One refers to *“a termination”* while the other points to *“fulfilling a goal.”* Both of these took place in Christ (an end to the Law because it reached its final goal in Christ).

**I. ISRAEL'S REFUSAL OF GOD'S RIGHTEOUSNESS (10:1-15) (Contd.)****A. PAUL'S EXPRESSION OF CONCERN FOR ISRAEL (10:1-4) (Contd.)****2. Through ignorance, they seek to save themselves by the Law, and do not submit to God's righteousness in Christ which brings an end to the Law (10:3-4) (Contd.)**

The Jews have missed the righteousness that is now made available to them by not accepting Christ. Gentiles have now been given a opportunity to be made righteous by placing their faith in Christ whom they have accepted. This is the pivoting verse upon which this section moves (9:30-10:13).

This does not mean that we have no law to live under now that we are a believer in Jesus Christ (Matthew 5:17; Galatians 6:2; I Corinthians 9:19-21). We live under the law of Christ. Nor can we now say that the Law has no part in God's revelation because it is a vital part of our canon of our Scriptures and is therefore profitable (II Timothy 3:16).

Fulfilment of the Law is quite different than abolishment of the Law. The Law served its purpose as given to Israel (not to the Gentiles). It was only meant to be used temporarily. The Ceremonial Law was annulled through the finished work of Christ at Calvary (Hebrews 7:18). The Moral Law remains intact.

*“so that there may be righteousness for everyone who believes”* - It doesn't matter as much whether we are Jew or Gentile. What matters is what we believe and Who we believe in.

“Everything about the Jewish religion pointed to the coming Messiah – their sacrifices, priesthood, temple services, religious festivals, and covenants. Their Law told them they were sinners in need of a Saviour. But instead of letting the Law lead them to Christ (Galatians 3:24), they worshipped their Law and rejected their Saviour. The Law was a signpost, pointing the way. But it could never take them to their destination. The Law cannot give righteousness; it only leads the sinner to the Saviour who can give righteousness.”

Warren Wiersbe  
*“The Bible Exposition Commentary”*  
 Vol. 1; p. 547

**I. ISRAEL'S REFUSAL OF GOD'S RIGHTEOUSNESS (10:1-15) (Contd.)****B. RIGHTEOUSNESS OF THE LAW vs. RIGHTEOUSNESS BY FAITH IN CHRIST (10:5-15)****1. Righteousness of the Law as defined by Moses (10:5)**

**10:5** - *“Moses describes in this way the righteousness that is by the law: ‘The man who does these things will live by them.’”*

*“Moses describes in this way the righteousness that is by the law”* - The Reformers insisted that it was because of man’s depravity that salvation could be made available by humbly accepting Christ as their Saviour.

The Biblical teaching of faith and believing contrasts Moses’ teaching of works and doing as one of the most persuasive teachings of Paul.

*“The man who does these things will live by them”* - One of the Scriptural references that Paul would be referring to would be Leviticus 18:1-30 particularly vs 5. In this portion the Israelites are told to follow the statutes and ordinances of God rather than the customs of the Egyptians or the Canaanites.

This new way of living given to them through the Law of Moses was more than just a new way to *“live”* out their life. This new life consisted of deliverance from their enemies, peace and a long life and material prosperity (Leviticus 26:3-13; Deuteronomy 28:1-6). Unfortunately, no one was able to live up to the demands of the Law and therefore, were unable to reap from its rewards. The Law was never meant to be a standard of “works” excluding “faith.”

**2. Righteousness by faith as defined by Paul (10:6-15)****a. Involves the mouth and the heart (10:6-8)**

**10:6** - *“But the righteousness that is by faith says: ‘Do not say in your heart, Who will ascend into heaven?’ (that is, to bring Christ down)”*

*“Do not say in your heart”* - This is taken from Deuteronomy 9:4.

*“Who will ascend into heaven?” (that is, to bring Christ down)”* - This phrase was used to speak of an impossible task for any human to perform. In fact, there is no need to even attempt to try to bring Christ down from heaven. Jesus Christ has already come down through the incarnation. It is not a matter of coming or going (works related) but rather remaining in solid faith with God’s Word that has been clearly taught throughout the ages.

**I. ISRAEL'S REFUSAL OF GOD'S RIGHTEOUSNESS (10:1-15) (Contd.)****B. RIGHTEOUSNESS OF THE LAW vs. RIGHTEOUSNESS BY FAITH IN CHRIST (10:5-15) (Contd.)****2. Righteousness by faith as defined by Paul (10:6-15)(Contd.)****a. Involves the mouth and the heart (10:6-8)**

Initially, Moses used these next verses to assure the children of Israel that they need not worry just because his time of mediation was coming to an end. Who could go up (like on Mount Sinai) and then come down to speak to the people? This was no longer needed.

The people could quote God's Word from memory. That's how personal it had become to them. Yet it's truth had not moved from their lips to their heart. It had simply become a type of rote learning. They had reversed what was suppose to take place (Matthew 12:34).

We must also ask ourselves whether we are satisfied simply speaking forth the Word of God from memory and not living it (James 1:22-25). If so, we are deceiving ourselves.

**10:7 - "or 'Who will descend into the deep?'" (that is, to bring Christ up from the dead)."**

**"Who will descend into the deep?"** - The original quote from Deuteronomy 30:12,13 spoke of descending into the "sea." The sea and the abyss were used interchangeably in Judaism. The "**deep**" also speaks of the depths of the earth as well as a place where evil spirits dwell (Luke 8:31; Revelation 9:1-2)

Just as foolish as it would be to try to bring Christ down from heaven now that the incarnation has taken place, so foolish it would be to descend into hell now that Christ has risen from the dead. It was none of our efforts that brought Christ to this earth or to raise Him from the dead. Why should we foolishly attempt to bring about our own righteousness?

**10:8 - "But what does it say? 'The word is near you; it is in your mouth and in your heart,' that is, the word of faith we are proclaiming:"**

**"The word is near you; it is in your mouth and in your heart"** - This is a quote from Deuteronomy 30:14. God has not made it difficult for us to do. We simply have to join our converted heart with our redeemed mouth. It is much easier for us to comprehend this wonderful truth now that Jesus Christ came as the Word of God (John 1:1)



## I. ISRAEL'S REFUSAL OF GOD'S RIGHTEOUSNESS (10:1-15) (Contd.)

### B. RIGHTEOUSNESS OF THE LAW vs. RIGHTEOUSNESS BY FAITH IN CHRIST (10:5-15) (Contd.)

#### 2. Righteousness by faith as defined by Paul (10:6-15)(Contd.)

##### b. Involves confessing Jesus and believing in His resurrection (10:9-10)

**10:9** - *“That if you confess with your mouth, ‘Jesus is Lord,’ and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.”*

*“That if you confess with your mouth”* - Confession must always be an outward manifestation of an inward response that has already taken place (I Timothy 6:12,13). The most obvious confession that begins our act of justification and the process of sanctification takes place at our initial confession of sins when we turn to God and are saved.

*“Jesus is Lord”* - There is a difference in confessing Jesus as either our “Saviour” or our “Lord.” One highlights our need for forgiveness while the other focusses upon placing our trust in Christ as deity and fully surrendering to His will for our lives. The act of accepting Him as our “Saviour” is immediate, when we are justified of our sins. The process of allowing Him to be Lord develops as we mature in our process of sanctification.

To intellectually recognize Jesus as Lord (Gr. - *“kurios”*) is first of all to say that He is reverently worthy of our emotional worship and given supreme obedience of our will.

*“and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved ”* -

Secondly, one must believe that Jesus rose from the dead.

“The Christian must believe not only that Jesus *lived*, but also that Jesus Christ *lives*. He must not only know *about* Christ: he must *know* Christ. He is not studying a historical personage however great; he is living with a real presence. He must not only know the *sacrifice* of Christ; he must know the *conquest* of Christ. He must not only know Christ the *martyr*: he must know Christ the *victor* too.”

William Barclay  
*“Letter to Romans”*  
 St. Andrew Press 1972, p.148

**I. ISRAEL'S REFUSAL OF GOD'S RIGHTEOUSNESS (10:1-15) (Contd.)****B. RIGHTEOUSNESS OF THE LAW vs. RIGHTEOUSNESS BY FAITH IN CHRIST (10:5-15) (Contd.)****2. Righteousness by faith as defined by Paul (10:6-15) (Contd.)****b. Involves confessing Jesus and believing in His resurrection (10:9-10)(Contd.)**

**10:10** - *“For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you confess and are saved.”*

*“For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified”* - Heart-felt trust and public confession should never be divorced from each other. The old sawdust trails that led the way to robust altar calls have unfortunately been replaced by “quietly talking to God.”

*“and it is with your mouth that you confess and are saved”* - The third vital part that Paul addresses is that of confession. Christianity is based upon belief and confession. We are not simply to confess our sins to God but also confess to others the new commitment we have made.

“Trust always includes the assent of the mind and the consent of the will; the credence (acceptance) of the intellect and the confidence of the heart. Saving faith dominates the entire being, mind, feelings, and will, and as a consequence, this faith will express itself in confession.”

W. H. Griffith Thomas D.D.  
*“St. Paul’s Epistle to the Romans”*  
Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company  
1956, p. 278

We must be careful in believing that simply “calling out on the name of the Lord” is all that is needed to be saved. It is more than a verbal confession. It must also include a willingness to allow God to change one’s heart through faith in God alone. Repeating “the sinner’s prayer” must be followed by living “the Christian life.” Its more than just lip service. We must always guard our incentive by our faith and not by our works.

It never hurts to ask a close friend (who will be honest with you) what your life displays. Confessing Jesus as one’s Lord and believing that He has risen from the dead should radically change one’s life. If it doesn’t, then question the motivation of your heart as well as the words of your mouth.

## I. ISRAEL'S REFUSAL OF GOD'S RIGHTEOUSNESS (10:1-15) (Contd.)

### B. RIGHTEOUSNESS OF THE LAW vs. RIGHTEOUSNESS BY FAITH IN CHRIST (10:5-15) (Contd.)

#### 2. Righteousness by faith as defined by Paul (10:6-15) (Contd.)

##### c. Offered to all who believe and call upon Him (10:11-13)

**10:11** - *“As the Scripture says, ‘Anyone who trusts in him will never be put to shame.’”*

*“Anyone who trusts in him”* - This is a quote from Isaiah 28:16 (cf. - Romans 9:33). This *“anyone”* includes Jew and Gentile alike. It corresponds with other expressions found in the Book of Romans as well (*“To the Jew first and also to the Greek; every one that believes”*).

*“will never be put to shame”* - Some versions speak of never being *“disappointed.”* It is clear that this open offer of salvation will lead those who choose to accept its free gift into a position that is deliverance from future shame and judgement.

**10:12** - *“For there is no difference between Jew and Gentile—the same Lord is Lord of all and richly blesses all who call on him,”*

*“the same Lord is Lord of all”* - If there is only one God, it naturally leads to the conclusion that both the *“Jew and the Gentile”* must be under the rulership of this One and only God (Romans 3:29,30).

*“richly blesses all who call on him”* - Anyone who chooses to give allegiance to the *“Lord of all”* can also expect a rich outpouring of His blessings which includes God’s mercy and His grace.

The phrase *“who call on him”* was common in ancient Greek to ask for assistance or intervention.

**10:13** - *“for, ‘Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.’”*

*“Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved”* - This is a quote from Joel 2:32. Paul brings together two important words and concepts. They are *“everyone”* (cf. - vv. 4,11,12) and *“salvation”* (cf. - vv. 1,9,10). It is the open concept of salvation.

So then this passage calls upon the Jews to abandon their way of ritualistic ceremony which led to the bondage of works and legalism. They are then to turn to God’s new way of grace and mercy which is open to everyone who chooses to believe.

**I. ISRAEL'S REFUSAL OF GOD'S RIGHTEOUSNESS (10:1-15) (Contd.)****B. RIGHTEOUSNESS OF THE LAW vs. RIGHTEOUSNESS BY FAITH IN CHRIST (10:5-15) (Contd.)****2. Righteousness by faith as defined by Paul (10:6-15) (Contd.)****d. Accomplished through the medium of preaching (10:14-15)**

**10:14** - *“How, then, can they call on the one they have not believed in? And how can they believe in the one of whom they have not heard? And how can they hear without someone preaching to them?”*

*“How, then, can they call on the one they have not believed in?”* - Paul begins to deal with 4 arguments that the Jews may have tried to use to avoid turning from a life of legalism based upon works. No one calls out for help from someone they don't know. Therefore, we must all begin the process by drawing close to God and believing in God and His Word.

*“And how can they believe in the one of whom they have not heard?”* - Second, one must have the proper message that points to Christ in order to believe. This is why it is imperative that people receive the true and living Word of God – not some man-made teaching that changes with the times. Once again we should be reminded that zeal without truth is misguided.

*“And how can they hear without someone preaching to them?”* - Third, we have often been asked *“Who is preaching the right message?”* In honesty, we all have our little “pet peeves” that guide the way we interpret (or misinterpret) the Word of God. That is why every believer should *“search the Scriptures”* to ensure that what they are being told is the truth (Acts 17:11).

**10:15** - *“And how can they preach unless they are sent? As it is written, ‘How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news!’”*

*“And how can they preach unless they are sent?”* Fourth, those who preach must be sent from the right source. The apostles were men who were sent forth by Jesus Himself to preach the gospel. The word for apostle is *“apostolos”* which means *“one who is sent.”*

*“How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news!”* - This is a quote from both Isaiah 52:7 and Nahum 1:15. These words originally referred to those who carried the good news from Babylon & Nineveh to Jerusalem proclaiming that the days of exile were over and God's people were about to be restored to their land.

**I. ISRAEL'S REFUSAL OF GOD'S RIGHTEOUSNESS (10:1-15) (Contd.)****B. RIGHTEOUSNESS OF THE LAW vs. RIGHTEOUSNESS BY FAITH IN CHRIST (10:5-15) (Contd.)****2. Righteousness by faith as defined by Paul (10:6-15) (Contd.)****d. Accomplished through the medium of preaching (10:14-15) (Contd.)**

Isaiah 40-66 is often associated with the gospel age. The deliverance from Babylon under Cyrus (as well as from Egypt in the days of Moses) is seen as a foreshadow of deliverance through Christ. Isaiah 40:3 which is a call to prepare a way through the wilderness which God may lead His liberated people to Zion was fulfilled through the voice of John the Baptist.

Many scholars believe that the Greek word for *“beautiful- horaioi”* should be translated *“timely.”*

**II. ISRAEL'S NEGLECT OF THE GOSPEL (10:16-21)****A. NOT ALL OBEYED THE GOSPEL (10:16-18)****1. As Isaiah predicted (10:16)**

**10:16 - “But not all the Israelites accepted the good news. For Isaiah says, ‘Lord, who has believed our message?’”**

*“But not all the Israelites accepted the good news”* - In all honesty, the preaching of the *“good news”* has never really been the problem. The message is still being preached today. The problem is that it is simply not being received by faith and obedience. Opportunities were constantly given but deliberately refused. Because they *“would not believe,”* they received the judgement of God which resulted in the fact that they *“could not believe.”*

*“For Isaiah says, ‘Lord, who has believed our message?’”* - Isaiah had the same problem in his day of people not believing the message he had been given to proclaim (Isaiah 53:1; Matthew 13:15). Rejection has been a continuous problem faced by God’s prophets in proclaiming the true message of God (Isaiah 6:9-10; Jeremiah 1:17-19). People foolishly make a way to accept what they want to hear (I Timothy 4:1-2; II Timothy 3:1-5; 4:3,4).

It was difficult for Israel to accept the message of the Suffering Servant. The Lord’s humiliation was the main reason why the people rejected Him as their Messiah (John 12:20-43).

## II. ISRAEL'S NEGLECT OF THE GOSPEL (10:16-21) (Contd.)

### A. NOT ALL OBEYED THE GOSPEL (10:16-18) (Contd.)

#### 2. Even though they had ample opportunity (10:17-18)

**10:17** - *“Consequently, faith comes from hearing the message, and the message is heard through the word of Christ.”*

*“faith comes from hearing the message”* - Therefore, we begin by hearing the message, then believing the message and all of this is based upon our faith in God and His Word.

*“and the message is heard through the word of Christ”* - The term used for *“word”* is different from that used in John 1:14. In that portion it is *“logos”* while here it is *“rhema”* which means a *“saying”* or *“speech.”*

There are four reasons why the church must send out missionaries:

1. **The command from above** - *“go ye into all the world”* (Mark 16:15)
2. **The cry from beneath** - *“send him to my father’s house”* (Luke 16:27)
3. **The call from without** - *“come over and help us”* (Acts 16:9)
4. **The constraint from within** - *“the love of Christ constraineth us”*  
(II Corinthians 5:14)

Dr. E. Meyers Harrison  
Veteran Missionary and Professor of Missions

**10:18** - *“But I ask: Did they not hear? Of course they did: ‘Their voice has gone out into all the earth, their words to the ends of the world.’”*

*“But I ask: Did they not hear? Of course they did”* - No one (Jew or Gentile alike) can stand and make an excuse that God has not declared His truth to them (Romans 1:20). Israel had the benefit of hearing from *“the Book of Nature”* as well as *“the Book of Revelation.”*

It was never a *“problem of hearing”* as much as it was a *“problem of heeding.”* No wonder Jesus so often said, *“He that has ears to hear, let him hear.”* We still have a hearing problem today.

**II. ISRAEL'S NEGLECT OF THE GOSPEL (10:16-21) (Contd.)****A. NOT ALL OBEYED THE GOSPEL (10:16-18) (Contd.)****2. Even though they had ample opportunity (10:17-18) (Contd.)**

*“Their voice has gone out into all the earth, their words to the ends of the world”* - This quote from Psalm 19:4. This stands true today as well for those who attempt to make an excuse of never hearing about the gospel (Psalm 19:1-4a). Ignorance is never a valid excuse before God.

“There is an ignorance which comes from neglect of knowledge. There is a legal maxim which says that genuine ignorance may be a defence, but neglect of knowledge never is. A man cannot be blamed for not knowing that which he never had a chance to know; but he can be blamed for neglecting to know that which was always open to him to know. A man is responsible for failing to know what he might have known.”

William Barclay  
*“Letter to Romans”*  
 St. Andrew Press 1972, p.152

Some have argued that it was not possible by the year AD. 57 to have had the gospel spread through “the entire globe of the earth.” Perhaps Paul was speaking of “the entire Roman-ruled world” (Charles R. Erdman). Another possibility is that he was referring to “every nation” but not “every individual.”

“The opportunity of hearing the gospel was as wide as the star-studded heavens.”

Stifler

It is a fact that many, many people had the opportunity (Colossians 1:23) and chose to reject it. Even if Jesus Christ chose to come today, we are told that every ethnic group (Matthew 28:18-20) in our world has had an opportunity to receive the message of the gospel of Jesus Christ. This should not hinder us from continuing our efforts. Every soul is precious in the sight of God. Not one should perish if they choose to come to Jesus Christ. Our problem, for the most part in our world, is not lack of knowledge as much as it is a lack of will.

## II. ISRAEL'S NEGLECT OF THE GOSPEL (10:16-21) (Contd.)

### B. THEIR NEGLECT, AND THE GENTILES RECEPTION, FORESEEN BY SCRIPTURES (10:19-21)

#### 1. As spoken by Moses (10:19)

**10:19** - *“Again I ask: Did Israel not understand? First, Moses says, ‘I will make you envious by those who are not a nation; I will make you angry by a nation that has no understanding.’”*

*“Did Israel not understand?”* - Why is it that we are so quick to make excuses for the way we choose to go in life? We are more than able to understand much more complicated things than the message of the Bible. Why do some people play dumb when it comes to understanding the clearly spoken word of God?

*“I will make you envious by those who are not a nation; I will make you angry by a nation that has no understanding”* - This quote is from Deuteronomy 32:21. Moses used it to say that Israel made God jealous by worshipping idols that are really no gods at all therefore, God will use the Gentile nation (who are not His people - Hosea 2:23; 1:10; Romans 9:25,26) to make Israel (His people) jealous.

God’s Word will not return unto Him void (Isaiah 55:11). Even though one may object to it, another will accept it. We need a receptionist for the Word of God.

#### 2. As spoken by Isaiah (10:20-21)

**10:20** - *“And Isaiah boldly says, ‘I was found by those who did not seek me; I revealed myself to those who did not ask for me.’”*

*“I was found by those who did not seek me”* - This is a bold quote from Isaiah 65:1.

**10:21** - *“But concerning Israel he says, ‘All day long I have held out my hands to a disobedient and obstinate people.’”*

*“All day long I have held out my hands to a disobedient and obstinate people”* - This is quoted from Isaiah 65:2 (cf. - Matthew 23). Anyone who has held out his arms for even a short period of time know how tiring it can become. God does it all day long waiting for His people.

How can anyone refuse to accept what God has offered? God is in control of all things and yet He has also allowed mankind to have a freewill. This paradox is not a contradiction. Jesus spread out His hands upon an old rugged cross to prove His Word was true. They still chose to reject Him and His Word. What more could/can He do?



**SUMMARY**

As Paul continues to explain God's dealings with the nation of Israel, he repeats his expression of love towards them (1). Though as a nation they had plenty of zeal, unfortunately their zeal was not according to knowledge (2).

Thus they rejected the righteousness of God while trying to establish their own righteousness through the Law of Moses. But Paul explains that Christ is the fulfilment of the Law and has brought it to an end (3-4).

The righteousness God now offers is based upon faith in Christ, not keeping the Law. It involves not the accomplishment of some great feat (like ascending to heaven or descending to hell), but such things as confessing Jesus as Lord and believing that God raised Him from the dead (5-10).

As foretold by Scripture, it is offered to all, both Jew and Gentile (11-13). And it is offered through the medium of preaching the Word (14-15). The problem with the nation of Israel, then, is that not all of them received the gospel message, even when they had ample opportunity (16-18).

But as Moses predicted, the day would come when God would provoke Israel to jealousy by another people, who Isaiah said did not seek God yet found Him, while Israel was constantly rebelling against Him (19-21).

**WORDS TO PONDER**

**“confess”** - lit., to speak the same thing, to assent, accord, agree with...; to declare openly by way of speaking out freely, such confession being the effect of deep conviction of facts (Matthew 10:32; Romans 10:9,10) - VINE

**REVIEW QUESTIONS FOR THE CHAPTER**

- 1) List the main points of this chapter
  - Israel's Refusal Of God's Righteousness (1-15)
  - Israel's Neglect Of The Gospel (16-21)
- 2) What was Paul's prayer in behalf of the nation of Israel? (1)
  - That they may be saved
- 3) What was good about them? What was wrong with them (2)
  - They have a zeal for God
  - But not according to knowledge
- 4) Why was Israel not submitting to the righteousness of God? (3)
  - In ignorance they were seeking to establish their own righteousness
- 5) What should one confess? What should one believe? (9-10)
  - The Lord Jesus (or, that Jesus is Lord)
  - That God raised Jesus from the dead
- 6) For whom is righteousness by faith intended? (11-13)
  - Whoever believes and calls upon the name of the Lord
- 7) What begins the process which finally enables one to call upon the Lord? (14-15)
  - The sending out of preachers
- 8) How does one come to have faith? (17)
  - By hearing the Word of God
- 9) Did the Jews have opportunity to call upon the Lord? (18)
  - Yes, for the gospel had been spread to the ends of the world
- 10) How did God say He was going to make His people jealous? (19-20)
  - By making Himself manifest to those who had not been seeking Him (the Gentiles)

**"THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS"****Chapter Eleven****OBJECTIVES IN STUDYING THIS CHAPTER**

- 1) To understand that God has not totally rejected Israel
- 2) To see the possibility of apostasy for us today
- 3) To understand Paul's summary conclusion for this section (**Chaps. 9-11**)

**OUTLINE****I. GOD HAS NOT TOTALLY REJECTED ISRAEL (11:1-10)****A. EVIDENCE SUPPORTING THIS (11:1-6)**

1. Paul himself (11:1)
2. There is a remnant, just as in the days of Elijah (11:2-5a)
3. A remnant according to grace, not works (11:5b-6)

**B. BUT MANY HAVE BEEN HARDENED (11:7-10)**

1. An "elect" have been saved, the rest were hardened (11:7)
2. This "hardening" foretold by Scriptures (11:8-10)

**II. HARDENING OF ISRAEL TO BENEFIT ISRAEL (11:11-32)****A. THE JEWISH STUMBLING AND GENTILE CONNECTION (11:11-16)**

1. Salvation to the Gentiles an incentive for the Jews to repent (11:11-12)
2. This is one reason why Paul magnified his ministry to the Gentiles (11:13-16)

**B. WORDS OF WARNING AGAINST GENTILE CONCEIT (11:17-24)**

1. Gentiles are but "wild branches" grafted in to the root (11:17-18)
2. As "broken branches" we can just as easily be displaced and replaced (11:19-24)

**C. THE HARDENING AND BLESSING OF ISRAEL (11:25-32)**

1. Hardening is partial, until the fulness of the Gentiles come in (11:25)
2. In this way all Israel will be saved (11:26-27)
3. They may be enemies of the gospel, but they are beloved by God (11:28)
4. And they may obtain mercy just as the Gentiles did (11:29-32)

**III. PAUL'S HYMN OF PRAISE TO GOD (11:33-36)**

**I. GOD HAS NOT TOTALLY REJECTED ISRAEL (11:1-10)****A. EVIDENCE SUPPORTING THIS (11:1-6)**

The apostle Paul has shown us that God's never boxed Himself into making obligations towards Israel which limited Him to reject those who would not accept His terms of salvation (9:5-29). He then went on to show that Israel's rejection had been clearly identified by God's prophets (9:30 - 10:21).

*“Ah sinful nation, a people loaded with guilt, a brood of evildoers, children given to corruption! They have forsaken the LORD; they have spurned the Holy One of Israel and turned their backs on him.”*

*Isaiah 1:4*

From the final verses of chapter 10 we may believe that God has exhausted His divine patience toward Israel and all that was left would be an ultimate judgement.

“Can Jews be converted to faith in Christ? Is Jewish evangelization a futile and impertinent enterprise on the part of the Christian church? Is the spiritual condition of Israel hopeless? To those important and searching questions of the present day, Paul here gives his inspired reply.”

Charles R. Erdman  
*“The Epistle of Paul to the Romans”*  
 The Westminster Press, 1966, p. 131

Paul devotes this entire chapter to prove that God was not finished with Israel. This chapter is not to be spiritually applied to us as Gentiles. Israel's present state is not final nor is it ultimate. Paul uses five witnesses to present His proof (i.e. - he himself (11:1); Elijah the prophet (11:2-10); the Gentiles (11:11-15); the Patriarchs (11:16-24); and God Himself (11:25-36).

**I. GOD HAS NOT TOTALLY REJECTED ISRAEL (11:1-10) (Contd.)****A. EVIDENCE SUPPORTING THIS (11:1-6) (Contd.)****1. Paul himself (11:1)**

**11:1 - “I ask then: Did God reject his people? By no means! I am an Israelite myself, a descendant of Abraham, from the tribe of Benjamin.”**

**“Did God reject his people? By no means!”** - Twice before (3:3; 9:6) Paul made it clear that Israel’s disobedient unbelief had not cancelled out the promises of God as did other writers (Psalm 94:14; I Samuel 12:22). We can perish that thought before it entertains a dangerous conclusion (most likely based upon Gentile pride). We all need to be assured that God does not reject us – it is us who reject God.

**“I am an Israelite myself”** - For the third time in as many chapters (9:1;10:1;11:1), Paul uses himself to illustrate just how much God still loves the nation of Israel. Even though he was rejected by his own brothers (Acts 13:46) Paul was still willing to identify with his people. God is still willing to fulfill His Word through as many of them as will respond to His call.

Paul himself was a great example that God had not abandoned His people

**“from the tribe of Benjamin”** - We know for certain that Paul was a Benjamite (Philippians 3:5) but also that his parents cherished high ambitions for him by naming him Saul (Acts 9:1; later being changed by God to Paul - Acts 13:9 cf. Acts 13:21). The name **“Saul”** which in Hebrew means **“the longed for or the big one”** ) had to be changed to **“Paul”** which in Greek is **“Paulos”** which means **“the little”** in order for God to use him (II Corinthians 12:7-10).

**2. There is a remnant, just as in the days of Elijah (11:2-5a)**

**11:2 - “God did not reject his people, whom he foreknew. Don’t you know what the Scripture says in the passage about Elijah—how he appealed to God against Israel:”**

**“God did not reject his people, whom he foreknew”** - The word **“foreknew”** implies a previous purpose or plan. God, still now in the apostolic times, safeguards His purpose for His people. God doesn’t give up easily on people – even when they are dead wrong. Israel had stumbled but had not fallen in such a way that they could not rise again (Psalm 37:23,24).

**“Elijah—how he appealed to God against Israel”** - We often see the prophets of the Old Testament as men who delighted in bringing a message of judgement. We forget that they had a heart to see the nation turn back to God. They would cry out day and night and place their lives on the line for the sake of their people.

**I. GOD HAS NOT TOTALLY REJECTED ISRAEL (11:1-10) (Contd.)****A. EVIDENCE SUPPORTING THIS (11:1-6) (Contd.)****2. There is a remnant, just as in the days of Elijah (11:2-5a) (Contd.)**

**11:3 - “*Lord, they have killed your prophets and torn down your altars; I am the only one left, and they are trying to kill me?*”**

**“*Lord, they have killed your prophets and torn down your altars*”** - This is a reference to Elijah’s conversation with God after his victory on Mount Carmel (I Kings 19:14). The hope-filled victory on Mount Carmel (**“*fruitful [plentiful] field or place*”**) was followed by the hopeless pleading on Mount Horeb (**“*desolate*”**). Mount Carmel contained broken altars (I Kings 18:30) while at Horeb God’s voice was clearly heard (I Kings 19:13-18).

**“*I am the only one left*”** – How often have we felt alone while doing the will of God? Yet we must understand that even though unbelief is rampant that there will always be those found who are faithful toward God. There were thousands of faithful servants of God even during the apostate time of Ahab and Jezebel. We need eyes to see what God has in store for us (II Kings 6:16,17). Appearances are often not the reality of what is taking place.

**“*and they are trying to kill me?*”** - We have had more Christians martyred for their undeniable faith in God in the last century than in all the centuries combined since the time that Jesus Christ walked upon this earth. Elijah felt his life was doomed (I Kings 19:2-4).

**11:4 - “*And what was God’s answer to him? ‘I have reserved for myself seven thousand who have not bowed the knee to Baal.’*”**

**“*And what was God’s answer to him?*”** - God loves offering hope in a time when things appear hopeless (Hebrews 6:18,19).

**“*I have reserved for myself*”** - It is not only the US army that can call upon its reserve forces (I Kings 19:18) . We are in the army of the Lord and can be called upon at any time to engage in spiritual warfare.

**“*seven thousand who have not bowed the knee to Baal*”** - One would place themselves in great danger for not bowing down to Queen Jezebel’s idols. These men put their lives and that of their families on the line for what they believed.

Paul could identify with Elijah. Each had a heart for the salvation of Israel; each were confronted with Israel’s rejection and downfall. Yet each found a new hope in God’s preservation of His remnant.

## I. GOD HAS NOT TOTALLY REJECTED ISRAEL (11:1-10) (Contd.)

### A. EVIDENCE SUPPORTING THIS (11:1-6) (Contd.)

#### 3. A remnant according to grace, not works (11:5b-6)

11:5 - *“So too, at the present time there is a remnant chosen by grace.”*

*“there is a remnant chosen by grace”* - What a difference grace makes. Isn't it wonderful to know that if while living under the O.T. Law one can be chosen as a remnant, how much more significant and rewarding is it to be part of *“a remnant chosen by grace.”*

Our generation also has a group of disciples of Jesus who would be rightly called *“a remnant chosen by grace.”* Its wonderful to see that they are so many when you see just how dominate the spirit of this world has become. Yet we are an insignificant few compared to the vast number who are choosing to disregard God and his Word.

Paul referred to a remnant earlier in this book (9:27). The prophets often made reference to the remnant that chose to serve the LORD in spite of the fact that most of Israel were unfaithful toward God (Amos 9:8-15; Micah 2:12; 5:3; Zephaniah 3:12,13,20; Jeremiah 23:3). Isaiah had such a believing heart for the people that he named his son *“Shear-Jashub”* (Isaiah 7:3; 8:18) which means *“the Salvation of the Remnant”* or *“a remnant will return.”*

There has never been a time in the history of the nation of Israel that they all of the people were faithful toward God. It is more correct to say that they have not been a *“Chosen People”* but rather are *“called or chosen persons.”* God's relationship with us is always individualistic. Many are called but few are chosen.

“A man must give his own heart, make his own submission, surrender his own life to God. God does not call men in crowds; God has ‘His own secret stairway into every heart.’ A man is not saved because he is a member of a nation, or because he is a member of a family, or because he has inherited righteousness and salvation from his ancestors; he is saved because he has made an individual and personal decision of God.”

William Barclay  
*“The Letter to the Romans”*  
 The Saint Andrew Press  
 1972, p. 155-156

**I. GOD HAS NOT TOTALLY REJECTED ISRAEL (11:1-10) (Contd.)****A. EVIDENCE SUPPORTING THIS (11:1-6) (Contd.)****3. A remnant according to grace, not works (11:5b-6)**

**11:6 - “And if by grace, then it is no longer by works; if it were, grace would no longer be grace.”**

*“And if by grace, then it is no longer by works”* - It is vital that we don’t allow ourselves to creep back under a form of legalism based upon good works. Grace and works are two totally opposite principles within God’s Word (Acts 15:10,11; Galatians 2:15,16,21).

*“if it were, grace would no longer be grace”* - Grace will never be able to be fully exercised under the deceptive bondage of good works. It is either human works or God’s grace but never both. It is like being totally controlled by the devil or ourselves and Holy Spirit at the same time. Its impossible to do. They are so diverse from each other.

Grace demands that God be perfectly free to pour out His blessings on whomever He chooses to.

**B. BUT MANY HAVE BEEN HARDENED (11:7-10)****1. An "elect" have been saved, the rest were hardened (11:7)**

**11:7 - “What then? What Israel sought so earnestly it did not obtain, but the elect did. The others were hardened,”**

*“What Israel sought so earnestly it did not obtain”* - This *“Israel”* is speaking of the nation as a whole or those born into it by their natural heritage only. It is one thing to proclaim that we are something while it is another to live in such a way that it clearly shows itself.

*“but the elect did”* - Israel had a nation living within the nation. Those who were considered as the true Israel were often referred to as *“the elect.”* They were not elected in order to walk in obedience. They were “elected” because they already chose to walk in obedience.

*“The others were hardened”* - Some versions speak of them being *“blinded.”* But the word used here is *“porōsis”* which means *“to harden”* or *“to render insensitive.”*

It is a medical term which means *“a callus.”* A callus forms around a broken bone to help mend the break. A callus causes that part of the body to lose its feeling. It becomes insensitive to its surroundings. A callus can grow as easily upon our heart as it can upon our hand.



**I. GOD HAS NOT TOTALLY REJECTED ISRAEL (11:1-10) (Contd.)****B. BUT MANY HAVE BEEN HARDENED (11:7-10) (Contd.)****1. An "elect" have been saved, the rest were hardened (11:7) (Contd.)**

God did not create the hardness of their heart. He simply put the law of sowing and reaping into effect (Galatians 6:7,8). If we place our hand in a fire and get burned, we can blame God or the fire but really it is our own fault because this natural law is not to be broken without consequences. God will deal with both our neglect and our contempt for His Word.

Even though the national hardening of Israel is seen as temporary, nothing is mentioned of the individuals who choose to harden their hearts against God.

**2. This "hardening" foretold by Scriptures (11:8-10)**

**11:8** - *“as it is written: ‘God gave them a spirit of stupor, eyes so that they could not see and ears so that they could not hear, to this very day.’”*

*‘God gave them a spirit of stupor’* - When Paul refers to *“them”* he is speaking of the Israeli nation not about the remnant within the nation. There comes a time when people choose to walk in darkness and find that God allows them to follow their desires (Romans 1:21-32).

*“a spirit of stupor”* - This is a quote from Isaiah 29:10. The word for *“stupor”* is *“katanuxis”* which is very rarely used and literally means *“pricking”* or *“stinging.”* It refers to the numbing which is often associated with a sting or being stabbed or pricked by a thorn. There is a numbing on the outside while there is great pain on the inside

*“eyes so that they could not see and ears so that they could not hear”* - This reference to unseeing eyes and unhearing ears was used of Moses and Isaiah (Deuteronomy 29:4; Isaiah 6:9) and quoted by all of the gospel writers (Matthew 13:14f; Mark 4:12; Luke 8:10; John 12:40).

**11:9** - *“And David says: ‘May their table become a snare and a trap, a stumbling block and a retribution for them.’”*

*‘May their table become a snare and a trap’* - This was from an Imprecatory Psalm (See Psalm 69:22,23). David prayed for this to happen to his persecutors. Our table is a place where we go to get refreshed and to share fellowship with one another. Beware where you go to be refreshment. Many people have become entrapped in the areas of their strength.

The blessings that were directed toward Israel actually became their snare. They rested in a false hope. Instead of leading them to Christ, their religious practises led them away from Him.

**I. GOD HAS NOT TOTALLY REJECTED ISRAEL (11:1-10) (Contd.)****B. BUT MANY HAVE BEEN HARDENED (11:7-10) (Contd.)****2. This "hardening" foretold by Scriptures (11:8-10)(Contd.)**

“Their very religious practices and observances became substitutes for the real experience of salvation. Sad to say, this same mistake is made today when people depend on religious rituals and practices instead of trusting in the Christ who is pictured in these practices.”

Warren Wiersbe  
*“The Bible Exposition Commentary”*  
 Chariot Victor Publishing  
 1989, p. 551

**11:10 - “*May their eyes be darkened so they cannot see, and their backs be bent forever.*”**

**“*May their eyes be darkened so they cannot see*”** - People have often stumbled in darkness and struggled in weakness when they could have found rest for their souls. It is never God’s plan for men to walk in darkness but always to walk in the light of His Word.

**“*and their backs be bent forever*”** - The word translated **“alway or forever”** is not indefinite, but rather limited by the circumstances surrounding it. The Church of Jesus Christ should never believe that they have permanently displaced Israel. Gentiles should never attempt to appropriate to themselves all the blessings that were promised to only God’s chosen people.

“It is important to understand that the Old Testament promises to the Gentiles were linked to Israel’s ‘rise’ – her entering into kingdom. Prophecies like Isaiah 11 and Isaiah 60 make it clear that the Gentiles will share in Israel’s kingdom. But Israel did not ‘rise’; *she fell!* What would God then do with the Gentiles? God introduced a new factor – the church – in which believing Jews and Gentiles are one in Christ (Ephesians 2:11-22). In Ephesians 3, Paul called this new program ‘*the mystery*,’ meaning ‘*the sacred secret*’ that was not revealed in the Old Testament. Does this mean that God has abandoned His Kingdom program for Israel? Of course not! Israel is merely set aside until the time comes for God’s plans for Israel to be fulfilled.”

Warren Wiersbe  
*“The Bible Exposition Commentary”*  
 1989, p. 551

## II. HARDENING OF ISRAEL TO BENEFIT ISRAEL (11:11-32)

### A. THE JEWISH STUMBLING AND GENTILE CONNECTION (11:11-16)

#### 1. Salvation to the Gentiles an incentive for the Jews to repent (11:11-12)

**11:11 - “Again I ask: Did they stumble so as to fall beyond recovery? Not at all! Rather, because of their transgression, salvation has come to the Gentiles to make Israel envious.”**

*Did they stumble so as to fall beyond recovery?* - People can reach a stage of apostasy, but this is not the case for the remnant of Israel at this point in time. God still has a purpose and plan for this nation. We must perish all thoughts of Israel’s ruin being total (11:1-10) or final and permanent (11:11-32). It is best for Gentile believers to walk in humility while Israel begins once again to walk in hope that God will be true to His promises.

Paul knew that the Gentile Christians in Rome were bragging so he chose to curb this sinful pride in chapters 9-11. We as Gentiles have never and will never *replace* the Jews as God’s chosen people. These hardened Jews have not fallen into an irretrievable ruin.

The real question is not can the hardened within Israel be saved as much as can Israel as a whole nation be saved? When asking “*did they stumble?*” Yes they did because it refers to Israel’s rejection of Christ’s righteousness. But the word “*fall*” denotes a much more serious condition of an irretrievable spiritual ruin (Isaiah 24:20).

“*because of their transgression, salvation has come to the Gentiles to make Israel envious*” - The question needs to be asked, “Have we made Israel “*envious*” because of the way we have received and lived out the wonderful gift of salvation?” Some versions speak of Israel being “*provoked to jealousy.*” Would the average Jew enter our church service today and be “*provoked to jealousy*” or just simply provoked.

Israel was meant to believe the message of the gospel and become the missionaries of our world. They missed out on a great opportunity that will never be afforded to them again. All they will ever be able to successfully reach with the gospel is their own people. This should stand as a warning to Gentiles that there is always a price to pay for transgressing God’s known will..

This is Paul’s interpretation of the Song of Moses (Deuteronomy 32:21).

## II. HARDENING OF ISRAEL TO BENEFIT ISRAEL (11:11-32) (Contd.)

### A. THE JEWISH STUMBLING AND GENTILE CONNECTION (11:11-16) (Contd.)

#### 1. Salvation to the Gentiles an incentive for the Jews to repent (11:11-12) (Contd.)

**11:12** - *“But if their transgression means riches for the world, and their loss means riches for the Gentiles, how much greater riches will their fullness bring!”*

*“But if their transgression means riches for the world”* - As soon as Paul turned to the Gentiles (Acts 13:46,47) it brought the riches of heaven’s teaching to the entire Gentile world.

*“how much greater riches will their fullness bring!”* - If the Gentiles received such a wonderful gift of riches, then just consider what it will be like when those of the Jewish nation turn back to God. Their fallen ranks will be re-occupied.

This *“fulness”* is not so much quantitative (as in numerical growth) as it is qualitative (reaching its fulfilment or time of completion). The remnant of Israel will accept their Messiah during the time of the upcoming Great Tribulation (Revelation 14:1-5). The word *“fulness”* speaks of Israel’s future occupation of the huge arena of truth that they once vacated by their unbelief.

#### 2. This is one reason why Paul magnified his ministry to the Gentiles (11:13-16)

**11:13** - *“I am talking to you Gentiles. Inasmuch as I am the apostle to the Gentiles, I make much of my ministry”*

*“I am talking to you Gentiles”* - Paul wanted to make it clear that he was now speaking to the Gentiles. What we say and how we say things need to find adjustment (not from truth but from perspective) depending upon our audience.

*“I make much of my ministry”* - This phrase can become a real problem if misunderstood. The only reason for this comment is to show the Gentiles that the ministry afforded to them is not something to be considered as less significant. In fact, Paul felt that the more that his ministry excelled to the Gentiles, the more the opportunity was given to indirectly serve to bring back the Jewish people to God’s kingdom.

## II. HARDENING OF ISRAEL TO BENEFIT ISRAEL (11:11-32) (Contd.)

### A. THE JEWISH STUMBLING AND GENTILE CONNECTION (11:11-16) (Contd.)

#### 2. This is one reason why Paul magnified his ministry to the Gentiles (11:13-16) (Contd.)

**11:14** - *“in the hope that I may somehow arouse my own people to envy and save some of them.”*

*“in the hope that I may somehow arouse my own people to envy”* - Paul always had a heart for his people. Just because he physically turned away from them, he never turned his heart against them.

*“and save some of them”* - As sure as the celestial bodies continue to function in their orbits as God originally designed them to (Jeremiah 31:35-37), so will God continue to keep His promises to the nation of Israel who will listen to His divine call.

Paul realized his limitations. None of us has it altogether, but all of us together have it all.

**11:15** - *“For if their rejection is the reconciliation of the world, what will their acceptance be but life from the dead?”*

*“For if their rejection”* - The word for *“rejection”* means *“a throwing away”* or *“a loss.”* Many believe that Israel’s movement toward conversion will be the precursor to the return (parousia) of Christ.

*“is the reconciliation of the world”* - The word *“reconciliation”* refers to God’s act of bringing sinners into a peaceful relationship with Himself. This does not mean that all of the world will respond but it does mean that they will be given the opportunity and some will choose its benefits.

*“what will their acceptance be but life from the dead?”* - Israel will play a major part in the climactic end of salvation history. There is no indication in Scripture as to when this will begin to take place. We just know that it is still to take place. It is believed that their choosing to follow after God will incite many others to do the same.

## II. HARDENING OF ISRAEL TO BENEFIT ISRAEL (11:11-32) (Contd.)

### A. THE JEWISH STUMBLING AND GENTILE CONNECTION (11:11-16) (Contd.)

#### 2. This is one reason why Paul magnified his ministry to the Gentiles (11:13-16) (Contd.)

**11:16** - *“If the part of the dough offered as firstfruits is holy, then the whole batch is holy; if the root is holy, so are the branches.”*

*“If the part of the dough offered as firstfruits is holy”* - This is probably a reference to Numbers 15:17-21. There was a truth that every Jewish believer was taught. The first was that all food that was presented to God had to be made sacred. A portion of the prepared dough (firstfruits) had to be presented to God and then the whole remainder was considered as sacred before God without offering every individual loaf. The offering of the first part sanctified the whole. The word used for *“holy”* means to be *“consecrated to God”* (Deuteronomy 7:6; I Corinthians 7:14).

The same was true for planting a small sapling. Even though all of the branches were not yet developed, once the tree was offered to God to be used in sacred service, the branches that would eventually spring out from the tree would also be considered as sacredly dedicated to God. It was not necessary to dedicate every new branch.

This then symbolized the distinct benefit that Israel had been given with God. What Paul brings out is that neither the loaves or the newer branches could not be removed based upon their own choice. Those who chose to separate themselves from this privilege were allowed to do so. If they did they would lose their rights as well.

*“if the root is holy, so are the branches”* - This could be making reference to the Patriarchs as representing the roots (9:5; 11:28) while the Israelites of Paul’s day represented the branches. Through the Patriarch’s obedience to God’s Word, the nation was brought into a special relationship with God.

The remnant inherited this faith and belief from their forefathers. Each branch had to choose to stay with the root and receive its nourishment or break off and wither away and eventually be thrown into the fire.

## II. HARDENING OF ISRAEL TO BENEFIT ISRAEL (11:11-32) (Contd.)

### A. THE JEWISH STUMBLING AND GENTILE CONNECTION (11:11-16) (Contd.)

#### 2. This is one reason why Paul magnified his ministry to the Gentiles (11:13-16) (Contd.)

“There are three figures of speech relating to Israel

- (1) The “*fig tree*,” which speaks of Israel’s natural privilege (Matthew 24:32-34).
- (2) The “*vine*,” which speaks of Israel’s spiritual privilege (Isaiah 5:1-7; Matthew 21:33,34);
- (3) The “*olive tree*,” which speaks of Israel’s religious privilege (Romans 11:16; cf.. Judges 9:9; Zechariah 4:3).”

Charles A. Ratz  
 “*Outlined Studies in Romans*”  
 College Press, 1972, p. 141

### B. WORDS OF WARNING AGAINST GENTILE CONCEIT (11:17-24)

#### 1. Gentiles are but "wild branches" grafted in to the root (11:17-18)

**11:17** - *“If some of the branches have been broken off, and you, though a wild olive shoot, have been grafted in among the others and now share in the nourishing sap from the olive root,”*

*“If some of the branches have been broken off”* - This is referring to the original Jewish branches that found their place in the Olive tree after the time of the patriarchs.

*“though a wild olive shoot”* - The wild olive tree was notoriously unfruitful. So to, in the eyes of Biblical teaching, the Gentiles were seldom if ever seen in a good light - unfruitful in the ways of God. They were considered good only when they chose to follow (became engrafted into) the teaching of the Jews.

*“have been grafted in among the others”* - In a horticultural thought, this would seldom, if ever, be done. You would normally engraft a branch of a good Olive tree into one which was wild in order to enhance the wild tree.

## II. HARDENING OF ISRAEL TO BENEFIT ISRAEL (11:11-32) (Contd.)

### B. WORDS OF WARNING AGAINST GENTILE CONCEIT (11:17-24) (Contd.)

#### 1. Gentiles are but "wild branches" grafted in to the root (11:17-18) (Contd.)

There was a rare practice used to rejuvenate a decaying olive tree. Sir William Ramsay quotes Theobald Fisher saying that it was customary in Palestine years ago . . .

“to reinvigorate an Olive-tree which is ceasing to bear fruit, by grafting it with a shoot of the Wild-Olive, so that the sap of the tree ennobles this wild shoot and the tree now again begins to bear fruit.”

Sir William M. Ramsay  
*“The Olive Tree and the Wild Olive in  
 Paul and Other Studies in Early Christian History”  
 London, 1908, p. 223*

We as Gentiles have nothing to boast about in our past.

*“Remember that at that time you were separated  
 from Christ, excluded from citizenship in Israel and  
 foreigners to the covenants of the promise, without  
 hope and without God in the world.  
 13. But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far  
 away have been brought near through the blood of  
 Christ.”*

*Ephesians 2:12,13*

Gentiles are pictured as coming from the wilderness and deserts; taken from among wild briars. It is only by God’s grace (that doesn’t make any sense to our feeble minds) that God would even consider engrafting us into the richness and fertility originally offered only to the natural Olive tree. One blessed truth is that Gentile and Jew alike must get their source of life from the root system of the Olive tree. That root system was a gracious act of God toward the patriarchs who began the growth process by placing their faith in God and His revealed Word to them.

**“from the olive root”** - The **“olive root”** represents Abraham as their first covenant father (Romans 4:11,12; Galatians 3:16,29) while Israel represents the natural Olive tree before having any engrafting of wild shoots taking place. The Olive tree was the most cultivated fruit tree in the Mediterranean area.



## II. HARDENING OF ISRAEL TO BENEFIT ISRAEL (11:11-32) (Contd.)

### B. WORDS OF WARNING AGAINST GENTILE CONCEIT (11:17-24) (Contd.)

#### 1. Gentiles are but "wild branches" grafted in to the root (11:17-18) (Contd.)

**11:18** - *“do not boast over those branches. If you do, consider this: You do not support the root, but the root supports you.”*

*“do not boast over those branches”* - Paul has two main words to bring to our minds. The first is a warning not to *“boast”* or be in contempt of the natural branches.

*“You do not support the root, but the root supports you”* - We must beware of both boastful pride and arrogant superiority over others. We are to always walk humbly before the Lord as well as before the healthy branches and the decaying branches. This same type of argument is used of Isaiah (Isaiah 29:16; 45:9). Christianity sprung up out of the root of the Patriarchs who symbolise Judaism. That is why we say that we follow our roots from Judaic Christianity. Boasting essentially removes one from the vital link of the tree.

#### 2. As "broken branches" we can just as easily be displaced and replaced (11:19-24)

**11:19** - *“You will say then, ‘Branches were broken off so that I could be grafted in.’”*

*‘Branches were broken off so that I could be grafted in’* - A branch is never grafted into an area of a tree that is already producing through a healthy branch. It is rather added in the area that has a gap that needs to be filled in with a vibrant, fruitful branch.

**11:20** - *“Granted. But they were broken off because of unbelief, and you stand by faith. Do not be arrogant, but be afraid.”*

*“But they were broken off because of unbelief”* - This is just another way of saying that they lacked in their faith of God and His Word.

*“and you stand by faith”* - The only way to become engrafted into the tree is by faith (not works). We are saved by faith (Ephesians 2:8); sanctified (Acts 26:18); purified (Acts 15:9); live by faith (Galatians 2:20); stand by faith (Romans 11:20) and walk by faith (II Corinthians 5:7)

*“Do not be arrogant, but be afraid”* - It is important not only to have faith but also to practise that faith in a spirit of humility (cf. Romans 3:27 - 4:5). We must be very careful not to think too highly of ourselves (cf. - Romans 12:16; I Timothy 6:17). Every gift that God freely delivers into our hands is based upon His grace toward us.

## II. HARDENING OF ISRAEL TO BENEFIT ISRAEL (11:11-32) (Contd.)

### B. WORDS OF WARNING AGAINST GENTILE CONCEIT (11:17-24) (Contd.)

#### 2. As "broken branches" we can just as easily be displaced and replaced (11:19-24) (Contd.)

**11:21 - "For if God did not spare the natural branches, he will not spare you either."**

**"For if God did not spare the natural branches"** - Disobedience will always be dealt with by God's judgement. History proves that God dealt with Israel every single time they rebelled against the known will of God. Never was their sin overlooked.

**"he will not spare you either"** - It is a foolish thing to exchange faith in God for self-reliance. Jew and Gentile alike will suffer the same fate for walking in conceit of God's known will.

If the natural branches haven't escaped it would be foolish to think that we will be overlooked by God's keen eye of judgement. Even before the world began, God judged the angels who fell into the deceit sin of the devil as well as the pre-noahitic inhabitants and those of Sodom and Gomorrah (II Peter 2:4-10a).

**11:22 - "Consider therefore the kindness and sternness of God: sternness to those who fell, but kindness to you, provided that you continue in his kindness. Otherwise, you also will be cut off."**

**"Consider therefore the kindness and sternness of God"** - The second main word that Paul uses is the word "**kindness**." Seeing ourselves is one thing and seeing God is quite another. God is seen in three ways in this verse beginning with his "**kindness or goodness**" Secondly we see that God is "**stern**" (vs 23) and finally that "**God is able**" (vs 23).

**11:23 - "And if they do not persist in unbelief, they will be grafted in, for God is able to graft them in again."**

**"they will be grafted"** - Paul doesn't spend much time in the logic of horticulture because it is superseded by the *theologic* of God. We serve a God of miracles who "*gives life to the dead and calls things that are not as though they were*" (Romans 4:17).

**"for God is able to graft them in again"** - Its easier to graft back in the original part of the tree into the stock of the tree because it is much more akin to the tree than the wild shoots.

## II. HARDENING OF ISRAEL TO BENEFIT ISRAEL (11:11-32) (Contd.)

### B. WORDS OF WARNING AGAINST GENTILE CONCEIT (11:17-24) (Contd.)

#### 2. As "broken branches" we can just as easily be displaced and replaced (11:19-24) (Contd.)

**11:24** - *“After all, if you were cut out of an olive tree that is wild by nature, and contrary to nature were grafted into a cultivated olive tree, how much more readily will these, the natural branches, be grafted into their own olive tree!”*

*“if you were cut out of an olive tree that is wild by nature”* - This is once again a reference to the wild olive tree like we have already seen in vs 17.

*“and contrary to nature were grafted into a cultivated olive tree”* - This process was seldom (not never) followed in horticulture. The restoration of the Jews is much more probable than the reception of the Gentiles had been.

*how much more readily will these, the natural branches, be grafted into their own olive tree!”* - In spite of temporary unbelief and rejection of the known will of God, they will yet manifest the character that God intended for them. Their rightful relationship with God and His unchangeable purposes will yet be seen as the remnant of this nation fulfills its purpose.

It will seem so natural when the “Time of the Jews” begins as the “Time of the Gentiles” finishes.

“He is a foolish man who kicks away the ladder which raised him to the height which he has reached. It would be a foolish branch which cut itself off from its stem. The new faith grew from the old. The Jewish faith is the root from which Christianity grew. The consummation will only come when the wild olive and garden olive are altogether one, and when there are no branches at all left unengrafted on the parent stem.”

William Barclay  
*“The Letter to the Romans”*  
 The Saint Andrew Press  
 1972, p. 162

**II. HARDENING OF ISRAEL TO BENEFIT ISRAEL (11:11-32) (Contd.)****B. WORDS OF WARNING AGAINST GENTILE CONCEIT (11:17-24) (Contd.)****2. As "broken branches" we can just as easily be displaced and replaced (11:19-24) (Contd.)**

“It is worth noting that, according to Bible prophecy, the professing Gentile church will be “cut off” because of apostasy. First Timothy 4 and 2 Timothy 3, along with 2 Thessalonians 2, all indicate that the professing church in the last days will depart from the faith. *There is no hope for the apostate church, but there is hope for apostate Israel!* Why? Because of the roots of the olive tree. God will keep His promises to the patriarchs, but God will break of the Gentiles because of unbelief.

No matter how far Israel may stray from the truth of God, the roots are still good. God is still the ‘*God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob*’ (Exodus 3:6; Matthew 22:23). He will keep His promises to these patriarchs. This means that the olive tree will flourish again.”

Warren Wiersbe  
“*The Bible Exposition Commentary*”  
1989, p. 552

## II. HARDENING OF ISRAEL TO BENEFIT ISRAEL (11:11-32) (Contd.)

### C. THE HARDENING AND BLESSING OF ISRAEL (11:25-32)

#### 1. Hardening is partial, until the fulness of the Gentiles come in (11:25)

**11:25** - *“I do not want you to be ignorant of this mystery, brothers, so that you may not be conceited: Israel has experienced a hardening in part until the full number of the Gentiles has come in.”*

*“I do not want you to be ignorant of this mystery”* - This *“mystery”* is referring to the secret of how Christ would work out His plan of salvation for all of mankind which is now revealed. The church was an illustration of this *“mystery”* (Ephesians 3). This *“mystery”* was revealed through Paul studying the O.T. Scriptures in the light of the gospel but also through divine revelation (I Corinthians 15:51; Colossians 1:26f).

It is a mystery to us to see how God still has a plan of salvation for Israel in spite of their continual hardening of heart. It is because Israel’s hardening of heart is neither total nor final. God still has a future plan for this nation. It should never seem strange to us that Israel can be brought back to fellowship with God since they have had such a rich spiritual heritage.

What is more strange is that we as Gentiles, with our inheritance of pantheism, idolatry and atheism, could ever have received such an inheritance in the first place.

*“so that you may not be conceited”* - We must be careful about ever becoming wise in our own estimation of ourselves. Any feeling of ethnic pride or exclusiveness is out of place in the life of a Christian. The church in Rome and some Protestant churches still labour under this delusion that they will retain permanent supremacy over the religious world.

*“Israel has experienced a hardening in part”* - The *“hardening”* now found in the nation of Israel (in a measure, not in all of the nation) will continue only *until* the fulness of the time of the Gentiles takes place.

*“until the full number of the Gentiles has come in”* - There is both a fulness of the Jews (11:12) as well as the fulness of the Gentiles as seen in this verse. The speed in which the Gentile Church accomplishes God’s goal of a certain number of redeemed Gentiles will determine when the nation of Israel can begin its final stage in God’s plan of redemption.

*“The fulness of the Gentiles”* is not the same as *“the time of the Gentiles”* (Luke 21:24). The Gentile’s full number has to be brought in BEFORE the tribulation period begins, not during it. There is a sequence of events to take place. Not every Gentile will come to accept the Lord but only those that “shall come will come.” The same will be true of Israel.

## II. HARDENING OF ISRAEL TO BENEFIT ISRAEL (11:11-32) (Contd.)

### C. THE HARDENING AND BLESSING OF ISRAEL (11:25-32) (Contd.)

#### 2. In this way all Israel will be saved (11:26-27)

**11:26** - *“And so all Israel will be saved, as it is written: ‘The deliverer will come from Zion; he will turn godlessness away from Jacob.’”*

*“And so all Israel will be saved”* - This is the kind of verse that seems to stick out and grab a hold of your mind and emotions. It has the potential to be greatly misused by standing alone and not comparing it with other Scriptures. This is one of Paul’s way of specifying about how the natural branches will be once again engrafted into the tree.

*“all Israel”* - Notice that Paul wrote *“all Israel”* and not *“every Israelite.”* He is not attempting to say that every single person with an Israeli descent will be saved. But it is suggesting that the rejuvenation of Israel will be much more extensive and include more than just the remnant that remained faithful in the past. Every Israeli at this upcoming time will be given an opportunity to serve God. What a blessing to be afforded to them for this one last time.

*“will be saved”* - There is no new way for Israel to be saved. They must come by faith, confessing their sins, just as the Gentiles had to come (Romans 1:16,17; 10:9,10). Ethnic descent will never offer an opportunity to bypass the clear Biblical teachings of Soteriology.

*as it is written: ‘The deliverer will come from Zion; he will turn godlessness away from Jacob.’* - As Paul has done in previous arguments, he now turns to the Scriptures to substantiate his teaching (Isaiah 59:20-21; cf. Psalm 14:7; 110:2).

**11:27** - *“And this is my covenant with them when I take away their sins.”*

*“when I take away their sins”* - We find in both Isaiah 27 and Isaiah 59:20-60:7 that God will deliver Jacob from exile/sin and return these scattered people back to their own city. We also find from Jeremiah 31:31-34 that God’s covenant will be the basis of His forgiving the people of Israel for their iniquity and of no longer remembering their past sin.

This covenant was fulfilled at the first coming of Christ which allowed for the entrance, by faith, of both Jews and Gentiles (Galatians 3; Romans 4). Yet Paul now states that this same covenant awaits its final consummation that will affect Israel in particular.

Isaiah saw a day when Israel would take root, shoot forth, blossom and bring forth fruit (27:6) as well as return *“and worship the LORD on the holy mountain in Jerusalem”* (27:12,13). This will come to pass through forgiveness/atonement of sin (Isaiah 27:9; cf. Romans 3:21-26).

## II. HARDENING OF ISRAEL TO BENEFIT ISRAEL (11:11-32) (Contd.)

### C. THE HARDENING AND BLESSING OF ISRAEL (11:25-32) (Contd.)

#### 3. They may be enemies of the gospel, but they are beloved by God (11:28)

**11:28** - *“As far as the gospel is concerned, they are enemies on your account; but as far as election is concerned, they are loved on account of the patriarchs,”*

*“As far as the gospel is concerned, they are enemies on your account”* - If it wasn't for the estrangement of Israel from God, the Gentiles never would have been given a chance to receive the Gospel and become reconciled with God.

*“they are loved on account of the patriarchs”* - This is not because of anything the patriarchs had done to merit this kind of blessing. Both Galatians 3 and Romans 4 clearly show that it is all dependant upon God's gracious promises to the patriarchs and their offspring and because of God's fidelity to His Word (Deuteronomy 7:6).

#### 4. And they may obtain mercy just as the Gentiles did (11:29-32)

**11:29** - *“for God's gifts and his call are irrevocable.”*

*“for God's gifts”* - This verse needs to be interpreted in its context. This has nothing to do with spiritual gifts (charismata) in the sense of Gentile thinking such as speaking in tongues, prophesying, miracles etc. This refers to the spiritual gifts rather that God gave to the nation of Israel (9:4,5).

*“and his call”* - The calling of God mentioned here is once again a reference to God's choice of Abraham and his descendants as God's chosen and peculiar people. Many have used this verse to prove the fact that God will never take away His calling from us (i.e. - pastor etc). This is written for the sake of Jews not for Gentiles. The reason for Israel's special place in God's plan is because of God's faithfulness – definitely not because of Israel's faithfulness.

*“are irrevocable”* - This word is used only here and in II Corinthians 7:10 speaking of *“never to be regretted.”* They are based upon love that cannot be annulled by disobedience.

Paul began by defending God's Word against the assumption that the Jewish community had of obtaining an assured access into the grace of God (9:6b-29). He ends with a defence of Israel's special privileges based once again upon God's Word in striking opposition to the notion of Gentile superiority. God is incapable of revoking His Word.

## II. HARDENING OF ISRAEL TO BENEFIT ISRAEL (11:11-32) (Contd.)

### C. THE HARDENING AND BLESSING OF ISRAEL (11:25-32) (Contd.)

#### 4. And they may obtain mercy just as the Gentiles did (11:29-32) (Contd.)

**11:30** - *“Just as you who were at one time disobedient to God have now received mercy as a result of their disobedience,”*

These few verses show forth a number of comparisons and contrasts. In them is laid a map unveiling the antithesis of disobedience and mercy.

*“Just as you who were at one time disobedient to God”* - It’s so easy to get our eyes off of our own sin and place our attention upon others. It is a tactic often used to take the pressure off of needing to change for a while. Jesus was not fooled by these types of distractions (Matthew 7:1-5). When we judge ourselves, we are less likely to judge others.

*“have now received mercy as a result of their disobedience”* - Isn’t it better to see the good that can come out of past problems than continually focus on the problem itself? This is especially true when the ability to make any type of change is out of our hands. Paul already made it clear that through Israel’s *“trespass and rejection”* a way was made possible for the Gentiles to enter into the blessings of the covenant (11:12,15,17).

**11:31** - *“so they too have now become disobedient in order that they too may now receive mercy as a result of God’s mercy to you.”*

“God, so to speak, has locked up in the prison house of hopeless unbelief and sin all mankind, both Jews and Gentiles, that He might show toward all in their absolute hopelessness His free and unmerited grace. This does not mean that Jews and Gentiles are not responsible for their unbelief and sin which resulted in their helplessness and hopelessness; nor does it mean that ultimately every individual will be saved; nor yet that any individual is saved without faith.”

Charles R. Erdman  
*“The Epistles of Paul to the Romans”*  
 The Westminster Press; pp. 140-141



## II. HARDENING OF ISRAEL TO BENEFIT ISRAEL (11:11-32) (Contd.)

### C. THE HARDENING AND BLESSING OF ISRAEL (11:25-32) (Contd.)

#### 4. And they may obtain mercy just as the Gentiles did (11:29-32) (Contd.)

**11:32** - *“For God has bound all men over to disobedience so that he may have mercy on them all.”*

*“For God has bound all men over to disobedience”* - The word *“all”* in this verse refers to both Jew and Gentile. In some cases the word *“all”* means *“all without exception”* while in other verses it means *“all without distinction”* as it does in this verse.

*“so that he may have mercy on them all”* - God’s goal in highlighting the fact that we have been disobedient and worthy of eternal damnation is not to punish us but to offer us one last chance to acknowledge His gift of salvation and therefore, escape an everlasting doom.

We as Gentiles have our opportunity until “the fulness of our time” is reached which will then usher in the time for the nation of Israel to repent and receive salvation from God.

## III. PAUL'S HYMN OF PRAISE TO GOD (11:33-36)

**11:33** - *“Oh, the depth of the riches of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable his judgments, and his paths beyond tracing out!”*

*“Oh, the depth of the riches of the wisdom and knowledge of God!”* - At this point, Paul is overtaken by a grateful heart toward the grace of our Lord. This is a state that more of us should find ourselves in. Good theology leads to inspiring doxology. The more we study God’s Word, the more we should want to praise and exalt His name.

The word *“depth”* refers to God’s inexhaustible fullness rather than His unfathomable mystery. It is in reference to the divine attributes of God. There is a depth to divine wealth, wisdom and knowledge.

*“How unsearchable his judgments, and his paths beyond tracing out!”* - Some of Paul’s arguments may still seem unconvincing. Yet we must agree that when it comes to salvation for either the Jew or the Gentile that neither gained it through their own merit. It was rather a gracious gift awarded by a merciful and loving God toward and undeserving people.

### III. PAUL'S HYMN OF PRAISE TO GOD (11:33-36) (Contd.)

#### 11:34 - *“Who has known the mind of the Lord? Or who has been his counselor?”*

Here we find the reversal of knowledge, wisdom and wealth of God expanded upon.

*“Who has known the mind of the Lord?”* - There comes a time when even what we believe we can fathom with our feeble minds still doesn't entirely make sense. It seems that God sometimes saves men against their own will. Yet this should not surprise us because even against the teaching of some we do find that God does choose to place His will over ours ( i.e. - Jonah).

*“Or who has been his counselor?”* - No one can tell God that He is wrong to save a special place in His heart for the nation of Israel. Neither can we say that God is wrong to offer us as Gentiles the opportunity to receive the same blessings as Israel has for a specified time period. God has no confidant because He has no need of one.

#### 11:35 - *“Who has ever given to God, that God should repay him?”*

He paid a debt He did not owe  
I owed a debt, I could not pay,  
I needed someone to wash my sins away  
And now I sing a brand new song, Amazing Grace  
Christ Jesus paid the debt that I could never pay

David S. Winkler

#### 11:36 - *“For from him and through him and to him are all things. To him be the glory forever! Amen.”*

*“For from him and through him and to him are all things”* - At the end of it all we can see the hand of God because it is His purpose that is served. His purpose is focussed around salvation not of destruction.

God is the source (**from Him**), the means (**through Him**) and the destination (**to Him**) of all things.

Paul concludes this chapter after summoning five different witnesses to support his beliefs. The conclusion is very clear. Israel has a wonderful future ahead of them. After Israel's *“fall”* will come its *“fulness.”* When Jesus Christ returns to sit on the throne of David He will bring *reconciliation* to His chosen people in such a way that it will appear like a *resurrection*.

**SUMMARY**

Paul concluded chapter ten with a quotation from Isaiah describing the nation of Israel as "a disobedient and contrary people." Paul begins chapter eleven by giving several examples to show that despite this rebellion God has not totally rejected His people (1-6).

What God has done, however, is harden the hearts of the rebellious Israelites (7-10). But the outcome of this "hardening" led to salvation coming to the Gentiles, which in turn God was using to provoke Israel to jealousy in an attempt to win them back to Him. This is also why Paul magnified his ministry to the Gentiles, hoping to save some of his countrymen by provoking them to jealousy (11-15).

Paul then directs his attention to the Gentile believers, explaining that their obedience allowed them to be "grafted" into Israel to replace those removed by their own disobedience. This "grafting," however, is permanent only as long as they remain faithful. In addition, if any Israelites repent of their unbelief, they too can be grafted back in (16-24).

As Paul draws to a conclusion, he explains that this is how "all Israel" will be saved. Through a "hardening in part" mercy can now be shown to the Gentiles, and by showing mercy to the Gentiles mercy will be available to disobedient Israel. In this way Paul can say that "God has committed them all to disobedience, that He might have mercy on all," proving that God is no respecter of persons and makes His plan of salvation available to all (25-32).

Paul ends this section with a doxology praising the wisdom and knowledge of God (33-36).

**WORDS TO PONDER**

*"so all Israel will be saved"* - in this manner will true Israel be saved

**REVIEW QUESTIONS FOR THE CHAPTER**

- 1) List the main points of this chapter
  - God Has Not Totally Rejected Israel (1-10)
  - Hardening of Israel to Benefit Israel (11-32)
  - Paul's Hymn of Praise to God (33-36)
- 2) What example does Paul use to show that God has not totally rejected Israel? (1)
  - Paul uses himself
- 3) Why did God harden the rebellious Jews? (11-12)
  - So salvation might be presented to the Gentiles
- 4) Why was salvation allowed to come to the Gentiles? (11-14)
  - To provoke the rebellious Jews to jealousy that they might repent
- 5) What condition is necessary to remain in the "tree of Israel"? (20-23)
  - Continuing in faith
- 6) How will "all Israel" be saved? (25-26)
  - By a partial hardening of Israel, to allow Gentiles to come in and to provoke rebellious Jews to repent
- 7) What is Paul's summary on God's dealings with Israel? (32)
  - *"God has committed them all to disobedience, that He might have mercy on all"*

**"THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS"**

**Chapter Twelve**

**OBJECTIVES IN STUDYING THIS CHAPTER**

- 1) To see the difference between conformation and transformation, understanding the process involved in being transformed
- 2) To appreciate the diversity of service in the Body of Christ

**OUTLINE**

**I. AN APPEAL TO CONSECRATION (12:1-2)**

**A. PRESENT YOUR BODIES AS LIVING SACRIFICES (12:1)**

1. In view of the mercies of God (12:1a)
2. Which is your reasonable ("spiritual" NAS, NIV) service (12:1b)

**B. BE TRANSFORMED, NOT CONFORMED TO THE WORLD (12:2)**

1. By the renewing of your mind (12:2a)
2. To prove the good, acceptable, and perfect will God (12:2b)

**II. SERVE GOD AS MEMBERS OF ONE BODY (12:3-8)**

**A. WITH HUMILITY (12:3)**

1. In all seriousness (12:3a)
2. For what we are comes from God (12:3b)

**B. WITH APPRECIATION FOR DIVERSITY (12:4-5)**

1. Members do not have the same function (4)
2. But we are one, members of one another (5)

**C. WITH ZEAL, NO MATTER WHAT OUR GIFTS (12:6-8)**

**III. MISCELLANEOUS EXHORTATIONS (12:9-21)**

**A. AS CHRISTIANS (12:9-16)**

1. Concerning love, good and evil (12:9)
2. Loving and honouring brethren (12:10)
3. Fervent in our service (12:11)
4. Rejoicing, patient, prayerful (12:12)
5. Caring for saints (12:13)
6. Blessing our enemies (12:14)
7. Sharing joys and sorrows (12:15)
8. Humble in our relations together (12:16)

**B. RESPONDING TO EVIL (12:17-21)**

1. Do not repay with evil, be mindful of what is good (12:17)
2. If possible, be at peace (12:18)
3. Give place to the wrath of God (12:19)
4. Overcome evil by responding with good (12:20-21)

**I. AN APPEAL TO CONSECRATION (12:1-2)****A. PRESENT YOUR BODIES AS LIVING SACRIFICES (12:1)**

As in all of Paul's letters, he begins with clear teachings on doctrine and then moves into a practical living. What we believe eventually determines how we will behave. If we have a right relationship with God, then we will have a right relationship with those whom God brings into our lives (I John 4:20).

It is imperative for Christians to first of all believe correctly before they will behave correctly (John 13:17). Our minds must act upon something in order for our hearts to treasure something. The right foundation for Christian duty is Christian doctrine. Character is determined by creed. Christianity is a very practical way of living. The parallels between Romans 12:3 - 13:14 and the Sermon on the Mount are very impressive.

Three main parts are covered in this book. One must first be saved from sin (**The Doctrinal Section 1-8**) and then recognize the blessing of being justified (**The Dispensational Section 9-11**) before we will live in accordance with the will of God (**The Devotional Section 12-16**). Zeal without knowledge is wrong (10:2) but so is knowledge without the correct corresponding conduct.

This Epistle may be divided in three divisions as follows.

- (1) Faith - The Plan of Salvation – Doctrinal – Chapters 1-8
- (2) Hope - The Hope of Israel – Dispensational - Chapters 9-11
- (3) Love - Exhortation to Godliness – Devotional - Chapters 12-16

There are three divisions in 12<sup>th</sup> chapter:

- (1) The Christian Attitude Toward God - Consecration (vv. 1-2)
- (2) The Christian Attitude Towards Fellow-men - Consideration (vv. 3-13)
- (3) The Christian Attitude Towards Enemies - Transfiguration (vv. 14-21)

Charles A. Ratz  
*“Outlined Studies in Romans”*  
 College Press, 1948, p. 148

## I. AN APPEAL TO CONSECRATION (12:1-2) (Contd.)

### A. PRESENT YOUR BODIES AS LIVING SACRIFICES (12:1) (Contd.)

#### 1. In view of the mercies of God (12:1a)

**12:1** - *“Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God’s mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God—this is your spiritual act of worship.”*

*“Therefore”* - The word *“therefore”* links what is to be said with everything that has been written thus far. We have already had the *“therefore”* of condemnation (3:20); the *“therefore”* of justification (5:1); the *“therefore”* of assurance (8:1); and now the *“therefore”* of dedication (12:1).

*“I urge you, brothers”* - The word used to translate *“urge you or beseech you”* is *“parakaleō”*. The word lies somewhere between a request and a command. It is really an exhortation that comes with authority. This authority is because a preacher is a mediator of God’s truth not some authority given from a superior as a command (II Corinthians 5:20).

It is clear that Paul expects Christians to live in a manner that is different from non-Christians. Yet he does not command proper living – he graciously sets it as an expectation. Moses commanded the people while the apostle Paul exhorted or beseeched the brethren. The Christian life is one of participation not imitation.

*“in view of God’s mercy”* -

“We do not serve God to win his favor but because we have received his favor we serve him in gratitude and love.”

Charles R. Erdman  
*“The Epistle of Paul to the Romans”*  
The Westminster Press, 1966, p. 143

Once again it needs to be emphasized that it is God’s mercies and not His power or authority that is used as an incentive for change.

*“to offer your bodies”*- The word *“offer”* or *“present - KJV”* brings a picture of the Old Testament priest offering a sacrifice upon the altar. The word is a term used in the temple meaning *“to dedicate.”* The word *“offer or present”* means to *“present once and for all.”* It is like a bride and groom who make a dedication to each other that will determine what they do with their bodies for the rest of their lives.



**I. AN APPEAL TO CONSECRATION (12:1-2) (Contd.)****A. PRESENT YOUR BODIES AS LIVING SACRIFICES (12:1) (Contd.)****1. In view of the mercies of God (12:1a) (Contd.)**

It is also often translated with the word **“yield.”** It is voluntary (Romans 6:13). As a Christian, our body is God’s temple (I Corinthians 6:19-20) because God’s Spirit dwells within us (Romans 8:9).

The word **“bodies”** once again brings one’s mind back to the Levitical sacrifices.

**“as living sacrifices”** - The New Covenant required a New Sacrifice. This does not simply mean a life of hardship, persecution and pain. We are simply to live our lives on behalf of others. We work **“from salvation”** not **“for salvation.”** The New Testament believer is to offer a **“living sacrifice.”** We are to be alive before and after the sacrifice is made. There were only two living sacrifices in the Bible. The first was Isaac (Genesis 22) while the second was Jesus Christ.

**“holy and pleasing to God”** - This sacrifice is to be **“holy”** or **“consecrated to God.”** It must be separated from sin and also separated unto the service of God.

**2. Which is your reasonable (“spiritual” NAS, NIV) service (12:1b)**

**“this is your spiritual act of worship”** - This is not to be likened to some outward service as seen in the temple but rather an inward homage or journey of living faith.

Some versions talk about one’s **“reasonable service.”** It is reasonable, rational and logical to offer our bodies (spirit, soul and body) to God. It is an act of our mind or reason.

**B. BE TRANSFORMED, NOT CONFORMED TO THE WORLD (12:2)****1. By the renewing of your mind (12:2a)**

**12:2 - “Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God’s will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will.”**

**“Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world”** - The act mentioned in the previous verse must now be followed by an activity. The gift of self must issue forth a life of service.

**I. AN APPEAL TO CONSECRATION (12:1-2) (Contd.)****B. BE TRANSFORMED, NOT CONFORMED TO THE WORLD (12:2) (Contd.)****1. By the renewing of your mind (12:2a) (Contd.)**

The word “*conform*” means “*fashioned*” as referenced to an outward mould. It comes from the Greek root word “*schēna*.” You may remember that Jesus took on the “*schema (fashion) of man*” (Philippians 2:8). We are to be careful what we allow to fashion our intellect, emotion and will (I Peter 1:14). We must be careful not to allow the devil to rope us into his scheme of things (John 14:30; I Corinthians 1:20; Galatians 1:4; Ephesians 2:2).

The “*schēna*” or outward form will vary from day to day and year by year. We change our “*schēna*” as we get older or even when we dress up and go out (hairdo, makeup, clothing etc.). It is constantly altering. So we are not to alter our life according to our surrounding much like a chameleon (which takes its colour from its environment).

Even though we temporarily belong to “*this age or world*” we can still live as heirs of the world to come (II Corinthians 5:17) – the age of renewal and resurrection.

“Unless we are particularly careful we find ourselves influenced by and fashioned like the world and given up to its spirit and life.”

Rev. W. H. Griffith Thomas D.D.  
 “*St. Paul’s Epistle to the Romans*”  
 Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company  
 1956, p. 326

“*but be transformed*” - The best way to explain the word “*transform - (Greek “metamorphoō”)*” is by seeing how it used in others scriptures (Matthew 17:17:2; Mark 11:2; II Corinthians 3:18). It is therefore a transformation from one level of glory to another. It is a transformation from the inside out. It is a continuous transformation (present tense).

So instead of constantly changing to adapt to our surroundings, we should remain true to the very essence of our being. A non Christian lives a life that is dominated by their human nature (kata sarka) while a Christian is dominated by Christ (kata Christon) and the Holy Spirit (kata pneuma).

**I. AN APPEAL TO CONSECRATION (12:1-2) (Contd.)****B. BE TRANSFORMED, NOT CONFORMED TO THE WORLD (12:2) (Contd.)****1. By the renewing of your mind (12:2a) (Contd.)**

***“by the renewing of your mind”*** - The word that Paul uses for ***“renewing”*** is ***“anakainōsis.”*** It is important to know this because there are two words used for the English word ***“new”*** which are ***“neos”*** and ***“kainos.”*** The word ***“neos”*** refers to something that is ***“new in time”*** while the word ***“kainos”*** means ***“new in point of character and nature.”*** A new pencil is ***“neos”*** while and new convert to Christ is made new as in ***“kainos.”*** Our minds need to be made new from the inside out not just at a point in time.

The Holy Spirit must be allowed to continually work in the realm of our intellect which affects our moral knowledge and thought patterns. Sin has injured and disturbed our minds. It leads to self-centred thoughts and emotions and can direct our will into the wrong direction. Only the Holy Spirit can properly renew this part of our mental and moral perception. The world wants to control our mind while God wants to transform our mind (practical reason and moral consciousness). This is a lifelong process.

“Many people think they can control their will by ‘willpower,’ but usually they fail. (This was Paul’s experience as recorded in Romans 7:15-21). It is only when we yield our will to God that His power can take over and give us the willpower (and the won’t power!) that we need to be victorious Christians.”

Warren W. Wiersbe  
*“The Bible Exposition Commentary”*  
Volume 1, p. 554

**2. To prove the good, acceptable, and perfect will God (12:2b)**

***“Then you will be able to test and approve what God’s will is”*** - The word for ***“test”*** or ***“prove”*** is a word used to test metal by fire in order to see how it bear up under pressure (Philippians 1:10). To ***“approve”*** means to understand and agree with God’s will with the view of putting it into practise.

***“his good, pleasing and perfect will”*** - The outcome of holy living is transformation – not growth but transformation. Growth indicates progress while transformation indicates change. Our Lord grew but never needed to be transformed. He was already in the perfect will of God. We need to be transformed during our growth process.

## II. SERVE GOD AS MEMBERS OF ONE BODY (12:3-8)

### A. WITH HUMILITY (12:3)

“Understanding that Christians belong to one another in one body and have in common the same grace of God (v. 5) and faith (vv.3, 6) will help to stifle exaggerated ideas about one’s own status or ministry. And recognition of the significant contribution made by each member of the body of Christ will prevent one from thinking too highly (or too lowly) of him - or herself.”

Douglas Moo  
*“The Epistle to the Romans”*  
 William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company  
 1996, pp. 632

**12:3 - “For by the grace given me I say to every one of you: Do not think of yourself more highly than you ought, but rather think of yourself with sober judgment, in accordance with the measure of faith God has given you.”**

#### 1. In all seriousness (12:3a)

*“For by the grace given me I say to every one of you”* - Paul is speaking as one who has been given authority based upon the grace of God that called him to be an apostle. It is through graceful humility that one protects oneself from lording over others (I Peter 5:1-3).

*“Do not think of yourself more highly than you ought”* - One of the first important manifestations of the transformation spoken of in verse 2 comes in the form of humility. A true test of the transformation is seen in our humble relationship with each other in stark contrast to self-exaltation and pride. This is vital because one member in the body can disturb the whole body when this exhortation is not carefully applied. God does not simply want His Church to exist but rather to function in a healthy manner.

We belong to each other in one body, having received the same grace (vs. 5) as well as the same faith (vv. 3,6). This should stifle any harmful exaggeration about one’s status or ministry. An honest assessment of ourselves without conceit or false modesty is vital for a balanced Christian life. The injurious tendencies to either overrate or undervalue are both quite harmful to the body of Christ.

After dealing with a right relationship with God (vs 1,2) comes a right relationship with our fellow-believers. Spiritual growth should always lead to unity. It comes about through humility (seen in unity, diversity and harmony) which is a direct effect of our consecration toward God.

## II. SERVE GOD AS MEMBERS OF ONE BODY (12:3-8) (Contd.)

### A. WITH HUMILITY (12:3) (Contd.)

#### 2. For what we are comes from God (12:3b)

*“but rather think of yourself with sober judgment, in accordance with the measure of faith God has given you”* - We can keep ourselves from many dangerous traps by first of all knowing ourselves. This takes an honest assessment without conceit or false modesty. Secondly, we need to accept ourselves even if our contribution to the body is unseen or unknown and without praise or prominence. Thirdly, we need to recognize that our gift(s) (charismata) come from God as He chooses to distribute them – not based upon merit or reward. Fourthly, one must recognize that this gift is given as a privilege to be used as a contribution for the common good of the Church.

Our faith is the measuring tool. Many scholars believe that God has given an equal measure of faith to each and every believer. How we exercise that faith is up to us and is the true measure of what we have received. This equality of faith should keep us from boasting when exercising our God-given gifts as well.

### B. WITH APPRECIATION FOR DIVERSITY (12:4-5)

#### 1. Members do not have the same function (4)

**12:4 - “Just as each of us has one body with many members, and these members do not all have the same function,**

*“Just as each of us has one body with many members”* - As we clearly see in God’s creation in the natural realm so it is true in the spiritual realm that God has created diversity not conformity as the rule. Paul once again (i.e., - I Corinthians 12:12-27) uses the figure of a human body to illustrate his point. In a healthy body each part functions harmoniously and yet interdependently so also is the case in the spiritual body of Christ known as the Church.

#### 2. But we are one, members of one another (5)

**12:5 - “so in Christ we who are many form one body, and each member belongs to all the others.”**

*“so in Christ we who are many form one body”* - This whole teaching is further developed in the books of Ephesians and Colossians. In these Epistles, the Church, as the body is unable to be detached from its Head (that is Christ) and survive.

Our oneness in Christ extends beyond our local churches to encompass all Christians.

## II. SERVE GOD AS MEMBERS OF ONE BODY (12:3-8) (Contd.)

### C. WITH ZEAL, NO MATTER WHAT OUR GIFTS (12:6-8)

**12:6** - *“We have different gifts, according to the grace given us. If a man’s gift is prophesying, let him use it in proportion to his faith.”*

*“We have different gifts, according to the grace given us”* - A second safeguard against a boastful pride is the fact that no one in the Church has been given every gift in order to function alone. These gifts were given by God to the Roman church without Paul’s help. Every gift is given in order to benefit the body of Christ not for mutual gratification nor for producing hollow vanity.

“Spiritual gifts are tools to build with, not toys to play with or weapons to fight with. In the church at Corinth, the believers were tearing down the ministry because they were abusing the spiritual gifts. They were using their gifts as ends in themselves and not as a means toward the end of building up the church. They so emphasized their spiritual gifts that they lost their spiritual graces! They had the gifts of the Spirit but they were lacking in the fruit of the spirit — love, joy, peace, etc. (Galatians 5:22-23).”

Warren W. Wiersbe  
*“The Bible Exposition Commentary”*  
 Volume 1, p. 555

The word used of *“gifts”* is *“charismata”* which is given by God which we cannot attain to or acquire by ourselves. The following seven gifts are found in groups of four and three each.

*“If a man’s gift is prophesying, let him use it in proportion to his faith”* - The gift of prophesying takes place when one utters God’s will under the direct impulse of the Spirit. It is not so much *“foretelling”* as it is *“forthtelling”* the word of God. This prophesy is spoken forth with authority of one who knows the God who initiated it. This utterance is never on par with the Word of God. This prophecy is to be scrutinized by other prophets (I Corinthians 14:29-32).

“We do not have new revelations of truth. The foundation has been laid and cannot be twice laid . . .

Charles A. Ratz  
*“Outlined Studies in Romans”*  
 College Press, 1948, p. 151

## II. SERVE GOD AS MEMBERS OF ONE BODY (12:3-8) (Contd.)

### C. WITH ZEAL, NO MATTER WHAT OUR GIFTS (12:6-8) (Contd.)

**12:7 - “If it is serving, let him serve; if it is teaching, let him teach;”**

**“If it is serving, let him serve”** - Some versions use the word **“ministry.”** This is the gift of practical service (**“diakonia”** from **“daik”** meaning **“to wait on tables.”**). Some may never have the privilege of proclaiming the gospel in a public forum, yet we can all show forth God’s love in practical service to others in need. It is service to others in the name and the glory of God.

**“if it is teaching, let him teach”** - This specific teaching is in reference to spiritual truths. It enables one to clearly set forth the fundamental truths that are found in Scripture (II Timothy 3:10, 16; 4:3). God’s Word needs to not only be proclaimed but also explained. Exhortation and invitation without explanation often creates contamination.

**12:8 - “if it is encouraging, let him encourage; if it is contributing to the needs of others, let him give generously; if it is leadership, let him govern diligently; if it is showing mercy, let him do it cheerfully.”**

**“if it is encouraging, let him encourage”** - We all know the rich value of having someone who can lift up our soul with a word of encouragement. Teaching addresses one’s mind while the encourager ministers to our emotion and will. This exhortation encourages one to live out the truth of the gospel message.

**“if it is contributing to the needs of others, let him give generously”** - This special gift of liberality places one in a position of sincere unselfishness toward those who are in real need. This individual gives without hesitation and not avoiding to give based upon false excuses. They also don’t pry into the circumstances or attempt to offer a moral lesson in a note of criticism. These people simply delight in the sheer pleasure of giving for giving’s sake.

**“if it is leadership”** - This kind of leadership is due to the fact that the Holy Spirit has raised them up. It can be seen in the office of the elders/deacons (I Thessalonians 5:12; I Timothy 3:4,12; 5:17; Acts 20:17-28).

**“if it is showing mercy, let him do it cheerfully”** - This kind of sympathy makes the heart of the receiver glad (lit. - hilarious). It is a rich blessing beyond explanation to have one in the body of Christ who offers a spirit of cheerfulness and joyfulness to everyone. It can be done by visiting the sick, caring for the elderly and disabled and providing for the poor etc.

We must be careful about extending forgiveness with a note of insulting criticism and contempt. Remember what George Whitefield said as he saw a criminal going to the gallows - **“There but for the grace of God, go I.”**

### III. MISCELLANEOUS EXHORTATIONS (12:9-21)

#### A. AS CHRISTIANS (12:9-16)

One commentator titles this section “*Maxims to Guide the Christian Life.*” It is quite common in both Greek and Jewish writings to string together these types of admonitions of a general ethical content. It is most likely that these ethical issues were needing to be addressed in the Roman church because other equally important issues were not addressed. Lets look more closely at these ten admonitions so that we do not exercise our spiritual gifts in an unspiritual manner – that is without love, humility and kindness.

##### 1. Concerning love, good and evil (12:9)

**12:9** - “*Love must be sincere. Hate what is evil; cling to what is good.*”

“*Love must be sincere*” - This kind of “*sincere*” love must be free from hypocrisy, play-acting (lit - “*without a mask*”) and not given with ulterior motives. It is not given with an expectation of receiving something in return.

“*Hate what is evil; cling to what is good*” - The word used for “*hate*” or “*abhor*” is only used here in Biblical Greek and is a strong word meaning “*to hate exceedingly.*” We must hate evil itself and not just the consequences of evil. Carlyle once wrote that we need to see the infinite beauty of holiness and the infinite damnability of sin. The word for “*cling*” is a marriage term that refers to “*the intimate union of a husband and wife.*”

##### 2. Loving and honouring brethren (12:10)

**12:10** - “*Be devoted to one another in brotherly love. Honor one another above yourselves.*”

“*Be devoted to one another in brotherly love*” - Both words “*devoted*” and “*brotherly love*” come from the same root word “*philo*” which refers to brotherly relationships. Yet the word that Paul uses (which is “*philostorgos*”) goes even further to include “*storge*” which is the Greek word for “*family love.*” We are not simply acquaintances or even just friends but rather a family in God.

“*Honor one another above yourselves*” - The word for “*above*” means to “*go before*” in the sense that one leads to show someone else the way. Some suggest that it is another way of saying that we should surpass one another in showing honour. Much of the church’s problems centres around privileges, places and prestige.



### III. MISCELLANEOUS EXHORTATIONS (12:9-21) (Contd.)

#### A. AS CHRISTIANS (12:9-16) (Contd.)

#### 3. Fervent in our service (12:11)

**12:11** - *“Never be lacking in zeal, but keep your spiritual fervor, serving the Lord.”*

*“Never be lacking in zeal”* - The word *“zeal”* creates the image of *“being set on fire”* for God. Spiritual enthusiasm should always lead to humble service to the Lord’s work.

“The Christian cannot take things in an easy-going way, for to him life is always a choice between life and death; the world is always a battle-ground between good and evil; the time is short; and life is a preparation ground for eternity. The Christian may burn out, but he cannot rust out.”

William Barclay  
*“The Letter to the Romans”*  
The Saint Andrew Press  
1972, p. 178

*“but keep your spiritual fervor”* - We must constantly be on our guard not to become complacent in our pursuit of living a life which is pleasing to God. One writer translates this to say *“to keep our spirit at our boiling point”* (cf. - Revelation 3:15,16).

*“serving the Lord”* - We can open up opportunity for abuse anytime we encourage someone to have *“zeal”* and *“spiritual fervour.”* Therefore, there is a balance required in all we do.

This verse can be translated in two different ways. It is either *“serve the Lord”* or *“serve the time.”* Scribes would often abbreviate common words by removing the vowels. The Greek word for *“Lord”* is *“kurios”* while the word for *“time”* is *“karios.”* When either are short formed we end up with *“krs.”* Paul is probably saying that we should seize every opportunity (of time) that we have been granted to serve the Lord.

There are at least three things in life that never return to us - a spent arrow, a spoken word and a lost opportunity.

### III. MISCELLANEOUS EXHORTATIONS (12:9-21) (Contd.)

#### A. AS CHRISTIANS (12:9-16) (Contd.)

#### 4. Rejoicing, patient, prayerful (12:12)

**12:12 - “*Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer.*”**

**“*Be joyful in hope*”** - There are no hopeless situations in life; there are only hopeless men who have grown hopeless about them. Hope, endurance and prayer are common partners in our walk of faith. Hope rests in the future while affliction is born in the past. Any walk of hope will be strewn with a variety of tribulations that will attempt to destroy our future.

**“*patient in affliction*”** - What is more valuable - to rejoice with those who rejoice or to weep with those who weep? There are few things that bring us together than the bond of sorrow.

**“*faithful in prayer*”** - Persistent prayer is vitally needed to safeguard against the dangerous trap of losing hope during times of affliction. The church owes much to Stephen for his prayer (Acts 7:60) that eventually broke Pauls’ heart and brought him to his knees.

#### 5. Caring for saints (12:13)

**12:13 - “*Share with God’s people who are in need. Practice hospitality.*”**

**“*Share with God’s people who are in need*”** - The needs that are spoken of here would include food, clothing and shelter. We not only need the right attitude; we need the right actions also.

**“*Practice hospitality*”** - Due to the fact that there were few hotels or motels in the NT world, it meant that this was a great need (cf. - I Timothy 3:2; Titus 1:8; Hebrews 13:2; I Peter 4:9). What added to the problem was the many missionaries and Christian workers who travelled from place to place requiring proper accommodation.

#### 6. Blessing our enemies (12:14)

**12:14 - “*Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse.*”**

**“*Bless those who persecute you*”** - When we bless those who are persecuting us we are invoking God’s favour upon them. It takes a great deal of grace and mercy to have this kind of single-mindedness and loving attitude in this kind of extreme case. This parallels the teaching of Jesus (Matthew 5:44; Luke 6:27-28). This type of command was unprecedented in both the Jewish and Greek world of the day.

**III. MISCELLANEOUS EXHORTATIONS (12:9-21) (Contd.)****A. AS CHRISTIANS (12:9-16) (Contd.)****7. Sharing joys and sorrows (12:15)**

**12:15 - “Rejoice with those who rejoice; mourn with those who mourn.”**

**“Rejoice with those who rejoice”** - This verse shows a parallel of thought with that of I Corinthians 12:26. A proper response to someone’s joy is a wholehearted joy not envy or bitterness.

**“mourn with those who mourn”** - We also need to so identify with one another’s sorrow that we sorrow as well just like it is ours. We need to identify with the great loss.

**8. Humble in our relations together (12:16)**

**12:16 - “Live in harmony with one another. Do not be proud, but be willing to associate with people of low position. Do not be conceited.”**

**“Live in harmony with one another”** - This does not suggest that we are to think alike on every issue but we should have the same mind of cooperation and humility (Philippians 2:2ff).

**“Do not be proud** - Pride has always been the greatest barrier to unity.

**“but be willing to associate with people of low position”** - We should never show preference to those who are rich over the outcasts, poor or needy of our society (James 1:27; 2:1-9). The Christian Church is the one place where a master and slave can sit together as equals.

**“Do not be conceited ”** - Other versions talk about not being wise in our conceits (Proverbs 3:7a).

**B. RESPONDING TO EVIL (12:17-21)****1. Do not repay with evil, be mindful of what is good (12:17)**

**12:17 - “Do not repay anyone evil for evil. Be careful to do what is right in the eyes of everybody.”**

**“Do not repay anyone evil for evil”** - Also taught by our Lord (Matthew 5:38,44).

**“Be careful to do what is right in the eyes of everybody”** - This admonishment goes beyond our will to do something to the point that we actually set things into place to ensure that it actually happens.

### III. MISCELLANEOUS EXHORTATIONS (12:9-21) (Contd.)

#### B. RESPONDING TO EVIL (12:17-21) (Contd.)

##### 2. If possible, be at peace (12:18)

**12:18** - *“If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone.”*

*“If it is possible, as far as it depends on you”* - Christianity is not some easy kind of tolerance of all kinds of inappropriate actions. There are some battles that need to be won.

*“live at peace with everyone”* - This goes beyond peaceful living toward just Christians to include each and every person we have contact with. Jesus also exhorted His disciples to live in this way (Matthew 5:9; Mark 9:50).

##### 3. Give place to the wrath of God (12:19)

**12:19** - *“Do not take revenge, my friends, but leave room for God’s wrath, for it is written: ‘It is mine to avenge; I will repay,’ says the Lord.”*

*“for it is written: ‘It is mine to avenge; I will repay,’ says the Lord”* - This is a quote from Deuteronomy 32:35 (See also Jeremiah 5:9; 23:2; Hosea 4:9; Joel 3:21; Nahum 1:2). It is God’s prerogative to execute judgement on those who do evil (Psalm 37:13,20,35,36).

##### 4. Overcome evil by responding with good (12:20-21)

**12:20** - *“On the contrary: ‘If your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him something to drink. In doing this, you will heap burning coals on his head.’”*

*“If your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him something to drink”*- This is a quote from Proverbs 25:21-22a. This verse is not suggesting that we act kindly to our enemies for the intention that God applies a more severe judgement. Vengeance may break one’s spirit but kindness can break one’s heart. The best way to destroy an enemy is to make him your friend.

*“In doing this, you will heap burning coals on his head”* - The Egyptians used to carry a tray of burning coals of charcoal on their head as a sign of their contrition. We would do better to heap coals of red-hot love upon our enemies. Our good actions have the potential of bringing about that result.

**III. MISCELLANEOUS EXHORTATIONS (12:9-21) (Contd.)****B. RESPONDING TO EVIL (12:17-21) (Contd.)****4. Overcome evil by responding with good (12:20-21) (Contd.)**

“You may make him feel that burning sense of shame and remorse which comes to one whose unkindness is repaid by love.”

Charles R. Erdman  
*“The Epistle of Paul to the Romans”*  
The Westminster Press, 1966, p. 149

Therefore, our good actions may cause the individual to be ashamed and cause a desire to repent. This is not assured because the individual may become even more hostile toward us and God which will bring about a greater level of punishment.

**12:21 - “Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.”**

**“Do not be overcome by evil”** - The constant pressures of an evil world can affect our actions and attitudes in a negative way. We must constantly resist that kind of temptation.

All of the above exhortations are basically expanding upon the “good” actions that we are to have (12:2).

**SUMMARY**

Having concluded his discourses concerning the gospel (chs. 1-8) and God's dealings with the nation of Israel (chs. 9-11), Paul now exhorts his readers to full service in the kingdom of God.

He begins with a plea to present their bodies as living sacrifices and to be transformed by the renewing of their minds, so that they can demonstrate in themselves that the will of God is good, acceptable, and perfect (1-2).

He then encourages them to fulfill their proper place in the Body of Christ with humility and zeal (3-8).

Finally, there are a list of commands which are to govern the Christian's life and attitude towards love, good and evil, brethren in the Lord, service to God, and response to persecution (9-21).

**WORDS TO PONDER**

***“the mercies of God”*** - the many blessings alluded to in the first eleven chapters

***“a living sacrifice”*** - an offering that is living, not dead

***“conform”*** - *“to fashion or shape one thing like another . . . this verb has more special reference to that which is transitory, changeable, unstable”* (VINE) - this word is different than that found in Romans 8:29

***“transform”*** - *“to change into another form; [as used in Romans 12:2] to undergo a complete change, which under the power of God, will find expression in character and conduct”* (VINE)

***“overcome evil with good”*** - the goal of the Christian's response to evil

**REVIEW QUESTIONS FOR THE CHAPTER**

- 1) List the main points of this chapter
  - An Appeal to Consecration (1-2)
  - Serve God as Members of One Body (3-8)
  - Miscellaneous Exhortations (9-21)
- 2) Upon what does Paul make his plea? (1)
  - The mercies of God; their reasonable service
- 3) How is a Christian to present himself before God? (1)
  - As a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God
- 4) How is one transformed? (2)
  - By the renewing of their minds
- 5) What is the purpose of such transformation? (2)
  - To prove (demonstrate) what is the good, acceptable, and perfect will of God
- 6) What illustration shows our dependence upon each other in the church? (4-5)
  - Members of a body
- 7) How are Christians to respond to evil? (19-21)
  - In a positive way, with good

**"THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS"**

**Chapter Thirteen**

**OBJECTIVES IN STUDYING THIS CHAPTER**

- 1) To understand our relationship to the government
- 2) To appreciate the importance of love and moral purity

**OUTLINE**

**I. RESPONSIBILITIES TO THE GOVERNMENT (13:1-7)**

**A. BE IN SUBJECTION (13:1-5)**

1. For governing authorities are appointed by God (13:1-2)
2. For governing authorities are God's ministers to avenge evil (13:3-4)
3. To avoid wrath and maintain good conscience (13:5)

**B. FULFILL WHAT IS DUE (13:6-7)**

1. Taxes, customs (13:6-7a)
2. Fear (respect), honour (13:7b)

**II. EXHORTATION TO LOVE AND MORAL PURITY (8-14)**

**A. THE VALUE OF LOVE (13:8-10)**

1. Owe no one anything but love (13:8a)
2. For love does no harm, and fulfills the Law (13:8b-10)

**B. CONCERNING MORAL PURITY (13:11-14)**

1. Time is short; we need to cast off works of darkness, put on the armor of light (13:11-12)
2. Walk properly by putting on Jesus, making no provision to fulfill fleshly lusts (13:13-14)



## I. RESPONSIBILITIES TO THE GOVERNMENT (13:1-7)

In the previous chapter we are told how we were required to treat our fellow-Christians (spiritual duties) now we are guided how we are to respond to natural relationships (civic and civil duties). There are three main institutions that God was responsible for establishing on earth: The home (Genesis 2:18-25), world government (Genesis 9:1-17), and the church (Acts 2).

The church was able in its early stages to remain under the searchlight of the Roman government. Although the Christians started out with a black mark against them because their Lord had been convicted and executed by the sentence of a Roman magistrate. As time went on the severe persecution began because Christians would not bow down to Caesar and claim that he was lord.

Being a member of the body of Christ is one thing while being a citizen of the state is quite another. Paul wanted the members of the early church to recognize that they were not exempted from obeying the laws of the land when those laws didn't conflict with God's law (Acts 4:19; cf. I Peter 2:13-17).

There was an extreme thinking in Corinth (where Paul was writing from) thinking that an emphasis on the coming age excluded being involved in anything of this age (i.e. - human government). The Jews in Rome were also notorious for their turbulence. Those in Jerusalem were not content with passive resistance as the area seethed with insurrection. The Zealots were sworn to murder and assassination in order to make civil government impossible.

We must remember that most of the early church came from a Jewish background. Even though Rome was an oppressive regime there were benefits that were passed on to the Jewish community. There were benefits handed down to those who were part of the kingdom (just as there are national rewards today).

The Romans did not see the significance of many Jewish Laws but they did safeguard them under their imperial law. Jewish laws such as those surrounding the Sabbath, food-laws and exclusion of "*graven images*" were protected under Roman law. Imperial images were excluded from being within the walls of Jerusalem in order to suppress needless uprisings. No Gentile (even a Roman citizen) was allowed to enter the inner courts of the temple with all violators being punished by death.

**I. RESPONSIBILITIES TO THE GOVERNMENT (13:1-7) (Contd.)****A. BE IN SUBJECTION (13:1-5)****1. For governing authorities are appointed by God (13:1-2)**

**13:1** - *“Everyone must submit himself to the governing authorities, for there is no authority except that which God has established. The authorities that exist have been established by God.”*

*“Everyone must submit himself”* - Paul calls upon the entire church to *“submit”* not to *“obey.”* To submit is to recognize one’s subordinate position in the hierarchy involved – recognizing their authority over us. We are really submitting to God when we submit to those listed below.

We are told to submit to

1. Governing authorities - Titus 3:1
2. Spiritual leaders - I Corinthians 16:16
3. One another - Ephesians 5:21
4. Masters (in reference to slaves) - Titus 2:9
5. Other prophets - I Corinthians 14:32
6. Our husbands (in reference to wives) - I Corinthians 14:3,4; Ephesians 5:24

*“Everyone must submit himself to the governing authorities”* - This does not mean that the church is subordinate to the state. The government is a natural body of leadership which should promote moral living. The church is a spiritual body that is called upon to promote spiritual living. Anytime attempt to combine the two has created serious confusion. The two need to work side by side with neither dominating the other because each serve a different purpose.

“Christians may continue to ‘submit’ to a particular government (acknowledging their subordination to it generally) even as they, in obedience to a ‘higher’ authority, refuse to do, in a given instance, what that government requires. In a similar way, the Christian wife, called on to ‘submit’ to her husband, may well have to disobey a particular request of her husband if it conflicts with her allegiance to God.”

Douglas Moo  
*“The Epistle to the Romans”*  
William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company  
1996, pp. 809

**I. RESPONSIBILITIES TO THE GOVERNMENT (13:1-7) (Contd.)****A. BE IN SUBJECTION (13:1-5) (Contd.)****1. For governing authorities are appointed by God (13:1-2) (Contd.)**

*“for there is no authority except that which God has established”* - Some versions translate *“authority”* as *“governing authorities.”* Jesus uses the same word *“exousia”* in Matthew 28:18 (cf. Luke 23:7). King Nebuchadnezzar discovered this truth when he was humbled by God (Daniel 4:17).

There are several noteworthy items that are highlighted in the following verses:

1. No particular government is commended or advocated by the apostle. Any form is better than anarchy.
2. Loyalty does not preclude endeavours to improve a government.
3. One must be loyal to government even in spite of the character of the civil rulers, who may be selfish, arbitrary, oppressive and immoral men (i.e.- loyalty to Nero).
4. One must not disobey their conscience in submitting to civil government.
5. While the duties to the church are distinct from duties of the state, the performance of either is equally binding upon a Christian. The payment of a tax may be as equal an expression of spiritual life as the offering of a public prayer.

Charles R. Erdman  
*“The Epistle of Paul to the Romans”*  
 The Westminster Press, 1966, p. 152-53

**13:2 - “Consequently, he who rebels against the authority is rebelling against what God has instituted, and those who do so will bring judgment on themselves.”**

*“Consequently, he who rebels against the authority is rebelling against what God has instituted”* - Few NT verses have suffered as much abuse as this one. This is speaking about an attitude of someone who will not admit that human government has a legitimate right to exercise authority over them. The government can rightly command submission only within the limits of the purposes for which it has been divinely instituted. The government must be resisted when it demands the kind of allegiance that is only due to God.

**I. RESPONSIBILITIES TO THE GOVERNMENT (13:1-7) (Contd.)****A. BE IN SUBJECTION (13:1-5) (Contd.)****1. For governing authorities are appointed by God (13:1-2) (Contd.)**

Christians should be slow in heading up a rebellion. There may be circumstances that warrant such action and there is nothing in this passage to prohibit it. Yet once again, rebellion must be regarded as our last resource instead of our first response.

*“and those who do so will bring judgment on themselves”* - Some versions go so far as to suggest that this will bring *“damnation”* which is closer associated with eternal punishment. The words *“condemnation”* or *“judgement”* are better words to use.

**2. For governing authorities are God's ministers to avenge evil (3-4)**

**13:3** - *“For rulers hold no terror for those who do right, but for those who do wrong. Do you want to be free from fear of the one in authority? Then do what is right and he will commend you.”*

*“For rulers hold no terror for those who do right, but for those who do wrong.”* - This was written prior to the time of the cruel persecution that was inflicted on the early church. God knows how to prepare His people for what they must endure.

*“Then do what is right and he will commend you.”* - Paul was able to benefit as a citizen from the protection that was instilled in the Roman Law (Acts 18:12-17; 19:35-41).

As Christians we are told to pray for and give thanks for those who rule over us (I Timothy 2:1,2). One of the early church fathers wrote an insightful prayer for those who had the rule over them.

“We offer prayer for the safety of our princes to the eternal, the true, the living God, whose favor, beyond all other things, they must themselves desire . . . Without ceasing, for all our emperors we offer prayer. We pray for life prolonged; for security to the empire; for protection for the imperial house; for brave armies, a faithful senate, a virtuous people, the world at rest – whatever, as man or Caesar, an emperor would wish.”

Tertullian (CE -197-220)  
*“Ante-Nicene Fathers”*  
Apology 30

**I. RESPONSIBILITIES TO THE GOVERNMENT (13:1-7) (Contd.)****A. BE IN SUBJECTION (13:1-5) (Contd.)****2. For governing authorities are God's ministers to avenge evil (3-4) (Contd.)**

**13:4** - *“For he is God’s servant to do you good. But if you do wrong, be afraid, for he does not bear the sword for nothing. He is God’s servant, an agent of wrath to bring punishment on the wrongdoer.”*

*“For he is God’s servant to do you good”* - It is noteworthy that Paul uses the phrase *“God’s servant”* or *“God’s minister”* twice in this verse. Those in the position of governmental authority are to defend what is good and right and execute judgement upon those who choose to break the law of the land. In doing so they are carrying out the work of God. We have had many examples of death and destruction when this institution crumbles and anarchy prevails.

*“But if you do wrong, be afraid, for he does not bear the sword for nothing”* - This refers to the government’s right to inflict punishment upon anyone who violates the law of the land. This is assuming that the government is following moral principles as taught in the Word of God. There is argument whether this goes as far as capital punishment or not. God’s wrath is not waiting until the future to be carried out (Romans 1:18).

**3. To avoid wrath and maintain good conscience (5)**

**13:5** - *“Therefore, it is necessary to submit to the authorities, not only because of possible punishment but also because of conscience.”*

*“not only because of possible punishment but also because of conscience”* - There are two very strong reasons for obeying the law. One is because we don’t like the consequences of breaking the law (i.e. - fines; criminal records; jail time; capital punishment). This should be the least reason why we submit to government leaders.

*“but also because of conscience”* - The other is because of a God-instilled conscience. This conscience is the believer’s understanding of the will and purposes of God. In the state as well as in the church we are called upon to *“prove what is that good, and acceptable and perfect will of God.”*

## I. RESPONSIBILITIES TO THE GOVERNMENT (13:1-7) (Contd.)

### B. FULFILL WHAT IS DUE (13:6-7)

#### 1. Taxes, customs (13:6-7a)

**13:6** - *“This is also why you pay taxes, for the authorities are God’s servants, who give their full time to governing.”*

*“This is also why you pay taxes”* - It is because of the fact that God has appointed these secular rulers and they are there to serve Him that we pay taxes. The early church fathers supported the fact we should submit to these governing leaders by paying taxes.

“Everywhere, we, more readily than all men, endeavour to pay to those appointed by you the taxes, both ordinary and extraordinary, as we have been taught by Jesus. We worship only God, but in other things we will gladly serve you, acknowledging you as kings and rulers of men, and praying that, with your kingly power, you may be found to possess also sound judgement.”

Justin Martyr (AD 110-165)  
*“Ante-Nicene Fathers”*  
 Apology 1:17

*“for the authorities are God’s servants”* - The word that Paul uses for *“servants”* is *“leitourgos”* which was used in the LXX for those who served in the temple. In the NT it was always used of those who ministered for the Lord. Yet this word was also used by the Greeks to differentiate those serving in public office in various levels.

**13:7** - *“Give everyone what you owe him: If you owe taxes, pay taxes; if revenue, then revenue; if respect, then respect; if honor, then honor.”*

*“If you owe taxes, pay taxes”* - Some versions use the word *“tribute”* to describe both these personal and property taxes. There is no place given throughout scripture for us to withhold taxes when we don’t agree with how the money is spent. To not pay would be to violate our conscience. Jesus approved of the widow paying her temple tax (Luke 21:2,3) even though the priesthood was very corrupt at the time.

*“if revenue, then revenue”* - Some versions use the word *“custom”* to describe these import and export dues.

**I. RESPONSIBILITIES TO THE GOVERNMENT (13:1-7) (Contd.)****B. FULFILL WHAT IS DUE (13:6-7) (Contd.)****2. Fear (respect), honour (13:7b)**

“*if respect, then respect*” - Some versions use the word “*fear*” to describe the attitude we should have toward our police, judges etc.).

“*if honor, then honor*” - This is in reference to our reverent attitude toward them.

“Paul saw in the state an instrument in the hand of God; the state preserved the world from chaos; those who administered the state were playing their part in that great task. Whether they knew it or not they were doing God’s work, and it was the Christian’s duty to help and not to hinder.”

William Barclay  
*“The Letter to the Romans”*  
 The Saint Andrew Press  
 1972, p. 189

**II. EXHORTATION TO LOVE AND MORAL PURITY (8-14)****A. THE VALUE OF LOVE (13:8-10)**

After stating that all Christians have a obligation to submit, respect and honour those in government leadership, he now proceeds to specify the need for love toward each and everyone. The law demanded obedience and submission to the state as long as it didn’t conflict with God’s Law. In relationships, all Christians were governed by a different law - the Law of Love.

The commandment to love one another did not begin in the New Testament (Leviticus 19:18). It was one of the two commandments that Jesus claimed that “*all the law and prophets hang*” (Matthew 22:34-40; Mark 12:28-34; Luke 10:25-28; cf. John 13:34-35). There is also a parallel of thought in the writings of Paul (Galatians 5:13-15).

## II. EXHORTATION TO LOVE AND MORAL PURITY (8-14) (Contd.)

### A. THE VALUE OF LOVE (13:8-10) (Contd.)

#### 1. Owe no one anything but love (13:8a)

**13:8** - *“Let no debt remain outstanding, except the continuing debt to love one another, for he who loves his fellowman has fulfilled the law.”*

*“Let no debt remain outstanding”* - This is not to suggest that a Christian is forbidden from incurring a debt (i.e. - mortgage or car payment). We should repay our debts promptly and in the terms of any contract that we sign and therefore promise to pay.

Christianity that does not contain ethical standards will only bring with it plenty of room for condemnation and disgust by anyone who tries to walk an honest life. This is why the world looks down upon the church when it sees it not practising what it preaches.

Christianity is based upon principle not rules. A rule is applied to a limited number of circumstances while a principle has no limit because it applies to all conditions. As in the case of forgiveness we are not just to forgive seven times but rather seven times seventy (Matthew 18:21)

#### 2. For love does no harm, and fulfills the Law (13:8b-10)

*“except the continuing debt to love one another, for he who loves his fellowman has fulfilled the law”*

*“except the continuing debt to love one another”* - No one can honestly say that they have loved enough. Nothing is expected in return with this type of love *“agape.”* This kind of love comes from God (I John 4:8); it is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit (Romans 5:5; and is one of the fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22). Everything we say or do should emanate from love’s all embracing power.

“Let your only debt that is unpaid be that of love – a debt which you should always be attempting to discharge in full, but will never succeed in discharging.”

Origen



## II. EXHORTATION TO LOVE AND MORAL PURITY (8-14) (Contd.)

### A. THE VALUE OF LOVE (13:8-10) (Contd.)

#### 2. For love does no harm, and fulfills the Law (13:8b-10) (Contd.)

*“for he who loves his fellowman has fulfilled the law”* - Anyone who can claim that he loves his fellowman doesn't have to worry about the rest of the commandments. Yet such a consistent and complete act of love is impossible to achieve even for a Spirit-filled believer. That is why love will never be the only commandment we will need. The other commandments are required to guide and chastise us when necessary.

**13:9** - *“The commandments, “Do not commit adultery,” “Do not murder,” “Do not steal,” “Do not covet,” and whatever other commandment there may be, are summed up in this one rule: “Love your neighbor as yourself.”*

*“The commandments, ‘Do not commit adultery,’ ‘Do not murder,’ ‘Do not steal,’ ‘Do not covet’”* - Here we have a short form of the four final commandments of the Decalogue (Exodus 20:13-17; Deuteronomy 5:17-21).

“It is Paul's claim that if a man honestly seeks to discharge this debt of love, he will automatically keep all the commandments. If he discharges the debt of love, he will not commit adultery. When two people allow their physical passions to sweep them away, the reason is not that they love each other too much, but that they love each other too little. In real love there is at once respect and restraint which saves a man from sin. If he discharges the debt of love, he will not kill, for love never seeks to destroy, but always to build up. Love can never hate, for love is always kind. Love will never seek to destroy its enemy by killing him, but always by seeking to make him its friend. If he discharges the debt of love, he will never steal, for love is always more concerned with giving than with getting. If he discharges the debt of love, he will not covet. Covetousness (epithumia) is the inordinate and uncontrolled desire for the forbidden thing, for the thing that ought not to be desired, and love cleanses the heart, until that desire is gone.”

William Barclay  
*“The Letter to the Romans”*  
 The Saint Andrew Press  
 1972, p. 191

## II. EXHORTATION TO LOVE AND MORAL PURITY (8-14) (Contd.)

### A. THE VALUE OF LOVE (13:8-10) (Contd.)

#### 2. For love does no harm, and fulfills the Law (13:8b-10) (Contd.)

*“are summed up in this one rule: “Love your neighbor as yourself”* - This is not to say that love replaces all of the commandments but rather that it focuses upon an integral part of them (cf. - Galatians 5:14; James 2:8). Love should be clearly expressed to those who are in close contact with us.

**13:10** - *“Love does no harm to its neighbor. Therefore love is the fulfillment of the law.”*

*“Therefore love is the fulfillment of the law”* - This repeats the statement of 10:8b that a Christian who loves and meets the requirements of the law (10:9-10a) has basically brought the law to its eschatological fulfillment.

### B. CONCERNING MORAL PURITY (13:11-14)

#### 1. Time is short; we need to cast off works of darkness, put on the armor of light (13:11-12)

**13:11** - *“And do this, understanding the present time. The hour has come for you to wake up from your slumber, because our salvation is nearer now than when we first believed.”*

*“And do this, understanding the present time”* - Paul is concerned as we are today with the shortness of time in respect to the Second Coming of the Lord. This fact should fill us with encouragement instead of fear and despair (Luke 21:28).

*“The hour has come for you to wake up from your slumber”* - Spiritual vigilance was a highlight in the apostolic teaching of the NT (I Thessalonians 5:4ff.). The word used for *“slumber or sleep”* depicts an apathy toward responsibility and a forgetfulness of God.

*“because our salvation is nearer now than when we first believed”* - The time period of this writing (AD 64-66) was just bringing in the imperial persecution of Christians and the Jewish revolt.

This salvation is looked at in a future glance when it reaches its final and complete fulfillment. Paul also called it the adoption and redemption of the body, an event to take place in the future (Romans 8:23). It was time to remain steadfast in one's faith (Mark 13:13).

## II. EXHORTATION TO LOVE AND MORAL PURITY (8-14) (Contd.)

### B. CONCERNING MORAL PURITY (13:11-14) (Contd.)

#### 1. Time is short; we need to cast off works of darkness, put on the armor of light (13:11-12) (Contd.)

**13:12** - *“The night is nearly over; the day is almost here. So let us put aside the deeds of darkness and put on the armor of light.”*

*“The night is nearly over; the day is almost here”* - The sun played an important role in ancient society. People rose up with the dawn of light. Slackards were those who stayed in bed after the sun rose. Most of the work had to be done before the sun rose high in the sky and the temperature became too unbearable. This was also a form of symbolism to describe the darkness of the present age.

*“So let us put aside the deeds of darkness and put on the armor of light”* - Paul seems to borrow this figure of speech from the normal morning procedure of a Roman soldier as he laid aside his sleeping garments and donned his gleaming armour. There are three main things that we (*let us*) are to do of which this is the first mentioned.

The contrast between light and darkness is commonly addressed in the epistles (II Corinthians 6:14; Ephesians 5:8; Colossians 1:12f; I Thessalonians 5:4f). There have also been found numerous texts in the Qumran writings depicting the control of either *“The Prince of Light”* or *“The Angel of Darkness.”*

#### 2. Walk properly by putting on Jesus, making no provision to fulfill fleshly lusts (13:13-14)

**13:13** - *“Let us behave decently, as in the daytime, not in orgies and drunkenness, not in sexual immorality and debauchery, not in dissension and jealousy.”*

The second thing we are to do is to *“behave decently.”* What Paul means by this is followed by describing six sinful actions to avoid.

*“not in orgies”* - Some versions use the word *“revelry.”* This is the type of behaviour that removes a man’s inhibitions and becomes a nuisance and a disturbance to others.

*“and drunkenness”* - It was a disgraceful thing for a Greek to get drunk. Wine was used even during breakfast to dunk bread in – even by children. The wine of the day was quite diluted so a person would have to overindulge to become drunk.

## II. EXHORTATION TO LOVE AND MORAL PURITY (8-14) (Contd.)

### B. CONCERNING MORAL PURITY (13:11-14) (Contd.)

#### 2. Walk properly by putting on Jesus, making no provision to fulfill fleshly lusts (13:13-14) (Contd.)

**“not in sexual immorality”** - The word **“κοιτῆ”** literally means **“bed.”** It was a desire for the forbidden bed. A person who was controlled by this type of behaviour would find sexual pleasure whenever and wherever he could.

**“and debauchery”** - Some versions use the word **“shamelessness”** for **“aselgeia”**. This is the kind of person who has no shame. Most people try to conceal their sin and keep it a secret from others. But this kind of person doesn't care what others think because reputation, honour and decency mean nothing to him.

**“not in dissension”** - This word **“eris”** describes the kind of spirit that thrives on an unbridled and unholy competition. It shows itself in place, power and prestige. It has been witnessed in lives such as Saddam Hussein. This person always needs to be in the foreground.

**“and jealousy”** - The Greek word used here is **“zēlos”**. A person with this kind of spirit can never be content with what he has because he looks with jealousy on every blessing given to another and denied to himself.

**13:14 - “Rather, clothe yourselves with the Lord Jesus Christ, and do not think about how to gratify the desires of the sinful nature.”**

**“Rather, clothe yourselves with the Lord Jesus Christ”** - This is the third thing that we are to do. The first 2 things tell us what we are to take off. Now we are told what to put on.

**“and do not think about how to gratify the desires of the sinful nature”** - It was the words of both vs 13&14 in AD 386 that caused St. Augustine of Hippo's heart to be moved to a place of repentance.

“At the end of this sentence, a clear light flooded my heart and all the darkness of doubt vanished away.”

FF. Bruce  
*“The Epistle of Paul to the Romans”*  
 Tyndale New Testament Commentaries  
 p. 58

**SUMMARY**

Continuing to instruct concerning the "*transformed life*," Paul now discusses the Christian's responsibilities to governmental authorities. Understanding that all governments are in power due to the providence of God, and that they serve as ministers of God to avenge the evil doer, Christians are admonished to submit to "*the powers that be*" (1-5).

This submission involves payment of taxes and having respect for those in authority (6-7).

Paul's next exhortation deals with the importance of love and moral purity. Christians are to be indebted to no one, save to love one another. When love is properly demonstrated, even the requirements of the Law are adequately met (8-10).

This admonition to love, however, is balanced with the reminder that time is short and it is imperative that Christians maintain moral purity. This is done by Christians putting on the Lord Jesus and not making provision for the fulfilling of the lusts of the flesh (11-14).

**WORDS TO PONDER**

***“the governing authorities”*** - the political powers which govern society

***“he does not bear the sword in vain”*** - an implied reference to the use of capital punishment

***“put on the Lord Jesus Christ”*** - a process begun in baptism (Galatians 3:27), continued as we develop Christ-like qualities (Colossians 3:9-17)

***“make no provision for the flesh, to fulfill its lusts”*** - avoid situations where unlawful fleshly desires might be aroused and acted upon

**REVIEW QUESTIONS FOR THE CHAPTER**

- 1) List the main points of this chapter
  - Responsibilities To The Government (1-7)
  - Exhortations To Love And Moral Purity (8-14)
- 2) What one word summarizes the Christian's responsibility to the government? (1)
  - Submit
- 3) From where do governments get their authority? (1)
  - God
- 4) What happens if we resist governing authorities? (2)
  - We resist God and bring judgment upon ourselves
- 5) What is a major responsibility of government? (4)
  - To avenge the evil doer
- 6) What should serve as motivation for Christians' submission to the government? (5)
  - Wrath, and conscience
- 7) What else is required of Christians in regards to government? (7)
  - Payment of taxes, and respect for those in authority
- 8) What one thing should we owe to others? (8)
  - Love
- 9) What are we to put on? What are we not to provide opportunities for? (12,14)
  - The *"armour of light"*, the Lord Jesus Christ
  - The fulfilment of fleshly lusts

**THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS****Chapter Fourteen****OBJECTIVES IN STUDYING THIS CHAPTER**

- 1) To learn how strong and weak brethren should deal with one another
- 2) To see the importance of being true to our conscience

**OUTLINE****I. ADMONITIONS TO STRONG AND WEAK BRETHREN (14:1-13)****A. HOW TO TREAT EACH OTHER (14:1-4)**

1. The strong are to receive and not despise the weak (14:1-3a)
2. The weak are not to judge those God approves (14:3b-4)

**B. HOW TO BE TRUE TO THE LORD IN THESE MATTERS (14:5-9)**

1. Be fully convinced in your own mind (14:5)
2. Do what you do as to the Lord (14:6-9)

**C. DO NOT JUDGE ONE ANOTHER (14:10-13)**

1. Christ is to be our judge (14:10-13a)
2. Our concern should be not to put stumbling blocks in a brother's way (14:13b)

**II. FURTHER ADMONITIONS TO STRONG BRETHREN (14:14-23)****A. DO NOT DESTROY A BROTHER FOR WHOM CHRIST DIED (14:14-18)**

1. Food is harmless in itself, but we can misuse it to the destruction of the weak (14:14-16)
2. The kingdom of God is more important than food and drink (14:17-18)

**B. PURSUE THINGS WHICH MAKE FOR PEACE (14:19-23)**

1. Build up your brother, don't destroy him over food (14:19-20)
2. Be willing to forego your liberties for the sake of your brother (14:21)
3. Appreciate the importance of a clear conscience in your weak brother (14:22-23)

## I. ADMONITIONS TO STRONG AND WEAK BRETHREN (14:1-13)

### A. HOW TO TREAT EACH OTHER (14:1-4)

#### 1. The strong are to receive and not despise the weak (14:1-3a)

There have always been struggles, dissensions, fights, wars and disunity in the work of God among God's people (I Corinthians 1:10-13; 6:1-8; Galatians 4:10,11; 5:15; Ephesians 4:1-3; Colossians 2:1-2, 16,17; Philippians 4:1-3).

We should have no problem with what is clearly spelled out in the Bible. It is either clearly acceptable or not acceptable. Yet there are numerous examples of areas that are not black or white but what we would call "grey areas." We need to be able to disagree on nonessentials and yet avoid walking into disunity.

"In essentials, unity; in nonessentials, liberty; in all things, charity."

St. Augustine

**14:1 - "Accept him whose faith is weak, without passing judgment on disputable matters."**

**"Accept him whose faith is weak"** - The word for **"accept or receive"** means **"to accept or receive into one's society, home or circle of acquaintance."** (BAGD). I find it ironic that even a portion of Scripture that addresses divisions created by differences has created even more difference. Scholars now argue about who are the **"weak"** and who are the **"strong"** that Paul is referring to.

Some believe the **"weak"** were mainly Gentile Christians who had given their lives to Christ and were still sensitive of their past lifestyle and pagan practises. These involved eating of meat and drinking of wine that had been offered to idols.

Others believe that the **"weak"** were mainly Jewish Christians who refrained from certain foods and observed certain days like the Sabbath because they found it difficult to let go of the teachings of the Mosaic Law. They were still legalistic at heart. The teaching of the grace of God had not yet impacted their lives. Today we still seem to believe that those who can avoid certain things or live by strict codes are more mature in their faith. This is not necessarily true.

**"without passing judgment on disputable matters"** - Love, acceptance and forgiveness are hallmarks of the Christian faith. Divisions based upon prideful stubbornness that are not clearly supported by the Word of God can never lead to building healthy relationships. They will only spark quarrels that will further divide us.



## I. ADMONITIONS TO STRONG AND WEAK BRETHREN (14:1-13) (Contd.)

### A. HOW TO TREAT EACH OTHER (14:1-4) (Contd.)

#### 1. The strong are to receive and not despise the weak (14:1-3a) (Contd.)

**“on disputable matters”** - Some commentators refer to the word “*scruples*” to address the problem. It was the original name of a very small Roman weight. Today, we refer to someone who is “*scrupulous*” as one who pays attention to unusual details, one who hesitates because of doubts or uneasiness or one who is unwilling to participate in something because of conscientious motives.

The early church had people who questioned everything and everybody. They saw themselves as authorities on matters that really had nothing to do with being right or wrong. Their attitude and actions were destroying the harmony of the churches as were those who were not accepting what they promoting. That is why Paul dealt more with the attitude of both the weak and the strong than with their proposed problems.

There are three attitudes we must avoid when confronted by someone who holds a narrower point of view:

“We must avoid the attitude of *irritation*. However much we may disagree, and however much we may differ, we must first of all try to see the other person’s point of view, to sympathize and to understand.

We must avoid the attitude of *ridicule*. No man remains unwounded when that which he thinks precious is laughed at . . . laughter will never woo the other man to a wider view; it will only make him withdraw still more determined into his rigidity.”

We must avoid the attitude of *contempt*. A man’s views are his own and must be treated with respect . . . Of all attitudes towards our fellow man the most unchristian is contempt.”

William Barclay  
*“The Daily Study Bible  
 Letter to the Romans”*  
 The Saint Andrew Press  
 1972, p. 196-197

## I. ADMONITIONS TO STRONG AND WEAK BRETHERN (14:1-13) (Contd.)

### A. HOW TO TREAT EACH OTHER (14:1-4) (Contd.)

#### 1. The strong are to receive and not despise the weak (14:1-3a) (Contd.)

**14:2** - *“One man’s faith allows him to eat everything, but another man, whose faith is weak, eats only vegetables.”*

*“One man’s faith allows him to eat everything”* - The Mosaic Law never demanded the abstinence from eating meat. What it did require was that the animal had to have a split hoof and one that chewed its cud (Leviticus 11:3); a fish had to have fins and scales (Leviticus 11:9) had to be fully bled before one could partake of it (Leviticus 17:10-12 - Kosher). Our Lord made all things clean (Mark 7:18,19) and Paul taught it to be accepted through prayer (I Timothy 4:3-5).

Much of what we believe is based upon our questions. We simply ask too many questions.

“We have found all the questions that can be found. It is time that we stopped looking for questions and started looking for answers.”

G. K. Chesterton

*“but another man, whose faith is weak, eats only vegetables”* - Our brothers and sisters in the Seventh Day Adventist Churches for the most part are vegetarians. They often remind us that it is healthier for us. For some people who have difficulty with their cholesterol levels that could be very true. We must be careful about making statements that must apply to everyone.

Faith has a doubled edged sword. It can cause tremendous freedom but it can also, if used wrongly, hinder consistent spiritual growth. Man-made restrictions are often based upon personal preferences, prejudices or even convictions. This does not mean that they are Biblical even if generations have practised them with due diligence under God’s blessing (Daniel 1:8,12).

**14:3** - *“The man who eats everything must not look down on him who does not, and the man who does not eat everything must not condemn the man who does, for God has accepted him.”*

*“The man who eats everything must not look down on him who does not”* - We noted earlier that zeal without knowledge is wrong (Romans 10:2), so knowledge without proper Christian conduct is also out of order. The strong were not to belittle the weak.

To despise someone or *“look down”* on them speaks of *“a disdainful, condescending type of judgement.”* You could also say that you *“make little”* of the person. Condemnation has little place in the kingdom of God. Paul reminded us that once we accept Christ as our Saviour that we are no longer live under condemnation (Romans 8:1).

**I. ADMONITIONS TO STRONG AND WEAK BRETHERN (14:1-13) (Contd.)****A. HOW TO TREAT EACH OTHER (14:1-4) (Contd.)****1. The strong are to receive and not despise the weak (14:1-3a) (Contd.)**

*“and the man who does not eat everything must not condemn the man who does”* - The weak were on the other hand not to judge the strong. Criticism cuts deeper than a sharpened knife. It must be stopped in its sinful, prideful tracks. Peter had to discover in his Christian walk that God decided what is to be called clean and unclean. Even after being clearly shown God’s will (Act 10:9-16, 43-48), he refused to fellowship with Gentiles in Antioch and had to be rebuked by Paul (Galatians 2:11-13).

**2. The weak are not to judge those God approves (14:3b-4)**

*“for God has accepted him”* - If God doesn’t condemn us why should we try to take on that role? We’ve got to learn to accept what God accepts just as the Jewish believers had to.

**14:4** - *“Who are you to judge someone else’s servant? To his own master he stands or falls. And he will stand, for the Lord is able to make him stand.”*

*“Who are you to judge someone else’s servant?”* - Becoming a judge is a very awkward position. It is one that is never handed over to an individual with little experience. That is why God has chosen to be our judge (Hebrews 12:5-11). Only He can pass on the sentence for our sinful actions (I Corinthians 4:3ff). Even playing the part of a lawyer presenting a case can be hazardous. Most of the time we never have all the facts so it is dangerous jumping to conclusions and setting forth a verdict. We should have better things to do with our time.

“People who are busy wining souls to Christ have more important things to do than to investigate the lives of the saints.”

Warren Wiersbe  
*“The Bible Expository Commentary”*  
Victor Books, Vol. 1, p.559

*“To his own master he stands or falls”* - Who is your master? What masters you?

*“And he will stand, for the Lord is able to make him stand”* - When all is said and done (and much is said and little is done) it is God alone whom we must stand before and make an account for our words, actions and thoughts. Only He can determine our acceptability. It is He that will determine whether a man stands or falls before Him. He has not only all the facts but also all the attitudes and customs behind our actions to make a wise decision.

**I. ADMONITIONS TO STRONG AND WEAK BRETHREN (14:1-13) (Contd.)****A. HOW TO TREAT EACH OTHER (14:1-4) (Contd.)****2. The weak are not to judge those God approves (14:3b-4) (Contd.)**

The word “*servant*” in this verse is the word “*oiketes*” - “*domestic servant*” not “*doulos*” - “*slave*.” It places our thoughts in the right perspective. Notice that the word “*Lord*” is used 8 times in the following verses. It’s vital that we recognize that He is the one we serve.

**B. HOW TO BE TRUE TO THE LORD IN THESE MATTERS (14:5-9)****1. Be fully convinced in your own mind (14:5)**

**14:5** - *“One man considers one day more sacred than another; another man considers every day alike. Each one should be fully convinced in his own mind.”*

*“One man considers one day more sacred than another; another man considers every day alike”* - Sacred days have been a problem ever since the introduction of the Mosaic Law has spanned into the New Testament (Galatians 4:8-11; Colossians 2:16,17).

Nothing is to be gained by living under a form of legalism that was never intended to become a Christian standard. Saturday Sabbath was given to the children of Israel as they lived under the legal code that God expected them to keep (Exodus 20:8-11). The Jews had made a tyranny of the Sabbath choking it of its purpose by adding to it a jungle of rules and regulations and prohibitions which Jesus opposed (Luke 13:10-17). The nation of Israel will return to its standard during the millennium (Ezekiel 46:1,3,4).

*“Each one should be fully convinced in his own mind”* - It is noteworthy that Paul neither condemns, condones nor commends one day over another. Just because we believe that our way is the only way doesn’t make it right. If it is not clearly spoken of in the Word of God, it may simply be our preference (i.e., - passing an offering plate; styles of worship; dress codes).

**2. Do what you do as to the Lord (14:6-9)**

**14:6** - *“He who regards one day as special, does so to the Lord. He who eats meat, eats to the Lord, for he gives thanks to God; and he who abstains, does so to the Lord and gives thanks to God.”*

*“He who regards one day as special, does so to the Lord”* - Paul now moves his thoughts from differences of “*meat and drink*” to that of “*days*.”

**I. ADMONITIONS TO STRONG AND WEAK BRETHERN (14:1-13) (Contd.)****B. HOW TO BE TRUE TO THE LORD IN THESE MATTERS (14:5-9) (Contd.)****2. Do what you do as to the Lord (14:6-9) (Contd.)**

***“He who eats meat, eats to the Lord, for he gives thanks to God”*** - This is one of the early references to thanking God before our mealtime (cf. - Mark 8:6; 14:22,23; John 6:11,23; Acts 27:35; I Corinthians 11:24; I Timothy 4:3). It is based upon O.T. teaching (Deuteronomy 8:10).

The phrase ***“to the Lord”*** is simply referring ***“to the interest of”*** or ***“to the benefit of.”*** When we maintain the standard that our lives are meant to serve the Lord and not what others think or expect of us, we can become free to please God.

***“for he gives thanks to God”*** - This should be seen as a principle in everything we do. If we cannot give thanks to God for the gift we are enjoying we better take a second look at what we are doing.

**14:7 - *“For none of us lives to himself alone and none of us dies to himself alone.”***

***“For none of us lives to himself alone”*** - Paul is not attempting to speculate as John Donne said: *“No man is an island, entire of itself; every man is a piece of the continent, a part of the main . . .”* rather he is pointing out that our lives are totally wrapped up in God whether we realize it or not.

We are linked with our past. We all are receivers of our past tradition, heritage and heredity. We cannot isolate ourselves from the stock from which we have sprung or the rock from which we are hewn. We are also linked with our present. This link binds us closer to each another because we influence each another. Lastly, we are linked with our future. We are a link in a chain that will affect the spiritual heritage and character of those that follow after us and that we have had an opportunity to influence.

We should keep our eyes more on ourselves than upon others who have chosen to follow the Lord (John 21:21,22).

***“and none of us dies to himself alone”*** - Not even death can dissociate us from whom we are and whom we have associated ourselves with. We cannot avoid the fact that we will forever be in the presence of Christ once we die. Indeed, we now live in the unseen presence of Christ but in death we shall see Him face to face (I Corinthians 13:12).

## I. ADMONITIONS TO STRONG AND WEAK BRETHREN (14:1-13) (Contd.)

### B. HOW TO BE TRUE TO THE LORD IN THESE MATTERS (14:5-9) (Contd.)

#### 2. Do what you do as to the Lord (14:6-9) (Contd.)

**14:8** - *“If we live, we live to the Lord; and if we die, we die to the Lord. So, whether we live or die, we belong to the Lord.”*

*“whether we live or die, we belong to the Lord”* - Only God can truly say that He has the power of life and death in His hands. We have absolutely no control about our birth or how God chooses to deal with our soul after we pass on into eternity.

**14:9** - *“For this very reason, Christ died and returned to life so that he might be the Lord of both the dead and the living.”*

*“Christ died and returned to life “* - The very proof of God’s Lordship over death and life stands firmly in the fact that He conquered death and the grave through His resurrection power. Every believer lives in the shadow of the cross and is given resurrected power by our living Lord. We must always keep Calvary in view and remember that the ground is always level at the cross.

*“so that he might be the Lord of both the dead and the living”* - The Lordship of Christ over our lives was the very purpose for which He died and rose again. ***He needs to be Lord . . .***

**For our Pardon** - Only as we surrender to His Lordship can we receive pardon from Him as our Saviour.

**For Our Peace** - Only He is the Lord of peace (II Thessalonians 3:16)

**For our Holiness** - Only when He is given His rightful place over the throne of our heart that He enters and abides in us and changes our words, thoughts and actions.

**For our Victory** - Only God can reign as the conqueror of Satan, sin and self

**For our Fellowship** - Only after enter into fellowship with God as the Lord of our lives can we enter into fellowship with each other (I John 1:7).

## I. ADMONITIONS TO STRONG AND WEAK BRETHERN (14:1-13) (Contd.)

## C. DO NOT JUDGE ONE ANOTHER (14:10-13)

## 1. Christ is to be our judge (14:10-13a)

**14:10** - *“You, then, why do you judge your brother? Or why do you look down on your brother? For we will all stand before God’s judgment seat.”*

*“You, then, why do you judge your brother?”* - When we pass swift, uniformed and unloving judgement on another brother we often forget that he bears the name of Christ so it reflects upon God as well.

*“Or why do you look down on your brother?”* - When we attempt to stand in God’s place of judgement, we are standing on unstable ground. Many are deceived into thinking that they are standing on holy ground while standing in the place of God. We who are all under judgement have no right to pass judgement unto another. We must admit that God blesses people whom we disagree with.

*“For we will all stand before God’s judgment seat”* - The word for *“judgment seat”* is *“bema.”* It was a well-known place that the judges of the athletic (Olympic) games stood. If anyone broke the rules of the game they were immediately disqualified. Our *“bema”* seat is not to judge our past sins but a place to judge our past works. A good example of it is found in the life of Paul (I Corinthians 3:10-15).

**14:11** - *“It is written: ‘As surely as I live,’ says the Lord, ‘every knee will bow before me; every tongue will confess to God.’”*

*“It is written”* - Paul quotes from Isaiah 45:23 (cf. - Philippians 2:10f).

*“every knee will bow before me”* - Never has God declared that we will bow before each other when it comes to passing on judgement.

*“every tongue will confess to God”* - Just as we have confessed that *“Jesus is Lord”* (Romans 10:9) while on earth, so will we have to do it before Him some day on bended knees.

**14:12** - *“So then, each of us will give an account of himself to God.”*

Keep short accounts with God. His account is paid in full. Never be deceived into thinking that God owes you something.

**I. ADMONITIONS TO STRONG AND WEAK BRETHREN (14:1-13) (Contd.)****C. DO NOT JUDGE ONE ANOTHER (14:10-13) (Contd.)****1. Christ is to be our judge (14:10-13a) (Contd.)**

“Naked we come into the world, and naked we leave it. We stand before God in the awful loneliness of our own souls; to God we can take nothing but the self and the character which in life we have been building up.”

William Barclay  
*“The Daily Study Bible  
 Letter to the Romans”*  
 The Saint Andrew Press  
 1972, p. 205

**14:13** - *“Therefore let us stop passing judgment on one another. Instead, make up your mind not to put any stumbling block or obstacle in your brother’s way.”*

*“Therefore let us stop passing judgment on one another”* - Paul now speaks of the proper use of Christian liberty. We would do much better taking the position of a brother instead of approaching problems as a judge. Judgement is limited to the work of God.

**2. Our concern should be not to put stumbling blocks in a brother's way (14:13b)**

*“Instead, make up your mind not to put any stumbling block or obstacle in your brother’s way”* - This stumbling block refers to an action that may cause another to be shocked or perhaps even lead them into sin. Never has a stumbling block proved to advance the maturity of a believer in Christ. It is better to relinquish our “rights” when so much is at stake.

“We have the right to do anything that we believe to be innocent; yet the greatest right is that of relinquishing a right for the sake of others.”

Charles R. Erdman  
*“The Epistle of Paul to the Romans”*  
 The Westminster Press  
 1966, p. 158



**I. ADMONITIONS TO STRONG AND WEAK BRETHREN (14:1-13) (Contd.)****C. DO NOT JUDGE ONE ANOTHER (14:10-13) (Contd.)****2. Our concern should be not to put stumbling blocks in a brother's way (14:13b)(Contd.)**

“A Christian man is a most free lord of all, subject to none. A Christian man is a most dutiful servant of all, servant to all.”

Martin Luther  
*“The Freedom of a Christian Man”*

This is not to say that we should allow someone else to live our lives for us (I Corinthians 9:19). Our life cannot be dominated or dictated by someone else’s views or prejudices. It is better to allow our love for God to determine our so-called “rights” and recognize our responsibility to others who may disagree with our actions. Beware of bringing division and possibly ruin to another by what you believe and do. What we do is based upon what we believe.

“Love God, and do what you like.”

St. Augustine

**II. FURTHER ADMONITIONS TO STRONG BRETHREN (14:14-23)****A. DO NOT DESTROY A BROTHER FOR WHOM CHRIST DIED (14:14-18)****1. Food is harmless in itself, but we can misuse it to the destruction of the weak (14:14-16)**

**14:14 - “As one who is in the Lord Jesus, I am fully convinced that no food is unclean in itself. But if anyone regards something as unclean, then for him it is unclean.”**

**“I am fully convinced that no food is unclean in itself”** - Food is one of those things in life that is amoral. It is what we do with food that can create a sinful act (ie. - gluttony). There is no food, no person or no day that is unclean in and of itself. These are amoral. They become immoral by what is done with them.

## II. FURTHER ADMONITIONS TO STRONG BRETHREN (14:14-23) (Contd.)

### A. DO NOT DESTROY A BROTHER FOR WHOM CHRIST DIED (14:14-18) (Contd.)

#### 1. Food is harmless in itself, but we can misuse it to the destruction of the weak (14:14-16) (Contd.)

**14:15** - *“If your brother is distressed because of what you eat, you are no longer acting in love. Do not by your eating destroy your brother for whom Christ died.”*

*“If your brother is distressed because of what you eat”* - We can approach problems either through our knowledge or with our love. In one way we will puff ourselves up while in the other way we will build others up (I Corinthians 8:1). It is unworthy of our calling to grieve our fellow believers by what we choose to eat especially if it leads them away from God (I Corinthians 8:7-13; 10:23-33).

*“you are no longer acting in love”* - Christian freedom goes hand in hand with brotherly love. Liberty must never degenerate into licence. Let it rather be guided by love.

*“Do not by your eating destroy your brother for whom Christ died”* - We should never allow something as common as food to create division and strife in the body of Christ. It's best to enjoy the food that God provides for us because so many in our world are not abundantly blessed the way we are.

**14:16** - *“Do not allow what you consider good to be spoken of as evil.”*

Isn't it interesting how things can be twisted to pervert truth and have it appear as evil? We must be on our guard about majoring in minors as the Pharisees became famous for (Matthew 23:23-24). God will never accept the division that it brings to His church.

#### 2. The kingdom of God is more important than food and drink (14:17-18)

**14:17** - *“For the kingdom of God is not a matter of eating and drinking, but of righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit,”*

*“For the kingdom of God is not a matter of eating and drinking”* - (Matthew 6:31). Fellowship should never be the cart that pulls the horse. If we place righteousness, peace and joy at the head of our lives then the fellowship of our lives will follow in a straight line.

*“but of righteousness”* - This righteousness consists of giving both to God and man what is due to them. It is living in a right manner.

**II. FURTHER ADMONITIONS TO STRONG BRETHREN (14:14-23) (Contd.)****A. DO NOT DESTROY A BROTHER FOR WHOM CHRIST DIED (14:14-18) (Contd.)****2. The kingdom of God is more important than food and drink (14:17-18)(Contd.)**

*“peace”* - This is not the absence of war. It focusses upon everything that reaches out for man’s highest good. It is maintaining a right relationship with each other.

*“and joy in the Holy Spirit”* - The joy of a Christian is not so much in making ourselves happy as much as it is to make others happy. We can never find joy in stubbornly doing what we believe is right and yet clearly bringing grief and distress to another.

**14:18** - *“because anyone who serves Christ in this way is pleasing to God and approved by men.”*

*“because anyone who serves Christ in this way “* - Without Christ in the picture we become a slave to our habits, desires and pleasures.

*“is pleasing to God and approved by men”* - People often ask what it takes to please God. Here is part of the answer. True Christian living is not doing what we are free to do and enjoy doing as much as it is doing what Christ wants us to do.

**B. PURSUE THINGS WHICH MAKE FOR PEACE (14:19-23)****1. Build up your brother, don't destroy him over food (14:19-20)**

**14:19** - *“Let us therefore make every effort to do what leads to peace and to mutual edification.”*

*“make every effort to do what leads to peace and to mutual edification”* - Just think of how our world and churches would be so much better if we chose to increase peace and edification. No church can truly be called Christian without aiming for the peace of God to guide its affairs.

We need to build one another up. We are called to be living stones. What Paul is referring to in these verses is like the mortar that holds these stones together.

**II. FURTHER ADMONITIONS TO STRONG BRETHREN (14:14-23) (Contd.)****B. PURSUE THINGS WHICH MAKE FOR PEACE (14:19-23) (Contd.)****1. Build up your brother, don't destroy him over food (14:19-20) (Contd.)**

**14:20** - *“Do not destroy the work of God for the sake of food. All food is clean, but it is wrong for a man to eat anything that causes someone else to stumble.”*

*“Do not destroy the work of God for the sake of food”* The word for “*destroy*” is the very opposite of the word for “*edification*” used in the previous verse. We are never to use our freedom as a cloak to stifle another.

*“All food is clean, but it is wrong for a man to eat anything that causes someone else to stumble”* - Many have come to the conclusion that the price of their freedom was brought about with a tremendous cost.

**2. Be willing to forego your liberties for the sake of your brother (14:21)**

**14:21** - *“It is better not to eat meat or drink wine or to do anything else that will cause your brother to fall.”*

This is not to say that we are to starve to death or die of thirst. We must constantly evaluate what kind of result our actions will have upon another. We need to sometimes curtail our liberty for our brother’s good. We are called to be our brother’s keeper (Genesis 4:9). Just think how problems would be avoided if we chose to avoid in partaking in even harmless things for ourselves because we were regarding the sake of a weaker brother?

**3. Appreciate the importance of a clear conscience in your weak brother (14:22-23)**

**14:22** - *“So whatever you believe about these things keep between yourself and God. Blessed is the man who does not condemn himself by what he approves.”*

*“So whatever you believe about these things keep between yourself and God”* - Wouldn’t our lives be more healthy if we became more sensitive to our differences but focussing only on changing errors that are clearly indicated in the Word of God. Too many have been swept away from the kingdom of God because of the flood of dominating, personal belief systems. Be very careful about parading your freedom before others.

*“Blessed is the man who does not condemn himself by what he approves”* - No one can borrow another’s conviction and stand strong in their faith. Our conscience will eventually be strengthened by our knowledge if it is performed in love. Be convinced of what you truly believe.

**II. FURTHER ADMONITIONS TO STRONG BRETHERN (14:14-23) (Contd.)****B. PURSUE THINGS WHICH MAKE FOR PEACE (14:19-23) (Contd.)****3. Appreciate the importance of a clear conscience in your weak brother (14:22-23)(Contd.)**

*“Blessed is the man who does not condemn himself by what he approves”* - The word *“approves”* could be translated *“permits or allows.”* It literally means *“to put to the test.”* We need to be fully persuaded that we are properly serving the Lord by the position we take on any particular issue. We can be fully right on the question while being fully wrong in our attitude.

So Paul addresses both the strong and the weak in this verse.

**14:23** - *“But the man who has doubts is condemned if he eats, because his eating is not from faith; and everything that does not come from faith is sin.”*

*“But the man who has doubts is condemned if he eats”* - Doubt is a killer of our spiritual growth.

*“because his eating is not from faith”* - The Bible says that without faith it is impossible to please God (Hebrews 11:6). Why would we eat anything that has us questioning our faith? The same goes for what we drink. Until our faith allows for it (and it may never) then we should avoid it.

*“and everything that does not come from faith is sin”* - Therefore, the bottom line is that anyone who defies his conscience is sinning.

A review of the principles of this chapter is in order (as noted by Griffith Thomas.).

**The Christian Life must be lived in the Light of the Lordship of Christ (verse 8).** We need to ask the question, *“What would God want me to do”* - WWJD.

**The Christian Life must be lived in the Light of God’s judgement (verses 10,11).** We need to ask ourselves how such an attitude or action will appear in the light of eternity.

**The Christian Life must be lived in the Light of Love (verse 15).** God’s love in us will keep our brother’s interest in the foremost of our thought thereby preventing us from violating his conscience.

**The Christian Life must be lived in the Light of Calvary (verse 15).** We must always remember that it was by God’s grace and love through Christ that we have received mercy. Therefore, it should preserve our souls in the same attitude of loving regard, unselfish consideration, and willing self-sacrifice.

**SUMMARY**

In this chapter Paul discusses the relationship strong and weak brethren are to have towards each other. He admonishes the strong to be careful in their dealings with those whose faith is weak, and for the weak not to judge those who are doing what God allows (1-4).

In such matters, each brother should be true to their conscience and do what they do as service rendered to the Lord (5-9). There is no place for condemning or despising one another in these matters, for Jesus will be the judge (10-12).

Of primary concern is not to put stumbling blocks in a brother's way (13).

The importance of being true to one's own conscience, and not encouraging the weak brother to violate his own, is the emphasis of the last half of the chapter. Things harmless within themselves can destroy those whose consciences do not permit them, so those who understand the true nature of the kingdom of God will be willing to forego personal liberties to maintain peace and build up their weaker brethren (14-23).

**WORDS TO PONDER**

**“judge”** - setting oneself up as accuser, judge, and sentencer; it does not mean we cannot make decisions about the right or wrong of another's action (cf. Matthew 7:1-6,15-20; John 7:24; I Corinthians 5:9-13)

**“stumbling block”** - that which causes another to fall; it does need to be wrong within itself

**“offended”** - made to stumble; the word does not mean the way we commonly use it today, that is, to have one's feelings hurt or "offended"

**REVIEW QUESTIONS FOR THE CHAPTER**

- 1) List the main points of this chapter
  - Admonitions to Strong and Weak Brethren (1-13)
  - Further Admonitions to Strong Brethren (14-23)
- 2) How are strong and weak brethren to treat each other? (3)
  - The strong are not to despise the weak
  - The weak are not to judge the strong
- 3) What is important according to verse 5?
  - *"Let each be fully convinced in his own mind"*
- 4) In all matters, whom is it we should try to please? (6-8)
  - The Lord
- 5) What is important according to verse 13?
  - Not to put a stumbling block or a cause to fall in our brother's way
- 6) What elements are crucial to the kingdom of God? (17)
  - Righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit
- 7) How far should one be willing to go to avoid causing a brother to stumble? (21)
  - As far as giving up personal liberties in Christ
- 8) If we violate our conscience, what are we guilty of? (23)
  - Sin

## THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS

### Chapter Fifteen

#### OBJECTIVES IN STUDYING THIS CHAPTER

- 1) To see further the importance of being considerate of weak brethren
- 2) To be impressed with the example of the churches in Macedonia and Achaia in their liberality toward the church in Jerusalem

#### OUTLINE

#### I. CONCLUDING ADMONITIONS TO STRONG BRETHREN (15:1-13)

##### A. BEAR WITH THE SCRUPLES OF THE WEAK (15:1-6)

1. Try to please your brethren, as Christ did (15:1-3)
2. With help from God and Scripture, be patient, so you may together glorify God (15:4-6)

##### B. RECEIVE ONE ANOTHER (15:7-12)

1. As Christ received us, to the glory of God (15:7)
2. As Christ served Jews and Gentiles, in fulfilment of prophecy (15:8-12)

##### C. PAUL'S PRAYER FOR THEM (15:13)

1. That God might fill them with all joy and peace in believing (15:13a)
2. That they might abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit (15:13b)

#### II. PAUL'S PLANS TO SEE THEM (15:14-33)

##### A. THE REASON FOR WRITING THEM (15:14-21)

1. He is well aware of their own abilities (15:14)
2. Simply reminding them, as is appropriate from a "minister to the Gentiles" (15:15-16)
3. Though he normally aims to preach where Christ has not been named (15:17-21)

##### B. HIS TRAVEL PLANS (15:22-29)

1. To go to Spain via Rome (15:22-24)
2. But first, to Jerusalem with a contribution from those in Macedonia and Achaia (15:25-29)

##### C. REQUEST FOR PRAYER, AND PRAYER FOR THEM (15:30-33)

1. His request for their prayers for his safe journeys (15:30-32)
2. His prayer that God be with them (15:33)



**I. CONCLUDING ADMONITIONS TO STRONG BRETHERN (15:1-13)****A. BEAR WITH THE SCRUPLES OF THE WEAK (15:1-6)****1. Try to please your brethren, as Christ did (15:1-3)**

This paragraph (15:1-6) basically is a call directed toward the strong to follow the example of Christ and serve in a loving manner to bring unity to the body of Christ.

**15:1** - *“We who are strong ought to bear with the failings of the weak and not to please ourselves.”*

*“We who are strong”* - Those who are *“strong”* are basically those who understand that what is acceptable before God without entering into an unbalanced lifestyle of either legalism or liberty.

*“ought to bear with the failings of the weak”* - The *“weak”* are those who are incapable of determining which ritual observances are no longer required under the grace of God. The strong were not just to tolerate the scruples of the weak and they are not being asked to adopt them either. Paul uses the same word in Galatians 6:2 to express the fact that they were to bear these in such a way that they were able to clearly feel the weight of the burden. This would put an end to any criticism or judging.

**15:2** - *“Each of us should please his neighbor for his good, to build him up.”*

*“Each of us should please his neighbor for his good”* - We need to be more concerned about pleasing others for their good than pleasing ourselves for our good. Yet keeping in balance that we don't look to please men rather than God (Acts 4:19; Galatians 1:10; I Thessalonians 2:4).

Who is our neighbour? In the parable of the Good Samaritan we find that it was man who was in need at that time (Luke 10:25-37). In this case the *“neighbour”* was the one who was *“weak.”* In the 16 times that the word *“neighbour”* is used in the N.T. 13 times deal with God's command of love.

*“to build him up”* - This is the way to do things for the *“good”* of our *“neighbour.”* The word for *“build up”* is often associated with the word *“edification.”*

**15:3** - *“For even Christ did not please himself but, as it is written: ‘The insults of those who insult you have fallen on me.’”*

*“For even Christ did not please himself”* - Paul addressed the church at Corinth (I Corinthians 10:33-11:1) declaring that his purpose for trying to please everyone was to save

their souls. He was following the example of Christ. It is not a matter of “giving in” to someone else as much as it is in following the example of Christ.

*“as it is written: ‘The insults of those who insult you have fallen on me’”* - Once again we see Paul referring to the Scriptures (Psalm 69:9b) to support his conclusions. When we take a moment to consider the suffering of Christ upon the Cross we should never think that abstaining from something for the sake of others is anything in comparison.

Sometimes doing the will of God doesn’t bring the results we have hoped and prayed for. This is the time that we must keep doing God’s will because we never know how many people are affected by our actions and words.

## **2. With help from God and Scripture, be patient, so you may together glorify God (15:4-6)**

**15:4** - *“For everything that was written in the past was written to teach us, so that through endurance and the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope.”*

*“For everything that was written in the past was written to teach us”* - It has been said, “The Old Testament is the New Testament concealed; The New testament is the Old Testament revealed.”

*“so that through endurance and the encouragement of the Scriptures-* These important words *“endurance”* and *“encouragement”* (or comfort) are often linked to other passages dealing with trials and tribulations.

*“we might have hope”* - Our Hope in God and the Scriptures can sustain us through difficult times (cf. - Romans 5:2-5; 8:20, 20-25). How often have the Scriptures lifted your spirit and offered you hope when things appeared as impossible (Luke 1:37)? Apart from Christ we can never have a lasting hope (Ephesians 2:12,13).

**15:5** - *“May the God who gives endurance and encouragement give you a spirit of unity among yourselves as you follow Christ Jesus,*

*“May the God who gives endurance and encouragement give you a spirit of unity”* - Endurance, encouragement and unity are key concepts in the kingdom of God.

*“a spirit of unity among yourselves as you follow Christ Jesus”* - Paul is not suggesting that we should all agree about everything we believe because that will never happen. Yet in our differences we can line up with the will and purposes of God in a beautiful spirit of Christ.

**15:6** - *“so that with one heart and mouth you may glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.”*

***“so that with one heart and mouth you may glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ”*** - Unity of the believers should always lead to the adoration of the God we mutually serve. Without unity we are portraying a very poor example to those we are attempting to reach with the message of the gospel. It's been said, *“I'd rather see a sermon than hear one.”* People will be much more open *“hear one”* when our lifestyle proves to them that we have something that is worthwhile.

**15:7 - *“Accept one another, then, just as Christ accepted you, in order to bring praise to God.”***

***“Accept one another”*** - In the previous part of the letter Paul wants unity among the “weak” and “strong.” Now he goes one step further by asking all Christians to walk in unity. As I mentioned in the last chapter we need to continue to walk in love, acceptance and forgiveness of each other. This word to ***“accept or receive”*** means more than just toleration, it means ***“to have the most affectionate regard”*** for each other. This is the same word used for how God has accepted us in this same verse (cf. - Luke 15:2).

***“just as Christ accepted you”*** - The theological basis for our acceptance of one another lies in the fact that Christ accepted us just as we were.

***“in order to bring praise to God”*** - We can often praise God much more with our actions than with our words. We will do much damage to kingdom of God if we only praise Him with our lips and forget about the way we live. Since we are accepted in the beloved we need to praise God (Ephesians 1:6 ; II Thessalonians 1:10-12).

**15:8 - *“For I tell you that Christ has become a servant of the Jews on behalf of God’s truth, to confirm the promises made to the patriarchs”***

***“For I tell you that Christ has become a servant of the Jews on behalf of God’s truth”*** - The Jews are referred to as *“the circumcision”* in a number of versions. They were the only group that followed this custom so newer versions (whether right or wrong) have decided to use their name ***“the Jews”*** instead of their practise of circumcision to identify them

***“to confirm the promises made to the patriarchs”*** - The promise made to Abraham and others was that through them the Gentiles would be reached. There is not a promise of God that hasn't been or won't be fulfilled to the letter.

**15:9 - *“so that the Gentiles may glorify God for his mercy, as it is written: ‘Therefore I will praise you among the Gentiles; I will sing hymns to your name.’”***

Isn't it wonderful to know that God had a plan for us as Gentiles just as He had for the Jewish people whom He chose to accomplish His will? It has been imbedded into the Word of God. No Jew could deny that the Gentiles were also part of God's plan (Psalm 117:1).

**15:10 - “Again, it says, *‘Rejoice, O Gentiles, with his people.’*”**

***“Rejoice, O Gentiles, with his people ”*** - Today we are seeing this verse fulfilled as Jews and Gentiles have gathered on the streets in Jerusalem to exalt the name of the Lord according to Deuteronomy 32:43.

**15:11 - “And again, *‘Praise the Lord, all you Gentiles, and sing praises to him, all you peoples.’*”**

***“Praise the Lord, all you Gentiles, and sing praises to him, all you peoples”*** - The word **“all”** indicates that God has a wonderful plan of praise for every tribe, nation and tongue on the face of the earth (Psalm 117:1; Deuteronomy 32:43). The Psalmist gives the reason for this praise which was God’s enduring love and faithfulness.

**15:12 - “And again, Isaiah says, *‘The Root of Jesse will spring up, one who will arise to rule over the nations; the Gentiles will hope in him.’*”**

***“The Root of Jesse will spring up, one who will arise to rule over the nations; the Gentiles will hope in him”*** - The Hebrew text brings out the emphasis that this Root of Jesse will be a **“signal to the peoples.”**

We have been taught in the Scriptures to understand that our heritage is from the Jewish nation. We are Judea-Christian as the prophets proclaim (Isaiah 11:10).

**15:13 - “May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.”**

***“May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him”*** - Hope, joy, peace and trust are all benefits of those who have chosen to follow after God.

Before going on it is important to bring this text (14:1-15:13) up to date. We do have Christians who abstain from all alcoholic drink but not because of the same reason. In Paul’s day it was due to their concern over ritualistic contamination.

Today it is because of the disastrous effects it has brought to many people. Many do not want to set a poor example for those who may not be able to partake without overindulging. These are very worthy reasons but they are not dealt with in Paul’s argument.

It should though give us a good foundation to abstain. We do not want to cause another to stumble in their faith (14:1) and deny their conscience (14:22,23). Our freedom should never be flaunted and bring harm to another believer (14:13b, 20-21). Yet we should not walk around with a life of bondage living under the standards of others. Remember that unity is a valuable goal but some costs are beyond the boundaries of God’s Word.

**15:14 - *“I myself am convinced, my brothers, that you yourselves are full of goodness, complete in knowledge and competent to instruct one another.”***

*“that you yourselves are full of goodness, complete in knowledge and competent to instruct one another”* - You would think that after all that has been written that this word of exhortation was needed. We need to remember to command our brothers as well as to commend them. Knowledge is much more effective when it is taught in the attitude of goodness and appreciation.

*“full of goodness”* - This word for *“goodness”* refers to an *“uprightness”* in conduct as well as a *“kindness and generosity toward others.”*

**15:15 - *“I have written you quite boldly on some points, as if to remind you of them again, because of the grace God gave me”***

*“I have written you quite boldly on some points”* - This is the longest ending of Paul’s epistles which matches his introduction. There are times in our lives when we must learn to accept words from those who love us and want the best for us even though the words be hard to swallow (John 6:60-71). Paul never surrendered his authority when truth was to be proclaimed.

**15:16 - *“to be a minister of Christ Jesus to the Gentiles with the priestly duty of proclaiming the gospel of God, so that the Gentiles might become an offering acceptable to God, sanctified by the Holy Spirit.”***

*“to be a minister of Christ Jesus to the Gentiles”* - This is supported by other Scriptures (Acts 9:15; Romans 1:5; Galatians 1:16; 2:1-10). Since the Roman church was mostly made up of Gentiles (Romans 1:5,14,15), it fell well within the scope of his apostolic ministry. It should be noted though that Paul did not use the word for apostle, rather he choose *“leitourgos”* which is translated *“servant or minister.”*

*“with the priestly duty of proclaiming the gospel of God”* - Yet it is not just a ministry but also a *“priestly”* ministry or *“duty.”* Is this not the duty of everyone who is called to proclaim the Gospel of Jesus Christ?

*“so that the Gentiles might become an offering acceptable to God, sanctified by the Holy Spirit”* - The only sacrifice that is acceptable to God is one that is *“sanctified”* or set apart. The animal sacrifices of the OT are replaced by obedient servants of God in the NT (Romans 12:1).

**15:17 - *“Therefore I glory in Christ Jesus in my service to God.”***

*“Therefore I glory in Christ Jesus in my service to God”* - We are not to boast in our own achievements (3:27; 4:2,3) but we can exalt the Lord by recognizing that whatever we

accomplish while doing His service is not accomplished by our strength and abilities

**15:18 - “I will not venture to speak of anything except what Christ has accomplished through me in leading the Gentiles to obey God by what I have said and done—“**

**“I will not venture to speak of anything except what Christ has accomplished through me in”** - The “*success*” of anyone’s ministry lies in the fact that God has given His enablement for it to take place.

**“in leading the Gentiles to obey God by what I have said and done”** - God has called to teach and preach in such a manner that men and women, youth, boys and girls will obey the Word of God (Matthew 28:18-20).

**15:19 - “by the power of signs and miracles, through the power of the Spirit. So from Jerusalem all the way around to Illyricum, I have fully proclaimed the gospel of Christ.”**

**“by the power of signs and miracles, through the power of the Spirit”** - The early church recognized the importance of signs and miracles following the preaching of the Word. This phrase of “*signs and miracles (or wonders)*” describes both its purpose and its unusual, unnatural results.

**“So from Jerusalem all the way around to Illyricum”** - Even though he personally began his ministry in Antioch, he recognized that Jerusalem was the true beginning of the gospel message. Illyricum encompassed an area of land north and west of Macedonia. Today it would cover the land occupied by Albania, Yugoslavia and Bosnia-Herzegovina.

**“I have fully proclaimed the gospel of Christ”** - This is not to say that everyone and all parts of this vast region had been reached with the gospel. It is better to think that Paul preached and taught widely enough and planted churches firmly enough that the work would prevail.

**15:20 - “It has always been my ambition to preach the gospel where Christ was not known, so that I would not be building on someone else’s foundation.”**

**“It has always been my ambition to preach the gospel where Christ was not known”** - Paul had a similar attitude as the early settlers who pulled up their stakes every time they smelled the smoke of another settler’s cabin.

**“so that I would not be building on someone else’s foundation”** - It is vital that a proper foundation be laid and that those who follow and build upon it maintain a consistency of a master workmanship (I Corinthians 3:10-15; II Corinthians 10:13-18).

**15:21 - “Rather, as it is written: ‘Those who were not told about him will see, and those who have not heard will understand.’”**

***“Those who were not told about him will see, and those who have not heard will understand.”*** This quote from Isaiah 52:15b supports Paul’s calling to build in virgin territory and especially to the Gentiles. As it is today, why should we hear the gospel message over and over when some people on this earth have never heard it for the first time?

**15:22 - *“This is why I have often been hindered from coming to you.”***

***“This is why I have often been hindered from coming to you”*** - God can often redirect our paths when our desire is to reach souls for Him (Acts 16:6). Paul was “hindered “ in stopping off at Rome (eventually desiring to go to Spain - vs 24) because he had other ministry needs that took precedence.

**15:23 - *“But now that there is no more place for me to work in these regions, and since I have been longing for many years to see you,”***

***“But now that there is no more place for me to work in these regions”*** - The apostle was running out of areas to proclaim the Word of God (vs - 20). He felt he had been successful in bringing the message of the Gospel to the area of Asia Minor and now it was time to stretch the boundaries of his tent (Isaiah 54:2).

**15:24 - *“I plan to do so when I go to Spain. I hope to visit you while passing through and to have you assist me on my journey there, after I have enjoyed your company for a while.”***

***“I plan to do so when I go to Spain”*** - The area occupied by Spain had been under the control of Rome since 200 BC. During the lifetime of Paul that area was more organized. It was his belief that Spain was lacking in their solid faith in the Gospel. Unfortunately, Paul never made it Spain because he was martyred in Rome. Only a writing of 1 Clement 5:7 would cause anyone to question whether he made it or not.

***“I hope to visit you while passing through and to have you assist me on my journey there”*** - The word that he uses for ***“assist”*** would include coworkers that could help with the customs and languages of the area as well as financial and other practical needs.

**15:25 - *“Now, however, I am on my way to Jerusalem in the service of the saints there.”***

***“Now, however, I am on my way to Jerusalem”*** - This would suggest that he is writing this from Greece just prior to visiting Jerusalem (Acts 20:2,3).

***“in the service of the saints there”*** - His present duty was to ensure that the collection from the saints made it to Jerusalem to alleviate the burden they were experiencing due to the famine. Paul uses the word ***“service or ministry”*** to state how he sees the mission (II Corinthians 8:4,19,20; 9:1,12,13).

**15:26 - “For Macedonia and Achaia were pleased to make a contribution for the poor among the saints in Jerusalem.”**

**“For Macedonia and Achaia”** - These would include the churches at Philippi, Thessalonica, Berea and Corinth.

**“were pleased to make a contribution for the poor among the saints in Jerusalem”** - The word he uses for the contribution is *“koinonia”* which is most often translated *“fellowship.”* This gift came from a loving friendship based upon their desire to please God. Its is important to note that they gave out of their own needs (II Corinthians 8:1-5).

**15:27 - “They were pleased to do it, and indeed they owe it to them. For if the Gentiles have shared in the Jews’ spiritual blessings, they owe it to the Jews to share with them their material blessings.”**

**“They were pleased to do it, and indeed they owe it to them”** - It is important to remember our spiritual heritage and be ever grateful for it. This is not to say that we should feel obliged to pay someone money if they lead us to the Lord. It was simply an expression of the Gentiles commitment to Israel. They gave cheerfully and without compulsion (II Corinthians 9:5,7). It became a moral not a legal obligation.

**“For if the Gentiles have shared in the Jews’ spiritual blessings”** - The salvation that we as Gentiles enjoy came through a Jewish Messiah in fulfilment of their prophecies (Romans 1:16; 4:13-16; 11:17-24; 15:7,8).

**“they owe it to the Jews to share with them their material blessings”** - We often use material blessings to show how appreciate one another. It is not a matter of *“buying”* a blessing but rather a tangible manner of showing their thankfulness (I Corinthians 9:11).

**15:28 - “So after I have completed this task and have made sure that they have received this fruit, I will go to Spain and visit you on the way.”**

**“So after I have completed this task and have made sure that they have received this fruit”** - Some of the versions talk about putting a *“seal on the fruit.”* A seal was most often used to affirm an authenticity. Paul may have seen his apostolic affirmation as a assurance that the ministry was done to its utmost care. Paul was a man who kept disciplined in his priorities.

**“I will go to Spain and visit you on the way”** - His trip to Spain would not happen until the collection of money had been delivered.

**15:29 - “I know that when I come to you, I will come in the full measure of the blessing of Christ.”**



***“I know that when I come to you”*** - Here is a word of assurance and faith combined.

***“I will come in the full measure of the blessing of Christ”*** - Not only would Paul be imparting a blessing to those in Rome but he would also be receiving a blessing from them by their encouragement and help.

**15:30** - ***“I urge you, brothers, by our Lord Jesus Christ and by the love of the Spirit, to join me in my struggle by praying to God for me.”***

***“I urge you, brothers, by our Lord Jesus Christ and by the love of the Spirit”*** - The prayer that Paul is asking for is to be done in the authority of the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and inspired by the love that the Spirit of God inspires.

***“to join me in my struggle by praying to God for me”*** - The word that is used for ***“praying”*** is a strong word that should not be reduced to asking or requesting. Little can be done in the kingdom of God without prayer. It is not simply just a prayer but rather a wrestling or struggling in prayer.

**15:31** - ***“Pray that I may be rescued from the unbelievers in Judea and that my service in Jerusalem may be acceptable to the saints there,”***

***“Pray that I may be rescued from the unbelievers in Judea”*** - Some versions refer to the ***“unbelievers”*** as the ***“disobedient.”*** This group did try their best to kill him before the Roman soldiers took him into custody (Acts 21:27-36).

***“and that my service in Jerusalem may be acceptable to the saints there”*** - The writings of Paul about a law-free gospel made it apparent that some of the Jewish Christians who were from a conservative side would distrust him. This was also made clear by the writings of II Corinthians 10-13 that were written just prior to the Book of Romans.

**15:32** - ***“so that by God’s will I may come to you with joy and together with you be refreshed.”***

***“so that by God’s will I may come to you with joy”*** - It may be confusing to some to see how God answered this prayer. Paul actually was rescued from the ***“unbelievers in Judea”*** by being locked in prison for 2 years by the Romans. Some may find it difficult to accept that Paul would arrive in Rome in chains as a joyful experience (Philippians 1:12-19;2:25-30).

***“and together with you be refreshed”*** - This mutual refreshment is still clearly needed in the work of the Lord.

**15:33** - ***“The God of peace be with you all. Amen.”***

***“The God of peace be with you all. Amen”*** - Only God can provide true peace to our

lives. We need peace both with other believers (Romans 14:19) as well as with God (Romans 5:1; 8:6)

**SUMMARY**

Paul exhorts those who are strong to receive and bear with the infirmities of the weak. Encouraging them to be concerned with uplifting the weak, he reminds the strong of Christ and His unselfishness (1-3).

Referring to the value of the Old Testament Scriptures, he pleads for patience so that with one mind and one mouth they may glorify God (4-6).

Finally, he calls for them to receive one another to the glory of God, just as Christ served both Jews and Gentiles in fulfilling the prophets of old (7-12).

Paul then prays that God might fill them with joy and peace in believing, so they may abound in hope with the help of the Holy Spirit (13).

At this point, Paul begins to draw this epistle to a close by making remarks concerning his apostleship and plans to see them. Recognizing their own abilities in the faith, he still felt it appropriate to write to them as he did (14-16).

Speaking of his design not to preach where Christ had already been received (17-21), Paul tells of his plan to come to Rome on his way to Spain (22-24).

But first, he is going to the poor saints in Jerusalem with a contribution from the saints in Macedonia and Achaia (25-29).

Realizing the danger such a trip entails, he asks to be remembered in their prayers (30-33).

**WORDS TO PONDER**

**“edification”** - to build up; "used only figuratively in the NT. . .the promotion of spiritual growth" (VINE)

**REVIEW QUESTIONS FOR THE CHAPTER**

- 1) List the main points of this chapter
  - Concluding Admonitions To Strong Brethren (15:1-13)
  - Paul's Plans To See Them (15:14-33)
- 2) Whose example are we to follow in bearing the weakness of others? (1-3)
  - Christ's
- 3) What value is the Old Testament to Christians? (4)
  - To learn, to find patience and comfort, to increase hope
- 4) Why is it important that we be of one mind? (5-6)
  - So we may in unity of mind and mouth glorify God
- 5) To what degree are we to receive one another? (7)
  - As Christ received us; to the glory of God
- 6) In his preaching, what did Paul try to avoid? (20)
  - Preaching where Christ had already been preached
- 7) Where did Paul hope to go after passing through Rome? (24)
  - Spain
- 8) Where was he headed for at the time he wrote this epistle? Why? (25)
  - Jerusalem; to take the contribution from Macedonia and Achaia to the poor saints in Jerusalem